

Teacher-Student Interaction in EFL Classroom in The Algerian Secondary School

التفاعل الجنساني بين الأستاذ والتلميذ في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في مرحلة التعليم الثانوي بالجزائر

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Date of receipt:(15/10/2020) , Date of revision: (05/12/2020), Date of acceptance :(01/01/2021)

Abstract :

Gender in teacher-learner interaction has become an important topic of research. The purpose of this study is to analyse gender bias in the teacher-learner interaction inside EFL classroom in the Algerian high school. The sample consisted of 300 students and 15 English teachers who were observed and interviewed to explore teachers' perception of gender and the attitudes they hold towards gender. Findings revealed that gender bias can be found in teacher-student interaction in the classroom despite teachers positive attitudes of gender. EFL teachers believe that students knowledge, personality and classroom participation are factors that affect teacher-student interaction regardless any gender consideration. Teachers should be conscious of their interactions with students regarding gender to deconstruct all sorts of gender bias inside classroom.

Keywords : Gender, teacher-learner interaction, gender bias, high school.

ملخص :

أصبح نوع الجنس في التفاعل بين المعلم والمتعلم موضوعاً مهماً للبحث. الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو تحليل التحيز بين الجنسين في تفاعل المعلم والمتعلم داخل الفصل الدراسي للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المدرسة الثانوية الجزائرية. تكونت العينة من 300 طالب و 15 مدرس لغة انجليزية تمت ملاحظتهم وإجراء مقابلات معهم. كشفت النتائج أنه يمكن العثور على التحيز الجنساني في التفاعل بين المعلم والطالب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الجنس، التفاعل بين المعلم والمتعلم، التحيز الجنساني، المدرسة الثانوية

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INTRODUCTION:

Since teachers play an important role in the developing of students' perceptions of themselves and of the world around them, the topic of ways teachers interact with their male and female students is of great importance to be searched. The topic of teacher-student interaction in the EFL classroom has become the basis of several studies. Investigations of gender bias in the classroom interactions and how this issue affects the students academic achievements have been of much importance. Research focus has been shifted from the nature of language input inside classroom to the nature of interaction. Teacher-learner interactions in class can be affected by gender. It has been shown to be a major factor influencing interactions between teachers and students. Teachers are supposed to hold a set of beliefs and attitudes that show opinions and expectations of students abilities and interest according to their sex. Therefore, teacher behavior leads to differential treatment of male and female students in class. Eventhough, teachers state that they treat both male and female students equally, research at all educational levels suggest otherwise. Sadker, Sadker and Bauchner (1984) in elementary school have suggested that 'sex differential treatment of students may characterize the interaction process' They also suggested that studies of classrooms from preschool through high school have revealed that teachers tend to give more attention to boys (p. 1-2). Teachers often unconsciously treat boys and girls differently. Boys often receive much of the teachers' attention in classrooms (Duffy, 2001). In the same vein, Sadker & Sadker (1994) state that teachers initiate more contacts with males than with females and males initiate more contacts with teachers and they criticize and praise males more often than females. Sunderland (1992) writes "Closer examination however suggests that gender operates at more than the level of materials. Other levels include the English language itself ; and classroom processes, including learning processes, teacher-learner interaction and learner-learner interaction" (p, 81). In regard to teacher-learner interaction, Sunderland (1992) claims that according to EFL classroom, it might mean that males get more speaking practice and more feedback on their utterances. Besides, Sunderland suggests different ways of teachers differential treatment of male and female students. Majority of teachers hold gender stereotypes and are not aware of the fact that they hold or perpetuate biased perceptions of males and females in their classroom practices such as those focusing on teacher to student discourse in whole-class work (Sunderland,1992). Therefore , the ways in which teachers interact with students in classroom lead many researchers to study teacher-students interaction in the EFL classroom. The study was undertaken in order to investigate, analyze and discuss aspects of gender bias and gender awareness in teacher-student interaction in the Algerian secondary school context Based on the purpose of the study, the following questions were used to guide the research:

Research question 1: How do EFL teachers respond to male and female students in their classrooms ?

Research question 2: Do EFL teachers have any presumptions of gender and different expectations for boys and girls ?

The purpose of the first research question that turns the focus to the gender of the pupil and the differences that might be found in the teacher's feedback is to see whether the teacher evaluates and reacts differently according to the gender of the pupil. It also presents the possibility whether the male students receive feedback that is different in quality than the female students feedback. The second research question

tends to examine whether EFL teachers have special expectations towards gender and if gender of their students affect their reactions to the students responses in class. It was hypothesized that due to the dominant gendered ideologies and attitudes to women, female participants would be more likely to experience gender discrimination in their classrooms.

In the light of these questions, the following objectives were postulated for this study. Firstly, this study aims to explore the impact of gender on EFL classroom interaction and the extent to which 'differential teacher treatment by gender' might be manifested in foreign language classroom in an Algerian context. Secondly, this research aims to understand how classrooms are sites where gendered treatments through classroom interaction can take place and how they shape the gender identities, roles and relations of the participants. Thirdly, to assess teachers' attitude toward gender bias and their awareness of their own treatment of male and female students in class, because according to M. Sadker and Sadker (1992) despite most teachers' claim that they treat students fairly, irrespective of their gender, research reveals the opposite. Thus, gender awareness and equal treatment are required inside classrooms.

This study is significant as it will contribute to the benefit of Algerian society as well as other societies considering that gender plays an important role in organising life. Rising awareness about how gendered ideologies are essential in effecting change and improvements regarding gender equity in Algeria and other countries as well. More specifically, this research will contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of gender studies in general and gender and education in particular in 'developing' countries that lack work on gender studies and gender in education. It is hoped that the results of this research would provide an insight about gender and education in a new context.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW :

Studies about gender in the context of classroom has involved in the past years. Interactions between teacher and students have been the focus of many studies in English as a foreign language. Research in education has revealed that teacher-student interactions in class are also biased by the gender of the students. Spender (1982) found that teachers of mixed classes pay more attention to male students. Also, Stitt (1988), in her work on building gender fairness in the schools, reported that boys are more likely to be praised for academic performance, whereas girls receive less praise for their school work and more praise for their non-academic qualities like neatness. The most relevant study to this paper is that of Sunderland (1988) because this paper study focuses mainly on examining how students' gender influence teachers' interaction with them in the EFL classroom as well as it provides aspects of teacher-student interaction. More closely its major aim is to study teacher-to-student discourse. According to Sunderland (1988) most of qualitative and quantitative studies of gendered classroom discourse have discovered findings of great concern in terms of the quantity and quality of attention the teacher gives to female students and the amount of talk girls produce. Moreover, Sunderland (1998) examines the quality and quantity of interactions and maintains that teachers vary considerably in the quantities of interactions they have with individual students, with males receiving a higher proportion of contacts from teachers across subject areas. Homes (1989) found that the adult male students both responded more to the teachers' questions and asked more questions themselves. Another study that was carried out by Dabiri (2006) indicates that the classroom interactions between Iranian teachers and students are

influenced by teachers' attitude and expectations from gender and that teachers change their behavior, expectations and teaching style according to students' gender. Recently, Ifegbesan (2010) states that gender inequalities are at work in the educational contexts of many countries in general. Ifegbesan (2010) explores teachers' belief and perception of gender bias in classroom practices, and reports that the educational system does not only reinforce traditional roles but also stereotyped attitudes toward gender.

1.1. Gender and Sex:

Gender is the construction of behaviours that a male and female possess. It is more than biological differences. When trying to define the word gender, Goddard and Patterson (2000) make a clear distinction between gender and sex so that the latter is about "socially expected characteristics rather than biology" (p.1) and that gender has to do with behaviour, for example, masculine and feminine characteristics that people possess whether being biologically a boy or a girl. Graddol and Swann (1989) agree with this kind of definition as they also see gender as a social rather than a biological phenomenon in the sense that people learn the attitudes and behaviour appropriate to their sex, rather than are born with them (p. 8).

1.2. Gender and Language:

It is important to tackle the concept of language and how it relates to gender. Early feminist linguists consider that there are significant relations between language and gender; understanding these relations would help in challenging patriarchy and sexism (Weatherall, 2002, p. 2). Talking about the question of how language and gender are related, Cameron (1992) states that the term language is used distinctively. For sociolinguists, it is "a set of learned surface features" (Weatherall, 2002, p. 217) and in terms of gender language is a set of learned surface features that convey the meaning of 'I am a woman' and 'I am a man'. As a result gender identity constituted by language is usually in accordance with the anatomical sex due to sociolinguistic emphasis on cultural norms that lead people to behave in a specific way. One reason of this is the fact that sex differences are naturalised, therefore, a close explanation of these sex differences in linguistic behaviour is required. The common point between all feminist approaches to gender and language is the assumption that language reflects men's power and social advantage on one hand and women's inferiority and disadvantage on the other hand. More recently, language and gender relationship is understood in the sense that language is both effecting and reflecting gender (Sauntson, 2012, p. 5). Much of the 1990s research on language and gender has been influenced by Judith Butler's approach of 'performativity' in which she argues that gender is an 'act' that could be 'performed' through different media including language. Therefore, language is a social activity through which identities, including gender identities, are constructed and reflected. She further argues that it is through gender performance that ideologies or dominant discourses are constructed. Nevertheless, the notion of performativity also holds a degree of individuals' agency in choosing their performance or even creating a new one. Consequently, viewing gender from the perspective of the theory of performativity is empowering, particularly for women, as gender is changeable. Overall, these concerns about language and gender, traced to both linguistics and feminism, have two distinct messages about the relationship between language and gender. The linguistic message "has been that there are important relationships between gender and language"; while the feminist message was that "those relationships are significant for understanding

and challenging sexism and patriarchy” (Weatherall, 2002, p. 2). Therefore, the early feminist concerns about language and gender was related to the significance of sexist language and how not only it reflects men’s power, but also perpetuates it.

1.3. Gender and ELT :

Gender in the ELT field includes the difference a female and a male have in the classroom is due to the personalities they construct in a certain context and a certain time. In many aspects of life, there is a fact that women and men are treated differently, this paper’s aim is to find out how the differences occur and in what situations in the classroom. According to Morgan (as quoted in Goddard and Patterson 2000) “males are seen as logical, rational, aggressive, exploitative, strategic, independent and competitive”, whereas females are thought to be “intuitive, emotional, submissive, empathic, spontaneous, nurturing and co-operative.” Morgan summarizes these by implying that man is “a leader and decision-maker” and woman is “a loyal supporter and follower” (p. 32). Some general aspects of gender differences between males and females have been discussed as background information and for the purpose of pointing out that the gender issues must be taken into consideration in a specific context that is the foreign language classroom.

1.4. Gender in the EFL classroom:

The focus on gender inside the classroom has become of much significance. There have been many studies concerning interaction that takes place in the foreign language classroom. There are many authors made studies on gender related to the interaction between a teacher and a student in the language classroom. According to Delamont (as quoted in Swann 1992, p. 3) gender bias is harmful and it can limit both girls’ and boys’ subject choices, their personal and social lives and even their career opportunities. Delamont continues to claim that when schools could be alleviating the negative aspects of gender roles, they often reinforce issues such as sex segregations, stereotypes and discriminations which bring forward sex roles with negative connotations in the outside world. Swann (1992) points out that it is important to understand that diversity and contradictions exist in classrooms and they “can be exploited by those who wish to promote change” in order for boys and girls to have more learning opportunities (p, 11). According to Sunderland (1998) as well, there has not been much research done on gendered discourse in the language classroom and that even though gender has been quite widely investigated in foreign language education, Sunderland’s study does have some interesting insights concerning gender specifically in the EFL classroom. She claims that 'Gender in the EFL classroom' is a phrase which may conjure up in teachers' minds no more than complaints about the use of he, or about textbooks being sexist. Closer examination, however, suggests that gender operates at more than the level of materials. Other levels include the English language itself; and classroom processes, including learning processes, teacher-learner interaction, and learner-learner interaction. These levels interact, always within a particular political, sociolinguistic, and educational context’ (Sunderland, 1992). Talking about gender in EFL classroom, Sunderland (1992) mentions teacher-learner interaction as an aspect that reflects gender differences inside classroom. She states that research findings concerning teacher-learner interaction applied in to the EFL classroom, ‘the findings might mean that males get more speaking practice and more feedback on their utterances’. Sunderland also suggest ways teachers can treat female and students differently, including selection (who asks/answers a question? who demonstrates?), varying the level of difficulty of questions by gender, and employing

double standards for, for example, error identification and treatment, presentation of written work, and acceptable classroom behaviour. She states that 'these may be neither intentional nor recognized, by either teacher or students'. The current study tends to investigate whether there are gender differences in teacher-learner interaction or not in the EFL classroom in the Algerian context.

1.5. Teachers perceptions:

Teachers may be affected by gender stereotypes that effect different perceptions of boys and girls academic abilities perception. This perception can affect students in classroom through different ways such as the way of interaction with them. Previous studies found that male students are given more time to talk and participate in class than female ones. Therefore, teacher perceptions helps identify social stereotypes and discrepancies in students perception of gender via the instructional practices during class as teachers play a large role in the socialization of students and are influential in the development of social stereotypes. An understanding of teachers perceptions helps to understand how perceptions foster gender stereotypes.

1.6. Students perceptions:

Several studies found that classrooms and teachers have a great impact on influencing male and female students understanding of gender. These perceptions start to appear when students start growing up, they perceive different notions in the world around them as feminine and masculine. The process of socialization helps them build a perception of themselves that is possibly affected by social stereotypes. What children perceive as masculine or feminine can lead to children having misguided perceptions of their own ability in different areas. Heyman (2004) focuses on presenting student's beliefs about gender and students perceptions of gender capabilities. Heyman (2004) discovers that boys and girls do have specific beliefs about gender. Children have distinct perceptions of themselves and of males and females. Studies illustrate that boys and girls have different perceptions of men and women. Therefore, societal stereotypes are learned by students a young age. The studies presented that students are at risk of limiting themselves because of the belief that gender stereotypes are true.

1.7. Teaching Strategies:

Teaching strategies that are used by teachers in EFL can foster gender stereotypes and lead to unequitable environment unconsciously and indirectly. Owens (2003) finds that female students are ignored teachers because male students are often receiving most of the teacher's attention. 'Boys receive positive praise for the quality of the content of their work while girls often receive praise for the appearance of their work' (Owens, 2003). Owens states that during class discussions, teachers call on male students for responses to abstract ideas and females are praised for complying with the rules and the teachers. These responses can affect female students perception of themselves and make them feel themselves not valuable.. The way teachers interact with students has an impact on themselves, the instructional practices could be unconsciously biased and cause further development of gender inequality and stereotypes. Therefore, there should be calls for critical pedagogy.

2. METHOD AND TOOLS:

The main sources of data collection for this study were classroom observation and teacher interviews. In line with the objectives of this study, the classroom observation procedure that focuses on teacher-student interactions (Lockheed & Harris, 1989) was used which took the form of qualitative note taking, and mainly focused on the

teacher-initiated interactions. The gender-equity observation checklist aids in the conversion of general classroom interactions into evaluative types of interactions: praise, criticism, remediation, and acceptance. Besides coding the interactions based on the prespecified checklist, interactions were also audio-recorded for later verification of the coded data. The audio-recording was very helpful in categorizing the types of interactions observed. A sample of ten teachers from the observed teachers (five females and five males) was randomly selected for the interview. Having completed the observations, and before posing the interview questions, the teachers to be interviewed were informed about the main concern of the study, after that they were asked the questions. Permission was obtained orally from each respondent to record the interview and they were assured that their answers would be kept confidential; and whenever the interviewees were not clear with the questions, they were freely offered clarifications and explanations by the interviewer. Notes were taken on their responses to every question. The whole interview was audio-recorded and then transcribed for further analysis.

2.1. Participants :

The sampling technique had to be nonrandom and purposive, because the researchers required only mixed-gender EFL classes since the present study was executed in mixed gender EFL classes, where chances for interaction between teacher and students would occur and rise and from which considerable amount of interaction between teacher and students would occur, and from which comparable data of teachers' treatment toward males and females could be obtained and considerable data of teacher's way of dealing with males and females would be obtained. As a result, a sample of 300 students (140 males and 160 females) and 15 EFL teachers (5 males and 10 females) was selected from three different high schools (5 teachers from each secondary school). Students from different classes and different levels participated in the study. All teacher participants were Algerian who taught English as a foreign language, with ages that ranged between 30 to 45 years. All the participants were informed about the purpose of the researcher's presence in the classroom and all of them agreed to be observed and interviewed.

2.2. Procedure:

The characteristics of this study required a qualitative method guided by the research questions. The main sources of data collection for this study were classroom observation and teacher interviews. Direct classroom observation of classes which focused specifically on teacher's and students discourse and the way they interacted with each other. Some of the main and convenient tools for collecting data involved field notes from actual direct classroom observations because the aim of this study is to understand teacher's way of interaction and reaction to gender. Therefore, qualitative study would best serve this purpose. Additionally, interviews with teachers were structured to understand different teachers' perceptions and expectations of gender. The participants teachers were asked for their permission to permit the researcher to attend their classes at least three times in a term. Therefore, 30 classes were totally observed. Moreover, they were informed that the researcher would interview them for further information. The interviews were recorded in the researcher's field notes. The audio-recording of the interview were later transcribed and analyzed.

2.3. Data Analysis:

For data analysis, the field notes taken during classroom observation were analyzed to uncover how teachers react to male and female students responses during classes. Meanwhile, the researcher tended to determine if there were any differential behaviour when the teacher respond to male and female students. Besides, data obtained from teachers interviews will be examined to know about the teachers perceptions of gender to explain the factors behind the teacher ways of interaction with male and female students.

3. RESULTS:

The findings obtained through classroom observation and interview will be described below

3.1. Observation Results: The teacher's feedback to boys' and girls' responses

Keeping in mind the research questions, we need to give more attention to the teacher feedback. The focus in this step is on interaction between the teacher and both male and female pupils. The researcher's aim during collecting data through observation is to show some of the patterns of feedback the teacher uses with both girls and boys and analyze other interactional and pedagogical behaviour between the teacher and the pupils, especially gender-specific behaviour. The teacher's reactions to the students work can have some differences in terms of the gender of the pupil. As can be seen in the first extract, the teacher almost in all the examples interacted with the boys or the girls differently. In the following teacher-students interaction examples, the teacher is responding to oral presentations given by individual students.

Extract 1:

Teacher responded to a female student, 'Very good, you did well'

Teacher to a female student, 'Great ! good presentation you gave'

Teacher to a female student, 'Good job !'

Teacher to a male student, 'Very good, I liked your presentation. Good job, be always shine up like today'

Teacher to a male student, 'Very nice, I liked how you tried to keep your eyes and voice up while presenting your work'

Teacher to a male student, 'Nice job, very nice. That was a good presentation'

Teacher to a male student, 'Very good. Your presentation was very nice'

Some differences in the above extract of interaction between the teacher and the pupils can be found. It was found that teacher's response to students regarding reward (positive praise) was directed significantly more to males than females. Similarly to the previous extracts, the teacher's feedback consists of an issue in terms of gender bias that cannot be ignored in the next extract (extract 2) is that the teacher refers to the girls as a group before referring to the girls as individuals by their name, which does not happen with the boys before when the teacher refers to the boys. Up until now, all the responses are produced by the pupils and the initiations by the teacher. The class is discussing a topic about describing the feeling and emotions expected from women and men in various situations such as happiness, grief and love.

Extract 2:

Teacher : What do you expect men's reaction to the death of close friend or relative?

One male pupil : They do not show

Teacher : Good. What about you 'Hacane', is that true ?

Hacane : Yes, absolutely. They can control their emotions

Teacher : Ok, What do you think girls?

One female pupil : Yes, generally my father tries not to panic.

Teacher : What can you say, Hajer?

Hajer : Yes, the same thing happens with my father and brothers

This extract is interesting in many ways when considering it in terms of gender bias and differential teacher treatment. As can be seen in the extract, the teacher almost in all examples interacted with either the boys or the girls, which seems to indicate that the teacher treated the pupils as two different gender groups. What is interesting to see via classroom observations is that even though the teacher's feedback patterns might be different in terms of the gender of the pupil, other aspects of the teacher-student interaction, e.g. the teacher's reactions to girls and boys responses or other behaviour can be similar. In extract 3, when comparing the teacher's reactions to male and female pupils a similar kind of feedback sequence can be found. The class is talking about a text they have just listened to.

Extract 3:

Teacher : Lets start answering the questions in task one based on the text you have listened to. Pupils interact orally with the teacher and give various answers.

Teacher: What types of text are they?

Female pupil: They are advertisements

Teacher: Nice. Where do we generally read such types of texts?

Male pupil: In newspapers and magazines

Teacher: Great. Now who can tell me what is the difference between the texts on the left and the text on the right hand side?

Pupils: no answer

One female pupil : The text length

Teacher : Yes, it is. The teacher accepts the pupil's contribution even the answer was wrong.

As can be seen in the above extract of interaction have similar patterns of teacher feedback in spite of the gender of the pupil. As it is shown in the the extract, The teacher almost in all examples interacted with both the boys and the girls positively and in a similar way.the teacher gave positive feedback to the female pupil who answered the last question eventhough she was wrong (incorrect answer) which seems to indicate that similarities in the interaction between the teacher and the pupils can be found.

3.2. Interview Results:

The results obtained through interviews about teachers' expectations and presumptions of gender and different expectations for boys and girls to assess teachers awareness of how they treated male and female students in their classrooms. Eight teachers (4 males and 4 females) were randomly chosen from among the observed teachers to be interviewed. The findings revealed that the teachers interviewed gave similar replies to the interview questions. When the teachers are asked about their opinion about the causes of the way of interaction between the teacher and the male and female students. Their replies were : 50% students willingness to participate, 50% the classroom context and 20% students knowledge. When the teachers were asked if they considered females were different from males in class and if that made them treated them differently, almost all the teachers stated that they did not consider any difference regarding gender of the students ; yet they claimed that sometimes it depends on the class participation and students level. where generally they found female students were more active and

participating in the classroom than male students. Where they found themselves give more attention to them. But they also thought that male students mostly try just to keep silent whereas females took part more in the different lesson parts. This factor made them give more positive praise to boys than girls. Here are some teachers' comments as stated by themselves :

'Females do like to participate in activities and like to talk more than males who prefer to keep silent even they know the answers' (A male teacher)

One other teacher stated 'When male students participate in class, they take more attention than the others because they rarely initiative interaction' (A female teacher)

When the teachers were questioned about the type of feedback directed toward females and males, almost all of them claimed that their feedback did not depend on gender and that they did not consider any difference between females and males. They further explained that it depends on the type of answer they received regardless of any gender consideration.

'My feedback depends on the type of answer given by the student regardless of any gender consideration (A female teacher)

Some others stated that their feedback depends on the personality of students. They explained that some students are more sensitive and they try not to hurt them by their criticism so that they continue participating and do not lose self-confidence. One male teacher stated :

'I think the feedback is not based on gender, but on the personality of the students. In some classes females are more sensitive than males, and in other classes you find males are more sensitive namely when the number of males are few in class so they do not like to be criticized in front of their female classmates that's most of the time they receive positive respond and more attention but not because they are males' (A male teacher)

4. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS:

While preparing for data analysis, it was planned to discover how teachers respond to students in the classroom and examine if this response differs among female and male students. The qualitative findings from classroom observations made during this study indicated that teachers treated female and male students similarly even though issues in terms of gender differences may appear in the teachers interactions with their students. In terms of observed classroom discourse, the analysis of the data is the focus of this study in order to identify certain patterns of feedback the teacher had and other interactional sequences that occurred between the teacher and the pupils. The analysis of the data, where interaction between the teacher and the pupils was examined, showed there to be both similarities and differences in the teacher's reactions when compared to girls' and boys' responses in the classroom. In terms of the research question in what way an English teacher reacts and gives feedback to his/her pupils' responses, some interesting conclusions can be made. The teacher had certain feedback types and ways to react to the pupils' responses that can be described as being consistent. In extract 1, the teacher praised various aspects of the students' oral presentation. The praise was directed towards the quality and the content of the presentations for both of female and male students. The teacher praised the students for their work saying 'Very good', 'Great' , 'Good job'. Whereas, the teacher commented on male students ability to speak well and to keep their eyes up without looking at the paper. Also, the teacher praised male students for the quality of their work and encouraged them to do the same always. Within teacher's interactions,

praise that was directed to males was significantly different than the one directed to females. This difference in teacher's way of reaction to the male and female students responses can be explained by teachers claims during the interview where they claimed that they believed that all students have the right to access to equal opportunities for learning in the classroom regardless their gender. The teachers confirmed that male boys may have got more attention and more positive praise than the female just because they wanted to encourage them continue their contributions in class. However, an issue in terms of gender bias that can not be ignored in extract 2 is that the teacher refers to the girls as a group before referring to them as individuals by their names, which does not happen with the boys before, when the teacher referred to the boys. In this respect, the teacher's attitude in terms of the gender of the pupil was not expected to be so obvious. The teacher-student interaction in this interaction example did involve gender difference. This demonstrates that despite teachers positive attitudes towards the gender of pupils, some gender differential treatment can appear in teacher-student interactions. On the other hand, in the data some similarities can be found in teacher-student interactions (extract 3). The teacher gave positive feedback to both female and male pupils' responses without further analyzing and evaluating it. The purpose was to keep the conversation going by extending the learner's contribution as a pedagogical goal. This pattern of feedback did not contain any differences according to the gender of the pupil, as they were quite equally distributed to both genders. This is what all the interviewed teachers insisted on. They claimed that they much believe in interacting with their pupils without any consideration to gender. Therefore, although the teacher's reactions in extract 2 did differ according to the gender of the pupil, they were not as different as was expected. Based on these findings, it seems that there are some factors that make gender differences appears in some teacher-student interactions as the interviewed teachers stated which are students willingness to participate, the classroom context and students knowledge. The teachers in the interview stated that they respond to their students depended on different other factors such as students personality, participation and /or knowledge or level regardless any gender consideration.

The findings of the present study are somewhat similar to previous studies. In terms of Sunderland's (1998) study, the findings of the present study also confirmed that the teacher gave more of her attention to boys, for example in terms of number of times boys' names were mentioned. In addition, what was also found in Sunderland's study was the fact that girls' responses to the teacher's solicits were treated as broadly correct rather than incorrect. In sum, teacher-student interaction in EFL classroom can not be free of aspects of gender differential treatment eventhough teachers believe in equality between the two genders.

CONCLUSION:

The aim of the present study was to examine the theoretical framework that exists in the research of classroom interaction and gender bias to see whether any differences can be seen in the teacher's reactions according to the gender of the pupil and whether the teachers treat their pupils according to gender. The analysis of the data, where interaction between the teacher and the pupils was examined, showed there to be both similarities and differences in the teacher's reactions when compared to girls' and boys' responses in the classroom. Even teachers are conscious of treating students fairly it seems that some aspects of gender bias may unintentionally creep into a

teacher's interactions with students. The appearance of such gender bias in EFL classroom can be effected by some factors such as classroom participation, pupils knowledge and pupils personality. There are many differences between boys and girls, and it is suggested that it is a teachers' job to understand these differences. In other words, they should have gender awareness so as to avoid gendered interactions inside classroom. We need to make sure we are not denying a student's ability to achieve success. Therefore, it is hoped that by investigating such important issue that is teachers way of treating girls and boys in classroom interaction, the present study contributed to raising teachers' and researchers' awareness of the drawbacks of gendered behavior during classroom interaction. In addition, EFL teachers should increase their interactions with students in the two forms of teacher versus a group of students and teacher versus individual students so that students will have more opportunities to receive feedback from the teacher. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education should provide training programs for teachers aiming to emphasize the importance of gender issues and raise awareness of educators regarding gender biases in classroom interaction. Such knowledge will help teachers improve their relationship with their students and treating them fairly. Although the findings of this study contribute to research done in the field of gender bias in the EFL classroom, it has certain limitations. The data for the present study is too narrow to draw any generalized conclusions about the difference in the teacher's reaction to a pupil's response according to the gender of the pupil, or to generalize the teacher's attitudes of gender. Suggestions for further studies can be conducted to explore the influence of teachers' gender on teacher student interaction so that the issue can be observed in a different angle. It would be suggested that future studies consider conducting research on gender at the different levels of education such as primary schools, middle schools, secondary schools and even universities. The research conducted for this work was mainly concerned with gender in the EFL classrooms. Other studies on gender focusing on other subjects such as Arabic language, maths, or science could be an absorbing occasion to further understand gender patterns in the classroom interaction and their relations to the subject in the Algerian context. Future studies on gender in Algerian context could considerably contribute to understanding issues about gender in Algeria as well as contributing to the field of gender in general and gender in education in particular.

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