Gender Bias in English as Second Language Classrooms

A research project by

Ghada M. Mougharbel

Submitted to the Lebanese American University in Beirut

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master in Education

February 2006
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Approved as to content and style by:

[Signature]
Dr. Rina Bahous
(Advisor)

[Signature]
Dr. Layla Harmoush
(Second Reader)

February 2006
To my mother and father,

My husband Hassan,

And my children Amira and Omar
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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to investigate whether gender bias exists in the Lebanese intermediate and secondary level English as Second Language (ESL) classrooms. The methodology used was of three folds; the researcher employed semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and observational techniques to collect data. The results revealed various discrepancies as well as similarities between the participants’ responses to the questionnaires, the interviewees’ standpoints, and the researcher’s observation reports. The researcher concluded that gender bias exists in the Lebanese intermediate and secondary level ESL classrooms; however, it is hidden and unconscious.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Context of the study

During the past few years research has revealed insights into how teachers treat their students differently, based on their gender (D’ambrosio & Hammer, 1996). Research findings have consistently indicated that male students receive more of teachers’ attention in classroom settings (Davis, 2003). Both genders, in the same classroom, learning the same material, experience different things (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). Many studies concluded that from kindergarten through university level, female students are the victims of gender bias that is manifested in various forms (D’ambrosio & Hammer, 1996).

Statement of the problem

In the 21st century, gender bias continues to subsist in educational settings (Gatta & Trigg, 2001). Classrooms in various cultural contexts are likely to experience gender bias in different ways (Sunderland, 2000). Most of the research, covering this topic, was conducted outside Lebanon. In the Lebanese context only one study, that the researcher is aware of, examined gender bias in Lebanese teachers’ behaviors (Akl, 2002). Yepez (1994) asserted that up to 1994 very few studies in the United States of America covered the issue of gender bias in English as Second Language (ESL) classrooms. The current study examines whether gender bias exists in the Lebanese ESL intermediate and secondary level classrooms.
Rationale and significance of the study

The persistence of many forms of gender bias, in favor of males, in classroom settings, is a prevailing reality (Spender, 1985). Although most teachers aim at providing their students with equitable learning experiences, girls are receiving differential treatment (Sadker & Zittleman, 2005). The problem of gender bias in classrooms is attributed to several factors such as untrained teachers, biased curricula, and lack of role models from both genders, among others (Gatta & Trigg, 2001). Learning communities do not grow where inequities are tolerated (Sadker & Zittleman, 2005). Therefore, it is imperative that serious steps, to override the problem, are put into action.

Gender bias, in English language classrooms, is subtle to a point of being invisible (Roop, 1989). Prior to the current study, only few other studies took place outside Lebanon. The findings of those studies revealed that gender bias, in several forms, exists in ESL classrooms (Yepez, 1994). To the researcher’s knowledge, gender bias in the Lebanese ESL classrooms has not yet been examined. Therefore, this study is vital for investigating whether gender bias subsists in the Lebanese ESL classrooms due to the negative implications, it may hold, with respect to female students’ educational well-being, in addition to their ESL learning and acquisition. The following chapter will review the literature to examine the problem of gender bias and how it is manifested in educational settings.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

Gender bias, in educational programs, has been the concern of many researchers in the field of education. Several studies have been conducted aiming at raising awareness of gender inequities, informing policy discussions, and highlighting the negative effect, gender bias has, on students’ educational well being (Gatta & Trigg, 2001). Sadker (1999) maintained that many educators have been struggling to achieve gender equity in the educational system for several years. Sadker referred to their struggle as the ‘battle’, which has not been won yet.

Gender bias affects boys as well as girls; unfortunately, such an issue has been overlooked by many educators (Sadker & Zittleman, 2005). In order to achieve gender equity, it is imperative that researchers, educators and political authorities join their forces for the sake of eliminating gender inequities, which would, in turn, pertain to the development of women as well as men (Eade, 1999).

Gender, gender bias, and gender equity

Gender

English Language speakers utilize the term sex to differentiate men and women by biological criteria. Conversely, the term gender, “is used at different levels of analysis, at least among scholars” (Miller & Taylor, 1997, p. 3). Post-structuralist theorists deplored the view of gender as fixed, stable and inherent. They argued that gender is constructed across various cultural and social contexts (Jackson & Gee, 2005). The post-structuralist view concurs with Miller’s view who stated that, “gender as it is lived, rather
than defined, is an ultimately personal and variable experience” (Miller & Taylor, 1997, p. 2). Children develop their personal notions about gender at a very young age as evidenced by their clothing, types of play, daily interactions, and classroom behavior (Frawley, 2005).

Allard (2004) claimed that gender performance is a socially constructed and negotiated process of social relations rather than a neutral one. According to Miller and Taylor (1997) gender has traditionally associated males and females with different abilities; however, there has been no empirical evidence to verify whether biological characteristics have a direct role in gender prospects.

Gender bias

Crawford (2004) maintained that gender bias exists in all societies because people are socialized to become gender bias. Stocking (1995) argued that gender bias is a network of limitations and restrictions, solely existing in the human mind. The seeds of gender bias are usually planted early in life, refined at home, and experienced in schools. Davis (1999) maintained that gender bias, which is the absence of gender equity, is the exhibition of inequitable proceedings that are usually very subtle. It is difficult to detect gender bias because it affects boys and girls in numerous ways (Sadker & Zittleman, 2005). The literature confirmed that gender bias takes place when boys and girls are either treated differently or responded to differently. The differential treatment they encounter is completely based on their gender (Davis, 1999; Frawley, 2005). Davis (1999) contended that the subtle forms of gender bias begin early in the school years. According to Tannen (1990), gender bias implies difference in status; consequently,
Davis (1999) confirmed that gender bias weakens females’ self-esteem, limits their aspirations, and affects their entire career life.

**Gender equity**

Eade (1999) maintained that several United Nations agencies have highlighted the importance of gender equity for the sake of improving the well-being of women. Overcoming the problems associated with gender bias, gender inequity, and the differential treatment of boys and girls, in the educational system, requires extensive efforts from all educators. Women’s social development is enhanced when gender equity is achieved and sustained.

Spender (1993) argued that gender equity is only achieved when the educational system provides equal opportunities for both genders. Unfortunately, after several years of hard work and extensive research in order to eliminate gender bias from education, Frawley (2005) confirmed that girls are still experiencing their school years in different ways than boys are. Gender parity organizations have been calling for gender equity and have declared that all students, regardless of their gender, have the right to an educational system that is free of gender bias (Gatta & Trigg, 2001).

**The different forms of gender bias**

Gatta and Trigg (2001) stated that the problem of gender bias, sexism, or gender inequity has been a hot issue for several years. Overcoming gender bias and achieving equitable educational environments demands pervasive efforts at all levels:
Gender inequity is a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon that calls for creative initiatives and solutions at all levels of the educational system and workforce structure. We will not be able to compete globally if we do not self-consciously address gender inequity, and eradicate it (p. 32).

The literature maintained that gender bias as well as gender equity are discernible in several ways, in the educational system (Davis, 2003a & Davis, 2003b). Ackley and Oatley (1993) declared that the timetabling of subject areas in schools, assessment procedures, instructors' expectations and discriminatory behaviors, peer pressures, and stereotyped instructional materials belong to a long list of educational features that contribute to gender disparity. The following section will shed the light on gender bias exhibited in multiple forms.

Instructional materials

Many language textbooks portray women and girls as victims of gender bias (Sunderland, 2000). Frawley (2005) concluded that the formation of an individual's gender identity is greatly influenced by the stereotypical portrayals, of males and females, in books and other types of media. Children form their beliefs, attitudes, and gender-role identities as a result of their exposure to the images that are existent in many educational materials. Eade (1999) argued that many textbooks, from infancy all the way to university, disclose the extent to which sexism exists. Frawley (2005) maintained that children's perception of their gender roles, their gender appropriate behaviors, their abilities, as well as what they can or can not do, is greatly affected by the hidden messages that are conveyed to them through several types of instructional materials.
Classroom practices

The school reflects the outside world (Coates, 1993); it is a fast-paced, multifaceted and confusing culture (Sadker & Sadker, 1997). The classroom is a miniature of society (D’ambrosio & Hammer, 1996); females in the 21st century are still suffering from gender inequities in their classroom environments (Jones, Evans, Byrd, & Campbell, 2000). Such inequities, whether intended or not, create the impression that girls are unwelcome (Gatta & Trigg, 2001). Most teachers aim at teaching their students equitably; however, boys and girls often receive differential treatment (Kramer, 1994; Hannan, 1995; Volk & Beeman, 1998; Sadker, 1999; Jones et al., 2000; Duffy, Warren, & Walsh, 2001; Sadker & Zittleman, 2005).

Some researchers argued that the differential treatment, students get, is greatly dependent on the subject of the class. For instance, in science and technology instructors hold higher expectations of male students than female students; consequently, males receive positive feedback more often than females do (Duffy et al., 2001). Sarah (1980) confirmed that “It is not difficult to document the sex differentiated expectations held by teachers based on their assumptions about, and evaluations of, the two sexes” (p. 158). Dickman (1993) observed that a female student may have to excel in her performance, in a scientific subject, in order to be valued by her teachers. The narrow expectations, female students are faced with, may act as self-fulfilling prophecies that would negatively affect their entire academic and career life. Sadker and Sadker (2003) maintained that students’ academic performance could be enhanced if teachers hold higher expectations of
their students; therefore, it is only fair and imperative that all teachers’ expectations of all their students should neither be influenced nor determined by their students’ gender.

Schools and classrooms are complex intellectual, social, and physical environments (Sadker & Sadker, 1997) where average teachers are daily involved in more than 1000 verbal interactions with their students (Sadker & Sadker, 1988; Sadker & Sadker, 1997); each of these interactions may hold a different nuance of meaning (Sadker & Sadker, 1997). Many teachers are concerned about their subtle and unintentional gender biases that are embedded in their classroom behaviors and interactions (Volk & Beeman, 1998). Teachers, for instance, pay more attention to boys than girls. The discrepancy in the amount of attention given to both genders has a negative impact on girls’ performance (Sadker, 1999). This is due to the fact that questioning is a key element in the learning process; all students, regardless of their gender, are entitled for equal access to classroom questions. Unfortunately, research showed that male students are asked more questions than female students and eventually have more access to academic talk and getting the teachers’ attention (Sadker & Sadker, 1997). Since increased teachers’ attention pertains to students’ performance, therefore, girls are disadvantaged (Sadker, 1999). The differential treatment, in favor of male students, sends hidden messages to all students that males are the high academic achievers whose educational needs deserve to be catered for (Jones et al., 2000).

In today’s classrooms, girls are underprivileged; teachers interact more with male students than female students (Sadker & Sadker, 1995). According to Allard
(2004) and Sadker and Sadker (1997), the amount of ‘wait time’ given to male students and female students, during discussions, is unequal in favor of males. Sadker (1999) confirmed that the type of questions directed to males is at a higher level than that of females. Sadker (2000) maintained that classroom interactions, between instructors and their students, situate the male students in the spotlight and demote the female students to the sidelines. Several research studies documented the severe gender gap existing in today’s schools. In most classrooms, instructors allow boys to call out more often than girls; girls are asked to raise their hands before speaking up. In one of Sadkers’ studies, they concluded that boys call out eight times more frequent than girls do; they also found a two-to-one male advantage in classroom practices. Sadker and Sadker (1997) confirmed that one of the main reasons male students have more access to classroom interactions than female students is that they are more assertive in taking hold of their teachers’ attention. Spender (1980c) blamed parents’ nurturing practices as well as the school; “Girls do not get the initial message that they shouldn’t talk from the school (they get it first at home) but the school certainly reinforces it” (p. 149). Spender explained that if girls take verbal initiative in the classroom they are criticized for being ‘loud’ and ‘aggressive’ while boys on the other hand are praised for exhibiting leadership qualities that are manifested in their assertive and active classroom behaviors.

Social prejudices exist in societies (Clarricoates, 1980); every society possesses its own rules that are constructed in a male-dominated society (Brewster, 1980). Heller (2001) argued that social problems are visible at schools. The unequal
treatment of both genders has profound consequences in the larger society. Heller confirmed that if we observe an educational setting we could understand the prevailing social realities and categories. Young (2004) maintained that cultural models tell members of a specific discourse what are the typical ways of doing or being. Cultural models not only exist in the people’s minds but are also shared through their daily interactions with other people. A well-known example of a cultural model is *boys will be boys*. Young confirmed that cultural models have a profound impact on teachers’ perceptions of their students’ interests and potentials. Cultural models have the power to shape teachers’ interactions in the classroom and affect the amount of attention granted to both genders.

According to Jones et al. (2000), female students receive positive feedback from their teachers based on the neatness and timeliness of their work, yet are criticized for the content completed. On the other hand, males are mostly rewarded for their smart answers, which are anticipated due to the perceived masculine innate abilities. Hannan (1995) confirmed that boys also receive more help from their instructors, especially the help that is needed to carry out a certain process while instructors usually complete the task on behalf of the girls. Hannan maintained that female students are disadvantaged because their educational needs are ignored; therefore, their learning is ‘short-circuited’. Roop (1989) argued that if sexist practices continue to take place, in our classrooms, then we are transmitting to our students potent and silent messages about gender appropriate behaviors and abilities.
Sexism in language

Spender (1985) used the term sexism to refer to any type of bias, in favor of males, regardless of its context. Sexism in language refers to language bias that is supportive of males. Spender maintained that the English Language is sexist and overcoming the dilemma of sexism, in language, requires a thorough analysis of sexism. Heller (2001) confirmed that language is the most important site for the study of society and culture. Zittleman and Sadker (2002) stated:

Language can be a powerful conveyer of bias, in both blatant and subtle forms. The exclusive use of masculine terms and pronouns, ranging from our forefathers, mankind, and businessman to the generic he, denies the full participation and recognition of women (p. 5).

Cameron (1998) argued that language has become an all-embracing discipline that has triggered the awareness of researchers across disciplines. Linguists have become concerned in discourse analysis, which scrutinize the effects of language in use. Many researchers confirmed that discourse is the main site for the construction of sexist and gendered meanings. Cameron (1998) and Allard (2004) stated that meaning is socially constructed; therefore, it is constantly negotiated and modified in our daily interactions. Cameron (1998) contended that being a major component of discourse, language, the basic tool of communication, transmits sexist and gendered meanings. It is therefore essential to analyze the effects of language generally and sexist language particularly in order to avoid any negative impact they may hold.
Anonymous (2002) maintained that language has a devastating effect on culture. Language affects an individual’s self-concept, self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-identity. The problem lies in the fact that people are unaware of the harmful effect sexist language has on their lives; as a result, it is widely used and commonly accepted. Language should reflect our desires and beliefs; consequently, if language continues to be sexist, then equality is far from being achieved. Spender (1985, p.141) stated:

When there are a sexist language and sexist theories culturally available, the observation of reality is also likely to be sexist. It is by this means that sexism can be perpetuated and reinforced as new objects and events, new data, have sexist interpretations projected upon them.

Coates (1993) confirmed that since childhood we become language users and by using language, we become gendered human beings. We develop our language and gender through our participation in daily social practices. Therefore, language and gender are inextricably associated. Coates’ view concurs with Allard’s (2004) view who maintained that language has a major part in gender relations. Language replicates existing realities, and endorses and reinforces particular ‘truths’ about how such relations ought to operate. According to Slavkin (2001), all behaviors that appear customary, typical, or essential to a culture are integrated within that culture’s language.

Teachers’ language is considered gender-biased (Davis, 1999). Davis (2003) argued that teachers’ biased language has a negative impact on female students as well as male students. Through their classroom exposure to biased
language, both genders might feel uncomfortable about themselves or their surroundings. Whitbread (1980) reported an incident that happened with a female teacher in the classroom, “One woman confessed that she had chastised her class for bad behavior by calling them silly girls” (p. 93). The current example and many others illustrate the use of sexist language in classroom settings.

People usually use the pronoun ‘he’ to refer to everyone, whether boys or girls, men or women. Some English classes teach their students that the appropriate singular pronoun is commonly ‘he’ (Anonymous, 2002). It is typically accepted to call mixed sex groups ‘guys’ or ‘men’ but unacceptable to refer to a group of females including one male with ‘gals’ or ‘women’ (Spender, 1985); “The use of man to include woman...reveals not only sexist prejudice but also linguistic ignorance (Spender, 1980d, p. 170). Anonymous (2002) argued that words are more than words. Words are used to shape and construct our own view of the world. If words are to illustrate the real world, and the existent realities in it, then using ‘man’, ‘he’, or ‘guys’ to refer to both genders does not accurately portray our world.

Gender stereotypes

Some people contribute gender stereotypes to the early nurturing practices in home environments (Lee, 1980; Frawley, 2005); others believe that schools play a significant role in developing students’ gender identities based on societal gender stereotypes (Frawley, 2005). Several media convey to children about how ‘to-do-gender’ (St. Pierre, 1999). Girls’ quietness and lenient behaviors are in line with girls’ gender stereotyped behaviors (Frawley, 2005). Being violent and aggressive is regarded as masculine and socially accepted; whereas being nurturant and
intuitive is considered as feminine (Sanders, 2002 & Sanders, 2003). "The masculine man is one who achieves, who is masterful; the feminine woman is one who underachieves, who defers" (Brewster 1980, p. 11); consequently, women at multiple levels of the society learn to lose (Buchan, 1980) because the society and the educational system's perception of future generations along with their abilities are greatly based on their gender (Payne, 1980a).

St. Pierre (1999) confirmed that language brings about gender stereotypes; through language girls are described as ‘obedient’, ‘neat’, ‘tidy’, and ‘orderly’ while boys are described as ‘confident’, ‘active’, ‘adventurous’, and ‘aggressive’. Spender (1980c) argued that, “the stereotype of the female as inferior is subtly woven into sociolinguistic practices” (p. 149). St. Pierre (1999) maintained that these gender stereotypes continue to exist in our classrooms, homes, and societies. Zittleman and Sadker (2002) stated:

Perhaps the most familiar form of bias is the stereotype, which assigns rigid set of characteristics to all members of a group, denying individual attributes and differences. Stereotypes cast males as active, assertive, and, curious, while portraying females as dependable, conforming, and obedient (p.5).

Sanders (2002; 2003) concluded that gender stereotypes affect both males and females. Scientific subjects are regarded as masculine subjects, whereas languages, art, and music are regarded as feminine subjects. According to Sadker and Zittleman (2005), math and science are considered ‘boy stuff’. Many female students avoid ‘boy stuff’ in order to escape being considered as ‘brains’, 
which would negatively affect their popularity at school. Unfortunately, the conviction that math ability, or any ability related to ‘boy stuff’, is the most essential intellectual ability amplifies the impact of the stereotypical belief that males have inborn superior Math ability (Murray, Meinholdt, & Bergmann, 1999).

Sadker (2000) confirmed that many teachers believe that girls’ achievement of high grades is a reflection of their manageable classroom performance rather than their intellectual ability. According to Jones and Myhill (2004), girls’ good results are attributed to hard work, while boys’ good results are attributed to high intellectual abilities. When boys underachieve, teachers infer that they could, but do not; by contrast, when girls underachieve, teachers infer that they lack self-confidence, they dare not, or they lack the sufficient cognitive abilities.

Many teachers’ stereotypical beliefs lead them to exhibit gender biased behaviors (Gatta et al., 2001; Frawley, 2005). Frawley (2005) confirmed that stereotypes have harmful social effects and consequences on males and females. In order to counteract gender role stereotypes, educators should encourage female students to achieve in all subject areas. Boys, as well, should be freed from their teachers’ expectations that are based on stereotypical beliefs. Instructors should recognize individual differences in addition to group differences. Teachers ought to believe that both genders could reach their complete potential if their individual educational needs are being catered for.

The problem

Several researchers concluded that teachers’ gender biases are subtle (Garber, 2003). Many instructors believe that they treat all their students equitably;
unaware of the hidden and unconscious biases existing in their classrooms (Plucker, 1994). St. Pierre (1999) confirmed that there is a positive correlation between teachers' behaviors and creating equitable learning environments. In order to achieve gender equity, in classrooms, it is imperative that teachers recognize their differential treatment to both sexes. It is worth noting that there is common agreement that socialization has an effect on teachers' classroom behaviors and interactions with their students. Sanders (2002) maintained that overcoming this dilemma requires serious talk, among all educators, about the educational well-being of female students along with male students.

Gender bias, in all its forms, results in limitations on potential (Volk & Beeman, 1998). Coates (1993) maintained that women are recognized as a disadvantaged group in a society, which favors technology and science. Slavkin (2001) argued that the 13 years of school experience shape the ideas and attitudes of students; several gendered characteristics, acquired in schools, rim potential opportunities in classrooms and communities. According to Sanders (2002), teachers' stereotyped beliefs about gender roles continue to limit children's ambitions and achievements.

Acker and Oatley (1993) stated that the under-representation of females in math, science, and technology in schools, universities, and in the workplace is attributed to stereotyped feminine qualities' such as lack of self-confidence, or to classroom practices, which allow boys to control classroom interactions and dominate such technology as computers. Furthermore, Acker and Oatley maintained that there is evidence indicating that educational inequity, on grounds of
gender, exists all over the world. Research proposes that the problem of gender bias stems from our societies and is cultivated in educational settings, such as classrooms.

*Teachers’ gender in relation to gender bias*

Anderson and Miller (1997) confirmed that male and female instructors approach teaching differently. Female teachers judge the fineness of their own teaching in a different way. They favor learner-centered styles of teaching and value the importance of teacher-student interactions, inside and outside the classroom, for the sake of better students’ learning. Park (1996) maintained that female instructors are continuously working towards improving their pedagogical techniques. Female teachers avoid using the extensive lecturing methods, which are favored by their male colleagues and prefer classroom discussions, experiential learning, cooperative learning, fieldwork, and student-developed activities as their primary instructional methods. Most male instructors use standardized assessment techniques whereas female instructors utilize a variety of assessment techniques including performance based assessment procedures.

Zacharias (2005) confirmed that several research studies concluded that teachers’ classroom practices constitute a reflection of their personal beliefs. Davis (1999) maintained that educational research has revealed that both male and female instructors display bias in school classrooms, particularly in scientific subjects. Most of the research studies that have scrutinized male and female teachers’ interactions, with their students, concluded that those interactions are biased in favor of the male students.
Prividera (2004) maintained that gender practices vary according to various settings. Park (1996) stated that saying 'everyone teaches' veils important differences among teachers. Park regarded the idea that anyone can teach well, same as the idea that anyone can parent well; as if teaching and parenting are easy tasks that require neither creativity nor various skills.

*Gender bias in relation to discourse analysts*

Discourse is defined as "a complex bundle of simultaneous and sequential interrelated linguistic acts which manifest themselves within and across the social fields of action" (Wodak and Reisigl, 2003, p. 383). In scrutinizing the discourse system, sociolinguists and discourse analysts study the dynamic interaction between the various levels of meaning that are intertwined to constitute discourse (Dubois & Sankoff, 2003). Discourse in interaction is a privileged site for examining social actions and social structures. Studying discourse in interaction illustrates how social realities are constructed and reinforced (Heller, 2003).

An ethnographic study conducted with African American children concluded that boys and girls in same-sex playgroups create various social organizations. Boys create hierarchical structures while girls create structures that are more egalitarian. For instance, the girls in the study constructed activities by phrasing directives in the form of suggestions rather than direct orders; while boys negotiated status by giving and resisting direct commands (Kendall & Tannen, 2003). Boys and girls grow up in different worlds of words (Tannen, 1990); men and women speak different languages (Amoroso, 2005); men's talk and women's talk differs in content as well as in nature (Johnson & Aries, 1998). Researchers
confirmed that gender differences in talking habits are observed with children as young as three. Gender stereotypes promote the belief that women talk too much; yet many recent studies concluded that men talk more than women. A crucial research finding significant to the current study is that men are more comfortable in public speaking than women are. More research confirmed that men interrupt women when they are talking and if women attempt to speak louder with more self-assertion they are regarded as being masculine (Tannen, 1990). Consequently, these research findings constitute important factors why male students are observed to dominate classroom interactions. Tannen (1990) confirmed, “Most people would agree that women as a class are dominated by men as a class in our culture, as in most if not all cultures of the world” (p. 209). The unequal treatment of the two genders is visible in educational settings and manifested in the discourse of their daily interactions (Heller, 2003).

*Gender bias in relation to male students*

Gender equity is a human issue rather than a feminist issue (Sanders, 2003). There is insufficient information, in the literature, about the effect of gender bias on male students. This is because it is assumed that gender bias exclusively affects female students, as they are its direct recipients (Davis, 2003). Sadker (1999) confirmed that gender bias also affects male students. Frawley (2005) claimed that research hardly ever addressed the fact that gender stereotyping negatively affects both boys and girls. Boys are stereotyped into gender roles at an early age. As they grow older, males encounter social pressures gearing them towards ‘masculine’ occupations while disregarding their true interests. The truth is that both genders
exhibit different strengths, weaknesses, as well as needs; and gender stereotypes shortchange males as well as females.

*Gender bias in relation to ESL*

The school curriculum, in all its components, is based on beliefs and expectations that are derived from the society (Lavigne, 1980). Language learning is greatly affected by the socio-cultural context of the learners (Bayley & Regan, 2004). Sexism exists in the curriculum and is reinforced in the daily experiences within schools (Scott, 1980). Research has concluded that sexism exists in language and classroom instructional materials. Teachers of regular education as well as English as a Second Language (ESL) should be aware of the degree of sexism occurring in their classrooms. Inequitable classroom behaviors, in favor of males, could negatively affect females’ second language learning and acquisition (Guidry, 2000). In the ESL classroom, it is crucial that both genders have equal language learning opportunities (Yepez, 1994).

Brown (2000) maintained that many schools of thought in the field of Psychology have generated interests in developing instructional strategies that, if implemented, would lead to better students’ learning. More particularly, linguists have been concerned with theories that emphasize the importance of interaction, for the sake of developing competent communicators in English that is not their native language. The domain of language teaching is moving towards the elimination of traditional practices like drilling rules and lecturing methods, towards teaching the students to communicate meaningfully in the second language.
Constructivism is a school of thought that originated from the works and beliefs of pioneers in the field of education, namely Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky. To them, learning is best achieved when students are actively involved in a learning process that is guided by the teacher and compatible with their needs (Foote, Vermette, & Battaglia, 2001). Wolk (1994) confirmed that project-based learning is one of the constructivist-oriented approaches that are utilized, by some schools, for language teaching. When teachers employ the project-based approach, in their classrooms, they are creating a community within the learning environment. All students interact and collaborate to successfully complete the project. According to St. Pierre (1999), gender discrimination, in favor of male students, constitutes a major problem in ESL classrooms; as a result, female students’ learning of ESL is greatly affected.

Roop (1989) stated that ESL teachers’ behaviors, classroom interactions and discussions, reading and writing assignments subtly, though unintentionally, reinforce gender stereotypes. Sarah, Scott, and Spender (1980) declared, “There is evidence that girls are more likely to be coerced into adopting the feminine stereotype…” (p. 60). Sunderland (2000) maintained that classroom interactions constitute an important gendered aspect of ESL education. Moreover, Coates (1993) confirmed that males and females follow different interactive styles; therefore, the differences in both styles of interaction may result in miscommunication between the two genders. Tannen (1990) maintained that communication between the two genders is more like a cross-cultural communication. Coates (1993) observed that within classroom settings, males and females learn various patterns of interactions such as “…when to speak, when to remain silent, how to mark speech politeness, when it is permissible to interrupt, etc.” (p. 16).
Coates concluded that those patterns of interaction contribute different outcomes for both genders. Spender (1985) argued that males interrupt females, when they are talking, in order to gain the floor for themselves; by contrast, females dare not interrupt their presumed counterparts due to several notions that reinforce the stereotyped belief that it is improper for females to interrupt males, particularly in public. Moreover, females who successfully lead interactions are criticized by males and regarded as aggressive. The most powerful means of preventing females’ talk is by intimidation. Females are usually intimidated and eventually stop talking when they feel that their talk is discredited. Furthermore, Spender (1985) stated that females follow cooperative strategies when they talk since they value talking and listening as well. Linguists perceive such strategies as positive traits of female talk. Coates (1993) confirmed that due to their differentiated communicative competence, boys are able to dominate classroom interactions.

Sunderland (2000) argued that the second important gendered aspect of ESL education is the gender bias existent in language textbooks. This argument has been supported by evidence based on research. Males are overrepresented in language textbooks. They are portrayed in stereotypical roles such as doctors and lawyers whereas females are depicted in subordinate positions; stereotypically emotional and weak. Sunderland’s view concurs with McGrath’s (2004) view that the lack of balance between the representation of men and women, in ESL materials, hold negative consequences.

Sunderland (2000) confirmed that reading is an engaging activity. When students are constructively reading a text, they are involved cognitively and affectively. Some ESL learners might accept the existing bias in textbooks, or even enjoy it; others might be offended by the bias and become resistant readers. Consequently, the reading activity is
no more engaging to the students who are offended. Sunderland concluded that not only
gender biased language textbooks affect the construction of students’ gender identities,
but also affect their ESL learning.

Overcoming the problem

Friedman (1999) stated that short-term interventions are inadequate to correct
years of conventional teaching practices. There should be general agreement, among
educators, that constructing knowledge by means of the constructivist approaches, such
as experiential, inquiry-based, and cooperative learning should no longer be regarded as
an experiment in teaching but rather become systemic. Educational leaders ought to
enunciate the link between constructivist practice and equity. Commitment to systemic
reform needs continuous support to teachers in order to facilitate their work and enable
them to maintain the changes that they establish in their classrooms.

A major step to overcome the problem is to bring it into the open (Wolfe, 1980).
Overcoming the problem of gender bias requires serious talk about the educational well-
being of both genders, not either one independently (Sanders, 2003). Teachers should
work in order to provide equitable learning environments, which reduce gender
stereotypes and foster equal role development (Slavkin, 2001). Teachers must be aware
of gender issues in general, and their own gender biases, in particular (Garber, 2003).
Altering attitudes about gender equity must begin through educators who are involved in
educational processes. Teachers are the essential means for developing these new
attitudes (Davis, 2003). Conversely, it has been argued that teachers’ ideologies set limits
on what alterations they are likely to accept. Innovations in educational settings are more
likely to succeed if they are well suited with teachers’ existing attitudes and beliefs;
moreover, valuable innovations require sufficient time for planning, available resources, support from school principals, and teachers eager to cooperatively work on a mission they believe in (Acker & Oatley, 1993).

**Teachers’ awareness and training**

There is an urgent need that educational institutions explore addressing gender issues and pedagogies (Valentine, 1994). Gender parity should be a hot topic in teachers’ education and training; unfortunately, several studies conducted in the 1990s confirmed that gender equity is still in its earliest stages of consideration (Sanders, 2002). The problem stems from the fact that teachers’ education programs do not equip their students with strategies that embrace how to teach about, to, and from the range of gender differences existing in the teachers themselves and in their classrooms (Annas, 1992).

Sanders (2003) and Needham (1994) maintained that it is very important to have gender parity on the outline of the teacher education profession. The whole educational system must work towards raising teachers’ awareness on the topic; in short, it is crucial that academic authorities highlight the importance of gender equity in relation to teachers’ education and students’ educational well-being. Sanders (2002) argued that gender parity should become a standard element of the curriculum of teacher education. For teachers who have not been trained about gender issues, Valentine (1994) confirmed that gender equity workshops are important for their professional development. Valentine’s view was later confirmed by Martino, Lingard, and Mills (2004) who stated that, “...there is clearly a need for professional development on this issue and its effect on the schooling experiences of both boys and girls” (p. 450).
 Teachers’ pedagogical practices

Mandziuk (1991) maintained that schools should not ignore gender issues. All students, regardless of their gender, are entitled for equal educational opportunities. Dickman (1993) confirmed that instructors need to scrutinize their classroom practices and modify them. Payne and Spender (1980) declared that sexism would continue to persist unless it is challenged; classroom practices should be modified and stereotyped images changed. Martino et al. (2004) stated that, “Teachers and their pedagogical practices are central to enhancing students’ learning and achievement...pedagogies need to be based upon appropriate teacher knowledge, including knowledge about the social construction of gender” (p. 450).

Many educational theorists stressed the importance of active learning. Goldman, Hasselbring, Heath, Hickey, Pellegrino, Rewey, and Vye (1992) declared that several educational theories highlighted the significance of engaging learners in active learning. Findings from several studies showed that the type of knowledge constructed actively is more likely to be retained and transferred to real-life than if it was only received from the teacher. This view of active learning is constructivist since it promotes the students’ active role in seeking knowledge and constructing it. Nassaji and Cumming (2000) conducted a study throughout a period of ten months. The participants in the study were an ESL teacher and her six-year old Farsi speaking student who had just started learning English. The purpose of the study was to examine whether the student’s active involvement, with his teacher, in the teaching-learning process, positively affected his language learning. The methodology used was the analysis of 95 exchanges in interactive dialogue journals that served as the contextual medium through which the teacher and the
student communicated. After the period of ten months the student showed remarkable development in his language proficiency level. The researchers concluded that the active engagement of the ESL teacher and the student, in the teaching-learning process, resulted in better language learning.

Dunlap and Grabinger (1996) stated that when students are provoked to take part in arguments and reach understanding as they are seeking knowledge, they are involved in active learning. According to Coates (1993):

Recent innovations in educational practice have stressed the importance of active learning. For children to learn they need be actively involved in the learning process. Being actively involved means talking, among other things: asking questions, making suggestions, offering comments. The quiet child, if quiet means passive and unassertive, is a child who is unable to participate fully in learning (p. 197).

Wolfe (1998) carried out an exploratory study in an ESL classroom to observe whether the traditional lecturing style grants students equal access to classroom interactions; thus refuting the notion that boys dominate in the classroom, which if true, would hinder female students' language learning and acquisition. Wolfe concluded from the classroom observations and data analysis that only the language teacher, whose instructional style was in line with the constructivist theory of learning, offered all the students equal access to language discourse; thus providing them equitable language learning experiences. By contrast, the instructional style of the other teachers was more suited to male students than female students; however, the access to academic discourse was less for the two genders.
Students' biased behaviors

Murray et al. (1999) stated that females should be able to recognize and deal with gender inequity, regardless of the context. Davis (1999) argued that perhaps the most significant principle of gender parity, which teachers ought to employ, is to remedy student gender-biased behaviors. Gender bias among students is common, and ignoring this dilemma indicates to the students that it is adequate in today's world. Actions to facilitate gender parity involve altering student biased behaviors. Davis suggested that teachers, in their classrooms, openly discuss with their students issues of gender bias and establish some gender unbiased principles that are related to their class. Learning and practicing gender equitable behaviors will teach students how to deal with gender disparity and ensure that students will pursue things consistent with their abilities, not with their gender.

Instructional materials

Instructional materials may transmit hidden messages to all students (Volk & Beeman, 1998). Instructional materials used in our schools are full of inaccurate images of men and women (Spender, 1980a). Instructors should examine materials, for any gender bias, prior to using them (Frawley, 2005). Volk and Beeman (1998) argued that teachers must critically evaluate all the materials they utilize in their classrooms including videos, computer software, textbooks, etc. for the sake of avoiding any subtle form of gender bias. Frawley (2005) stated that one way of fighting gender bias, through instructional materials, is by selecting literature that depicts non-traditional characters involved in non-stereotypical behaviors.
Overcoming gender bias in the ESL classroom

Good teaching requires qualified teachers who are able to stimulate active learning, rather than passive learning (Park, 1996). Roop (1989) confirmed that English teachers should thoughtfully orchestrate classroom activities; by doing so they strengthen female students’ self-confidence as meaning makers. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), students’ active involvement in the process of language learning is the most powerful means of acquiring it. Furthermore, Richards and Rodgers highlighted the importance of the Communicative Approach (CLT) to language teaching for the sake of language learning. They stated that the Communicative Approach is the umbrella under which lie many other approaches to language teaching. The Content-Based, Task-Based and Cooperative Learning are the descendents of the Communicative Approach to Language Teaching. The most important feature of these approaches is that they emphasize the importance of communication for the sake of language learning and acquisition. Park (1996) confirmed that teachers should interact with their students in order to involve them in classroom discussions and motivate them to think critically and creatively. According to Wolfe (1998), language instructors should ensure maximum access to academic language discourse to all students. Wolfe’s view concurs with Eskey’s view who maintained that, “people do not learn languages and then use them, but that people learn languages by using them” (see Whitney, 2002, p. 544). Dey, Fritsch, and Prudence (1992) confirmed the same position and argued that teaching is a continuous communicative process.

Heron (2003), a researcher interested in knowing what strategies could be best implemented in order to achieve more students’ involvement for the sake of better
learning and achievement, conducted a study on an inquiry-based classroom. Such classrooms allow the students to take part in choosing the topics of their interest, and follow the constructivist approach for the attainment of knowledge. The study was carried out in a middle school located in a small suburb in a U.S. city. The participants were ninth graders who struggled in order to succeed in few subject areas during their middle school. The methods used were observation of classroom activities and interviews. The researcher concluded that:

- Teachers’ ways of interacting with their students influence the amount of their engagement.

- Students are motivated to participate when teachers do not criticize or lecture them but on the contrary provide them with opportunities to expand their thoughts.

- Teachers should employ the teaching strategies that best engage their students in the learning process.

According to Cleary and Whitemore (1999), English departments should assure gender equity in all the required readings. According to Alvermann and Comnary (1994), language learners ought to be given opportunities to discuss what they hear, read, or write about. Cleary and Whitemore (1999) stated that genderizing the English curriculum is an opportunity that could enrich students’ lives in the course of their experiences with literature; consequently, students become aware of germane issues that are existent in life and displayed in literature.

English teachers should promote the use of gender exclusive language. Anonymous (2002) maintained that in the past few years there has been considerable
concern about the use of gender-neutral language. Since words are used to express what we intend to say and mean; therefore, it is crucial that gender-specific words change and become inclusive. The Fifth Edition of The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association is a good reference including important guidelines to ensure the appropriate use of gender-neutral language.

Classrooms should serve the needs of the society (Payne, 1980b). Classrooms must act as holding environments, in the sense of parents’ arms, for students to cultivate rather than take off, freeze, or fight (Annas, 1992). Teachers’ relationship with their students, boys and girls, is central to good teaching and ‘holding classroom environments’ (Martino et al., 2004). Zittleman and Sadker (2005) concluded that the best places to create gender-rewarding climates are schools and classrooms.

Strategies to make the classroom an equitable place

“Being admitted as an equal is not in itself assurance of equal opportunity” (Tannen, 1990, p. 95). Overcoming the problem of gender bias, in educational settings, requires several approaches and teaching strategies (Davis, 1999). Teachers can act to generate the possibility of change (Dey et al., 1992). The following is a comprehensive list of strategies that will help teachers overcome gender bias in their classrooms, promote gender equality, and assist them in meeting all their students’ needs:

1- Make sure the classroom environment, educational activities, instructional materials, and interactions are free of sex stereotyping (Frawley, 2005).

2- Decorate the classroom in an appealing way to both genders (D’ambrosio & Hammer, 1996).

3- Display pictures of female and male role models (Davis, 1999).
4- Arrange seating to integrate both genders.

5- Provide role models in non-stereotypical roles (D’ambrosio & Hammer, 1996).

6- Give female students and male students equal attention (Sunderland, 2000).

7- Make eye contact with males as well as females.

8- Address all levels of questions including those, which call for higher order thinking to both genders (Dickman, 1993).

9- Increase ‘wait time’ when expecting an answer from your students since girls usually require more time than boys in order to cognitively formulate their replies before verbalizing them (Dickman, 1993; Davis, 1999; Frawley, 2005).

10- Do not use sexist language to address your students; you can call them by their last name or by their first name (Dickman, 1993).

11- Encourage all your students to participate in classroom discussions and follow procedures to make sure that males and females have equal opportunity to participate. For instance, you may ask your students to raise their hands before speaking and you can call on from both genders (Dickman, 1993); or you can alternate between male students and female students during discussions (Sunderland, 2000).

12- Organize the patterns of discussions in order to avoid interruptions made by students. Limiting the number of remarks made by each student, throughout one classroom discussion, would be an appropriate procedure (Dickman, 1993; Davis, 1999).
13- In written tests, if applicable, make sure to include questions about males and females (Davis, 1999).

14- Use assessment procedures that are suitable for both genders (Frawley, 2005).

15- Evaluate your students according to their performance rather than your stereotyped gender expectations (Frawley, 2005).

16- Introduce knowledge and skills in equitable real-life contexts.

17- Employ hands-on activities.

18- Eliminate sharp criticism among students.

19- Do not refer to female students’ appearance without similarly referring to male students’ appearance (Dickman, 1993).

20- Praise female students and male students for their abilities and not only for the physical appearance of their work (Frawley, 2005).

21- Do not use sexist language or sexist humor (Dickman, 1993).

22- Provide constructive feedback to your male and female students for the sake of enhancing their performance.

23- Always keep a neutral tone when commenting on students’ performance; for instance use ‘yes’, ‘uh-huh’, or ‘fine’ rather than getting attention in a way that would bring about gender stereotypes (Frawley, 2005).

24- Discuss with your students issues of gender discrimination and involve them in planning procedures, related to your classroom, for the sake of strengthening trust and rapport with them. An equitable classroom environment can be achieved by joint teacher-student awareness, working
confidently, so that students recognize their full potential (Hollis, 1994; D’ambrosio & Hammer, 1996).

25- Let students search for examples of gender bias in textbooks, instructional materials, and audio-visual aids, and discuss those biases with them (Hollis, 1994).

26- Allow your students to monitor your behavior for possible bias (Hollis, 1994).

27- Assess the gender dynamics of your class in order to avoid any biases that may unintentionally occur (Volk & Beeman, 1998).

28- Engage all your students in all aspects of their learning process (Volk & Beeman, 1998).

29- Employ cooperative learning strategies to engage students in activities that will provide them with opportunities to work and interact with one another (Hannan, 1995; Murray et al., 1999; Gatta & Trigg, 2001; Slavkin, 2001; Zittleman, 2005). Knowledge is socially constructed (Jackson, 1980) and cooperative learning will aid both genders in constructing knowledge while developing conflict resolution strategies and skills that are needed in order to make their groups run successfully (Murray et al., 1999). Slavin (1991) maintained that cooperative activities supplement teachers’ instruction and enhance students’ learning. Spender (1980b) asserted that if cooperative learning is employed in the classroom it will aid in demoting the existing inequalities within societies.

30- Cooperative groups should comprise male students as well as female students. Avoid single-sex grouping since it will mostly result in students who are badly
prepared to deal with the other sex in future community engagements (Slavkin, 2001).

31- Monitor your students’ behaviors and interactions when they are working in groups (Frawley, 2005).

32- Employ project-based learning rather than lecturing. An important feature of this approach is that students’ learning about gender issues is a by-product of content learning (Murray et al., 1999).

33- Utilize teaching strategies that are less teacher-directed. Follow the constructivist approaches of learning rather than the traditional lecturing format (Davis, 1999).

In these and further strategies, all students, regardless of their gender, benefit educationally and are treated equally. According to Plucker (1994), there is no ‘correct’ program. Teachers should keep on experimenting with various interventions and resources in order to develop instructional programs that enhance students’ learning and establish equitable learning environments.

Conclusion

Better education leads to better generations, which bring about better populations. Working towards this end requires serious efforts at all levels. Sarah (1980) stated, “We live in a patriarchal social order, educational institutions are situated within a wider social structure” (p. 155). Frawley (2005) confirmed that teaching demands an obligation to examine ingrained sexist attitudes and a readiness to employ a variety of teaching strategies. Instructors have the strength to stop the damage that has been done through the subtle messages that biased environments and societies generate and spread out. Teachers
ought to critically analyze their personal attitudes and behaviors regarding gender roles. They should also examine instructional materials and be more alert of their feedbacks to their students. Teachers must provide equal educational opportunities to girls as well as boys. Davis (2003) concluded that teachers, who employ a variety of teaching approaches and strategies, are more liable to construct unbiased learning environments appropriate for all students.

This chapter covered the several aspects of the problem of gender bias in educational settings; it also provided the reader with several strategies that if implemented would help override the problem. The following chapter incorporates the methodologies that were used to conduct the current research and the rationale for employing such methods.
Chapter Three

Methodology

The present study followed the naturalistic approach to research; the naturalistic approach puts emphasis on the importance of individuals’ subjective experiences, "with a focus on qualitative analysis" (Burns, 2000, p. 3). The naturalistic approach has profound implications for the manner in which research is carried out. Consequently, the qualitative researcher conducting this study examined gender bias in the natural setting of ESL classrooms. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), qualitative researchers scrutinize things in their natural settings aiming to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings individuals bring to them. Qualitative research involves a range of empirical materials, which describe practices and problematic moments as well as meanings in people’s lives.

The current study employed a range of interrelated interpretative practices. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) stated that each of these practices make the studied phenomenon visible in various ways; therefore, researchers often commit themselves to utilize several interpretive practices in any study. In this study, the researcher combined multiple methodological practices to study gender bias in ESL classrooms. The researcher adopted the case study method; Cohen and Manion (1994) and Burns (2000) asserted that such a method is usefully employed in various areas of education. It is valuable to conceptualize a range of unit size from an individual subject to an ethnographic study. A case study focuses on a bordered subject or unit that is either representative or atypical.
Cohen and Manion (1994) defined triangulation as “the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behavior” (p. 233). Consequently, this case study combined qualitative and quantitative methodology aiming to gain in-depth understanding of gender bias in ESL classrooms. The methodology used was of three folds; the researcher employed semi-structured interviews and questionnaire surveys, as well as observational techniques to collect data.

_Semi-structured interviews_

The semi-structured interviews took the form of a conversation between the interviewees and the interviewer. The researcher aimed to encourage cooperation with the interviewees and establish rapport with them. The interview questions were preset (see Appendix A) but open to alterations and additions depending on the course of the interviews. The open-ended interview questions were flexible in order to allow the researcher to assess the interviewees’ beliefs and examine their perceptions of the investigated problem. Furthermore, the forms of the questions varied between direct and indirect. The direct questions aimed to elicit direct opinions from the respondents regarding the problem; the indirect questions examined the interviewees’ opinions regarding the multiple forms of the problem. The researcher made inferences based on the interviewees’ responses to both types of questions and probed the consistency in their responses.

The sample that participated in the semi-structured interviews was selected to be representative of the larger population of intermediate and secondary level ESL teachers; the semi-structured interviews were conducted with four male and four female intermediate and secondary level ESL teachers; their ages ranged between 21 and 52
years old. A tape-recorder was utilized after getting the consent of the interviewees. The interviews were transcribed in narrative form (see Appendices B, C, D, E, F, G, H & I for the transcribed interviews).

Questionnaires

Questionnaires constitute an important descriptive method in educational research (Cohen and Manion, 1994). The importance of employing questionnaires is that they provide the researcher with comparable information for a number of respondents within reasonable time at a minimum cost (Burns, 2000).

The primary focus of the questionnaires in this study was gender bias in the ESL classrooms; subsidiary issues were also examined to gain further insights to the respondents’ beliefs and perceptions of the problem being investigated. The researcher made inferences based on the participants’ responses and probed the consistency in their responses.

According to Burns (2000), in descriptive surveys it is crucial to have a representative sample of the population. Consequently, the participants who responded to the questionnaires were 40 intermediate and secondary level ESL teachers (7 males and 33 females) selected from several schools in Lebanon; their ages ranged between 22 and 52 years old. The selected sample is representative of the larger population of intermediate and secondary level ESL teachers. The socio-economic status of the schools the participants teach at varied between high and low.

The questionnaires incorporated closed, open-ended, and Likert Scale items (see Appendix J for the questionnaire). Burns (2000) maintained that the closed items are
good for achieving greater uniformity of measurement in order to attain greater reliability; moreover, closed items are more easily coded than the other types of items. The open-ended items yield more information than the other types of items; they facilitate richness and intensity in the participants’ responses. Concurrently, the Likert Scale items require the participants to respond by demonstrating their degrees of agreement or disagreement; the participants’ responses are located on a scale of five fixed alternatives ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The researcher incorporated several items that examined the same issues for the sake of testing the respondents’ consistency in the responses. All the items in the questionnaire aimed to investigate gender bias in the ESL classrooms. The questionnaires did not require the name of the respondents to ensure maximum honesty and objectivity in their responses.

Observations

Burns (2000) stated that the aim of observations in case studies is to get inside the participants’ perspectives; in many cases the observer gets a more thorough perspective on the observed unit than the participants themselves. Angrosino and Mays de Perez (2000) maintained that social scientists observe human activities as well as the physical settings in which the activities take place. Observations may take place in the natural settings of those activities. The current case study employed observational techniques in order to collect further data. The observations took place in the natural setting of the ESL classrooms; the researcher observed the ESL teachers, students, and the physical settings of the classrooms.
Denzin and Lincoln (2000) stated that the naturalistic observers do not interfere with the people or activities being observed; social scientists have recognized the probability of the observers affecting what they observe. In the current study, the researcher was a non-participant observer during eighteen ESL classroom sessions. The researcher observed four female teachers and one male teacher. The observations were conducted in three schools; one in Beirut and two outside Beirut. One of the schools is a religious school while the other two are secular schools. The socio-economic status of the religious school is considered high, while the other two schools are regarded as having medium to low socio-economic status. The teachers of the observed classrooms were assured the confidentiality of the process (fictitious names are used in the presentation of the data). To gain the right of entry to the three schools, the researcher's advisor wrote a letter to the respective principles explaining the purpose of the observations.

Observation reports were written based on the researcher's observations of the ESL classrooms' set-up, seating arrangements, instructional strategies, instructional materials that were used during the time of the observations, teacher-student interactions, and any data that seemed important for the aim of the study (see Appendices L, M, N, O & P for the observation reports).

Data Analysis Methods

The current study combined qualitative and quantitative measures based on data collected from the interviews, questionnaires, and observations. In analyzing the interview data, three files were constructed for each interview: transcript file, personal file, and analytic file. In the transcript file, the entire interview was transcribed in written
form. The personal file included information from the transcript file in addition to the researcher’s personal interpretations of the data. The analytic file was coded by classifying the data into thematic and conceptual categories and subcategories of the issues and topics. All the obtained data was analyzed according to the literature review.

The data collected from the questionnaires were categorized according to the same issues and topics that were the focus of the eight interviews. The literature review anchored the analysis of the gathered data with reference to the conclusions drawn from the eight interviews as well as the observations of the classrooms. Descriptive statistics were used to present the participants’ responses to the questionnaires’ items. The questionnaires’ responses were analyzed and coded in tables (see appendix K for the tables).

The classroom observations were analyzed in terms of the teachers’ instructional strategies, teacher-student verbal interactions, teachers’ patterns of interactions with their students, the type of language communicated in the classrooms; whether inclusive or exclusive, instructional materials used during the observation sessions and the classrooms’ set-up including seating arrangements, etc. The conclusions were drawn after comparing all the collected data and referring to the literature review.

*Ethics of Research*

The ethical aspect in all research studies is very important. In this study, the participants were informed about the nature and the purpose of the investigation and agreed to participate without coercion. All the participants were assured the confidentiality of their identities; consequently, fictitious names were used in the presentation of the data.
The principles of the three schools involved in the study were informed about the purpose and the nature of the study and agreed to have the observations on their premises. The names of the three schools were not disclosed in the presentation of the data.

Chapter four of this study comprises the results; the conclusions are drawn after analyzing all the collected data and referring to the literature review.
Chapter Four

Results

The purpose of this study was to examine whether gender bias exists in the Lebanese intermediate and secondary level ESL classrooms. Data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, and observational methods. In this chapter, the analyzed data are divided into six categories: Teachers’ awareness of the problem, gender bias in the classroom, pedagogical practices, teachers’ perception of their students’ learning abilities, teacher-student interactions, and overcoming the problem. The appendices include the transcribed interviews, the tables constructed for the analysis of the questionnaires, and the observation reports.

_Teachers’ Awareness of the Problem_

The eight interviewed teachers maintained that they are aware of the existent problem of gender bias. By contrast, 67.5% of the participants responded to the questionnaires by disagreeing on the notion that gender bias is a problem that prevails in ESL classrooms; thus contradicting St. Pierre’s (1999) declaration that gender discrimination, in favor of male students, constitutes a major problem in ESL classrooms.

A male interviewee affirmed that female students suffer from gender bias in their homes, and they are not given the chance to pursue their education because of their gender. The interviewee’s statement concurs with Davis (1999) and Frawley’s (2005) argument that the differential treatment, girls encounter, is completely based on their gender.

Concurrently, other interviewees asserted that there are teacher-student gender bias and student-student gender bias. A female teacher and a coordinator of the English
department with a 35 year work experience maintained, “Female teachers tend to address boys more often than girls...female teachers usually favor male students, and I have observed this bias in classrooms” (see Appendix B). This statement corresponds to Sadker and Sadker’s (1995) affirmation that in today’s classrooms girls are underprivileged and teachers interact more with their male students than female students. 82.5% of the participants’ responses to the questionnaires indicated that the ESL teachers interact equally with both genders; however, the classroom observations revealed the contrary since during 18 observed ESL sessions the majority of the interactions were between the teachers and the male students. The discrepancy in the amount of interactions, in favor of male students, was observed in the male teacher’s classrooms as well as the female teachers’ classrooms. The following quotes are taken from the observation reports of Mr. Jamal Salem and Ms. Florence Abi Nader’s classrooms (see Appendices L & P): “The interactions were lead by the teacher and the male students...Only three girls participated, which is a relatively small number. Eight girls were not involved in the classroom discussions at all”; “Most of the interactions that took place were with the male students”.

Along the same lines, two female interviewees stated their personal experiences of gender bias during their school years “...some teachers were biased towards me or against me based on my gender”; “I was the victim of this when I was at school” (see Appendices F & H). These two statements reflect Spender’s (1985) declaration that the persistence of gender bias, in favor of males, in classroom settings, is a prevailing reality.
Gender bias in the Classroom

The interviewed teachers confirmed that they either do not allow gender bias to take place in their ESL classrooms or they try to avoid it. The same confirmation was observed in the questionnaires as 95% of the responses were that the ESL teachers do not permit any form of gender bias to take place in their classrooms; therefore, there was almost consensus among all the participants. By contrast, one female interviewee asserted that gender bias in the classroom occurs automatically and it is implicit, “Without you noticing it, it happens”. The interviewee’s statement corresponds to Garber’s (2003) declaration that teachers’ gender bias is subtle to a point of being invisible. Plucker (1994) also maintained that many teachers believe they treat all their students equitably; unaware of the hidden and unconscious biases existing in their classrooms. It should be noted that 100% of the participants in the interviews as well as the questionnaires affirmed that they are not gender bias.

Seven interviewees maintained that students are gender bias towards each other; a female interviewee stated, “Even among them they are gender biased” (see Appendix H). A male interviewee affirmed, “Many of the boys tend to think they are superior to girls. They would say something like ‘girls should follow because I am the master; I am the man’ (see Appendix E). The interviewees’ declaration corresponded to 62.5% of the participants’ responses to the questionnaires, which revealed that male students exhibit gender biased behaviors in ESL classrooms. These results concur with Davis’s (1999) statement that gender bias among students is common; however, ignoring this dilemma indicates to the students that it is adequate in today’s world. During the observation of Mr. Jamal Salem’s classroom one girl expressed her opinion regarding the topic that was
being discussed and one of her male colleagues agreed to what she stated; in response to that Mr. Salem addressed the boy by saying, “because she’s a lady, you blindly follow her… is she the boss?” (see Appendix 1). Unfortunately, a statement like Mr. Jamal’s would promote gender bias among the students rather than eradicate it.

A female interviewee referred to an incident with a male student who was not taking notes; when she asked him why he was not, his answer was that if he takes notes then everyone would think that he is a *geek*, “…he has this macho image that he likes to keep up” (see Appendix H). This incident along with the teacher’s analysis of the student’s statement reflect the serious effect cultural models hold on students’ performance; Young (2004) stated that cultural models tell members of a specific discourse what are the typical ways of doing and being.

Concurrently, a female interviewee stated a further incident that occurred with one of her female students who refused to engage in group work with a boy; she told the teacher “Please I don’t want to work with him; he’s a boy!” she insisted on that and her female friends told the teacher, “…she’s not used to it since he is a boy”. The teacher confirmed that such a problem is common among few other girls, “I think there is quite a few of them; not only this particular girl” (see Appendix H).

The stated incident can be explained in terms of Tannen’s (1990) argument that girls and boys grow up in different worlds; had the female students been given adequate opportunities to learn within balanced social contexts they wouldn’t have had the problem of working with the boys in their classroom. It should be noted that all the observed classrooms had single-sex seating arrangements; the girls were sitting next to each other and the boys next to each other “girls with girls and boys with boys”.
Most of the interviewees declared that they make sure the instructional materials they use in their ESL classrooms are free of sex stereotyping. 92.5% of the participants in the questionnaires elicited the same confirmation; however, in one of Mr. Jamal Salem’s classrooms, the researcher observed that the text used during the hours of instruction involved a great deal of sex stereotyping. Furthermore, Mr. Salem did not employ the text to raise students’ awareness towards sex stereotyping; by contrast, he reinforced the gender bias existent in the text book. The following excerpt is taken from the observation report of Mr. Salem’s ESL classrooms, “The instructional materials used in the classroom is full of gender bias. Mr. Jamal could have utilized the materials in order to highlight the problem of gender bias...Mr. Jamal also said, ‘If your wife cooks and her food is not good; try to praise her work but later give her your comments’...What Mr. Jamal is doing in this classroom is promoting gender bias and portraying women in stereotypical roles most of the time. The text they were working with also talked about house cleaning as a part of women’s duties. The text was mainly about women in the 18th century. Had Mr. Jamal handled it properly he could have employed it for the sake of refuting the stereotypical role of women. One of the comprehension questions was ‘why do women prefer cooking to house cleaning?’ Although the text is about the women in the 18th century, the use of the present tense implies that it’s a fact that women prefer cooking to house cleaning. The implicit conveyed message is that such a fact was applicable in the past and still is”.

The interviewees as well as 92.5% of the participants in the questionnaires maintained that they use gender neutral language. A male interviewee highlighted the importance of using gender-neutral language; however, he declared that many other
teachers are gender bias and use sexist language in their classrooms. The interviewee stated, "...sorry to say that many language teachers are sexist...head of department or manager is always a he". The interviewee's statement fits Davis's (1999) claim that teachers' language is considered to be gender-biased. Davis's argument was illustrated in the majority of the observed ESL classrooms where the generic 'he' was exclusively used, "Mr. Jamal used the pronoun 'he' several times to refer to both genders"; "who’s ready to tell us about his dream?"; "The teacher and the students used sexist language"; "Several times the students and the teacher used the generic he to refer to both genders". Concurrently, a female participant's response to the questionnaire was, "I would like to educate my male colleagues about the negative influence of their unconscious stereotyping. Even the language discourse they use is gender biased. This is especially relevant in our Lebanese culture".

Pedagogical Practices

All the interviewees affirmed that they employ instructional strategies that are in line with the communicative approaches to language teaching. The majority of the participants declared that they are learner-centered. Seven interviewees as well as 60% of the participants in the questionnaires maintained that they employ cooperative learning procedures in their classrooms. The majority of the participants stated that they group the students according to their various abilities; high ability students with lower ability students. One male teacher declared that he allows his students to group themselves; students either group themselves in same sex groups or mixed sex groups. Another male interviewee confirmed that he avoids engaging students in cooperative work, "...in order not to disturb the whole floor". The teacher's response to this question contradicted with
his declaration that he employs the communicative approaches to language teaching, "...the communicative approaches give me the result I want, which is they feel at home when they discuss anything. I believe in practice more than theory" (see Appendix E).

The majority of the observed ESL classrooms were teacher directed; students were involved in drills and practice. Only one classroom was observed to be in line with the communicative approaches to language teaching. The students were engaged in cooperative learning work as well as project based learning. It is noteworthy to mention that gender bias was the least in this classroom in comparison to the other classrooms (see Appendix N).

Six interviewees as well as 75% of the participants in the questionnaires asserted that they use multiple assessment procedures to evaluate their students. However, quizzes appeared to be the dominant assessment procedure in the majority of the observed classrooms. Ms. Fida Stephan was the only teacher who employed performance based assessment procedures; Ms. Stephan involved her students in Power Point presentations and used a rubric to evaluate them (see Appendix N). Ackley and Oatley (1993) argued that assessment procedures belong to a long list of educational features that contribute to gender disparity. Furthermore, Frawley (2005) recommended the use of assessment procedures that are suitable for both genders.

*Teachers' perception of their Students' Learning Abilities*

Three interviewees declared that during their ESL teaching experience they observed that female students have higher ability than male students with respect to ESL learning. A male teacher explained this view by stating that probably girls are better off in the ESL learning because of their efforts to be superior to the other gender, "...maybe
they would like to prove that they are better than others; as a kind of superiority” (see Appendix D). The rest of the teachers asserted that there is no difference in the learning ability between the two genders; some interviewees observed that the difference lies in the students’ learning preferences and the amount of hard work exerted by the females. 72.5% of the responses to the questionnaires indicated that boys and girls achieve equally in the ESL classroom; however, three of the participants who believed that girls achieve higher than boys attributed the high achievement to hard work: “...they have the tendency to work hard”; “I think they are more attentive and quiet”.

Many interviewees affirmed that female students work harder than the male students. It should be noted that none of the participants attributed the male students’ achievement to hard work. In one of the responses to the questionnaires, a female teacher stated, “...when boys excel they are more outstanding than girls”.

Teacher-Student Interactions

All interviewees maintained that they provide their students with equal opportunities to participate in classroom interactions. 82.5% of the participants in the questionnaires disagreed that they interact more with their male students. However, the classroom observations showed that in the majority of the ESL classrooms most of the teachers’ interactions were with the male students, “The teacher did not try his best to engage the entire classroom in the discussions”; “The boys were very loud and started calling out answers without raising their hands”; “The students who were calling out the answers to the previously done exercises were mainly males” (see Appendix L). These findings correspond to Sadker and Sadker’s (1997) declaration that male students have more access to academic talk than female students. Sadker and Sadker asserted that male
students have more access to classroom interactions because they are more assertive in taking hold of their teachers’ attention. Sadker and Sadker’s argument was illustrated in the majority of the observed classrooms; “Most of the interactions that took place were with the male students; the females avoided answering any of the teacher’s questions…the girls were passive while the boys were very active and loud thus getting most of the teacher’s attention” (see Appendix P).

The majority of the interviewees agreed that male students dominate in the ESL classrooms. The interviewees attributed the male students’ dominance to their cultural background, “males are brought up to be males”; “They have this macho thing that they have to show off…it’s cultural”; “…boys dominate to mark their territory…I think it’s because of culture”; “…they are used to be dominant everywhere…it’s an upraising issue, the way they were upraised. They try to make the girls more obedient. I think it’s a culture issue more than anything else” (see Appendices B, D, F, & G). These statements were refuted by 67.5% of the participants’ responses to the questionnaires, which opposed the notion that boys dominate in ESL classrooms. On the other hand, the classroom observations showed that most of the time the male gender was dominant. In one of Mr. Jamal Salem’s classrooms, the researcher noted, “Boys in this classroom along with the teacher were dominant” (see Appendix I). A female participant’s response to the questionnaire was, “I believe this is the case in and out of the class. We are taught this by society; these are beliefs that are normal in our society. Boys are supposed to be the stronger and the dominant”. Similarly a male participant stated, “Yes, boys dominate in ESL classrooms; it’s in their culture”.
Overcoming the Problem

The majority of the interviewees confirmed that they follow procedures to counteract gender bias in their ESL classrooms. Seven interviewees maintained that they discuss issues of gender bias with their students; a male teacher stated, “We discuss such issues in class, especially when something comes up” (see Appendix E). This statement was refuted by the classroom observations, which revealed a great deal of gender bias. It was observed, in most of the classrooms, that the boys were the outspoken and the girls very quiet. Moreover, the researcher observed that when girls spoke or read aloud, their voices were low and they seemed hesitant and intimidated. By contrast, whenever the male students spoke they seemed assertive, outspoken, and self-confident. In responding to one of the female students’ answers to a question, Mr. Salem told the girl, “What a logical mind you have...the girl then looked embarrassed; she tried to rephrase her idea but she couldn’t” (see Appendix L). Spender (1985) argued that the most powerful means of preventing females’ talk is by intimidation. Females are usually intimidated and eventually stop talking when they feel that their talk is discredited. The girl in Mr. Salem’s classroom did not attempt to participate in any further discussion and remained quiet for the rest of the session.

The researcher observed several negative comments elicited by the observed teachers; these comments may have held negative implications to the female students as well as the male students; Sadker and Zittleman (2005) confirmed that gender bias affects both genders.

All interviewees as well as 52.5% of the participants in the questionnaires asserted that their education and teachers’ training did not involve gender issues. These
findings correspond to Annas’s (1992) argument that the problem of gender bias stems from the fact that teachers’ education programs do not equip their students with strategies, which embrace how to teach about, to, and from the range of gender differences existing in the teachers themselves and in their classrooms.

Conclusion

The results revealed some similarities as well as discrepancies among the interviewed teachers’ standpoints, the participants’ responses to the questionnaires, and the observation reports. All the interviewed teachers confirmed that they are aware of the existent problem of gender bias; however, 67.5% of the participants’ in the questionnaires disagreed that gender bias is a problem that prevails in ESL classrooms. 82.5% of the participants’ responses to the questionnaires indicated that the ESL teachers interact equally with both genders; however, the majority of the classroom observations revealed that most of the interactions that took place were between the teachers and the male students.

The majority of the participants in the study confirmed that students are gender biased towards each other; however, the researcher did not observe student-student gender bias in the ESL classrooms but rather teacher-student gender bias. Furthermore, most of the interviewees declared that the instructional materials they use in their ESL classrooms are free of sex stereotyping. The interviewees’ allegations were in agreement with 92.5% of the participants’ responses to the questionnaires; however, the observation report of Mr. Salem’s classroom revealed the amount of sex stereotyping existing in the text that was used for instruction. Furthermore, Mr. Salem reinforced the gender bias
exist in the text book rather than employed it for the sake of raising the students’ awareness towards the problem of gender bias.

There was almost consensus among all the participants in the study that they use gender neutral language in their ESL classrooms; however, the observation reports indicated that sexist language was communicated by the teachers as well as the students in the majority of the observed ESL classrooms.

There was almost agreement among the interviewees and the participants in the questionnaires that the instructional strategies they employ are in line with the communicative approaches to language teaching; by contrast, the majority of the observed classrooms were teacher directed and the implemented instructional strategies were far from the communicative approaches. Furthermore, all the participants in the study confirmed that they are not gender bias; however, the classroom observations revealed that gender bias, in various forms, existed in all the observed ESL classrooms.

This chapter comprised the results of the analyzed data; the following chapter will incorporate the researcher’s interpretations of the results as well as the limitations of the study in addition to implications for further research.
Chapter Five

Conclusion

This study examined gender bias in English as Second Language (ESL) classrooms in Lebanon. The results concurred the findings of Scott (1980), Tannen (1990), Acker and Oatley (1993), Sadker and Sadker (1994), D’Ambrosio and Hammer (1996), Sadker and Sadker (1997), Davis (1999), Sadker (2000), Sunderland (2000), Davis (2003), Garber (2003), Heller (2003), Heron (2003), and Frawley (2005). Gender bias is an existent problem in the Lebanese intermediate and secondary ESL classroom settings. The results of this research indicated that the ongoing gender bias is implicit and elicited unconsciously by the teachers due to the fact that all the participants in this study confirmed that they are not gender bias.

Teachers' Awareness of the Problem

The results of the present study revealed a discrepancy between the participants' responses to the questionnaires, the interviewees' standpoints, and the researcher's observation reports. The interviewed teachers expressed their awareness of the problem; however, 67.5% of the participants in the questionnaires maintained that there is no gender bias in ESL classrooms. The observation reports revealed that gender bias existed in several forms in the ESL classrooms. Therefore, the results corresponded to Plucker's (1994) declaration that many instructors believe they treat all their students equitably; unaware of the hidden and unconscious biases existing in their classrooms.

Along the same lines, the findings revealed a further discrepancy between the teachers' responses and the observation reports; the majority of the participants confirmed that they interact equally with both genders; however, the observation
reports showed that the majority of interactions in the ESL classrooms were in favor of the male students. Consequently, these results corresponded to Davis’s (1999) research findings, which indicated that male and female teachers’ interactions are biased in favor of the male students.

The results of this study revealed that teachers are unaware of the biases that are existent in their classrooms; therefore, the current findings fit St. Pierre’s (1999) argument that in order to achieve gender equity in classrooms, it is imperative that teachers recognize their differential treatment to both sexes.

*Gender bias in the Classroom*

All the participants in the study confirmed that the only form of gender bias existent in their classrooms is student-student gender bias; however, none of the observation reports revealed any incident of student-student gender bias during the observed ESL sessions. Nevertheless, the consensus among the participants is in agreement with Davis’s (1999) statement that gender bias among students is common. Davis suggested that in order to remedy the problem, teachers should openly discuss with their students issues of gender bias and establish some gender unbiased principles that are related to their class. Furthermore, learning and practicing gender equitable behaviors will teach students how to deal with gender disparity. Unfortunately, the observation reports in the current study showed that the teachers’ language discourse and classroom practices could promote gender bias among the students rather than eradicate it. The results unveiled teachers’ classroom practices that implicitly, though unintentionally, would reinforce gender bias in the ESL classroom.
Concurrently, the results revealed the effect of the cultural models on students' classroom behaviors. These findings are in parallel with the literature reviewed (Young, 2004) where cultural models tell members of a specific discourse what are the typical ways of doing or being. Cultural models not only exist in the people's minds but are also shared through their daily interactions with other people. A well-known example of a cultural model is boys will be boys. Young confirmed that cultural models have the power to shape teachers' interactions in the classroom and affect the amount of attention granted to both genders.

The findings of the study showed a discrepancy between the participants' responses encountered in the study and the observation reports. The majority of the participants confirmed their use of instructional materials that are free of gender bias; however, the observation reports indicated a great deal of sex stereotyping and gender bias existent in the text book that was used for instruction. These results are in parallel with the literature reviewed (Eade, 1999; Sunderland 2000 & Frawley, 2005) where many language textbooks disclose the extent to which gender bias exists.

The majority of the participants in the study maintained that they use gender neutral language in their ESL classrooms; however, the observation reports revealed that sexist language was generally used in the majority of the observed classrooms. The discrepancy between the teachers' responses and the observation reports might be in explained in terms of Anonymous (2000) statement that people are unaware of the harmful effect sexist language has on their lives; as a result, it is widely used and commonly accepted.
Pedagogical Practices

The majority of the participants' responses indicated that they employ the communicative approaches to language teaching in their classrooms. The results of the study showed discrepancy between the teachers' responses and the observation reports. The majority of the observed classrooms were teacher directed. The observations reports revealed that only one female teacher employed in her classrooms several strategies that are in line with the communicative approaches to language teaching. It is noteworthy to mention that the teacher's classroom witnessed the least gender bias among the rest of the observed classrooms. All the students were actively involved in the classroom interactions and the two genders were equally treated. These findings were in parallel with the literature reviewed (Park, 1996; Roop, 1989; Richards & Rodgers, 2001); good teaching requires qualified teachers who are able to stimulate active learning, rather than passive learning. English teachers should thoughtfully orchestrate classroom activities; by doing so they strengthen female students' self-confidence as meaning makers. Students' active involvement in the process of language learning is the most powerful means of acquiring it.

Concurrently, the results of this study indicated discrepancy between the participants' responses and the observation reports. The majority of the participants maintained that they use multiple assessment procedures to evaluate their students; however, the observation reports revealed that paper and pencil tests were the dominant assessment procedure. Only in Ms. Fida Stephan's classroom the students were engaged in presentations and the teacher was using a rubric to evaluate her students.
Teachers' perception of their Students' Learning Abilities

The results of the study showed that the majority of the participants agreed that both genders achieve equally; however, many participants attributed girls' achievement to hard work. None of the participants stated that boys work hard in order to achieve. These findings correspond to Jones and Myhill's (2004) declaration that females' good results are attributed to hard work, while boys' good results are attributed to high intellectual abilities. When boys underachieve, teachers infer that they could, but do not; by contrast, when girls underachieve, teachers infer that they lack self-confidence, they dare not, or they lack the sufficient cognitive abilities.

Teacher-Student Interactions

The findings of this study revealed discrepancy between the participants' responses and the observation reports. The majority of the participants in the questionnaires as well as all the interviewees asserted that they provide equal access to classroom interactions to both genders; however, the observation reports indicated that in the majority of the observed classrooms the interactions that took place were in favor of the male students. Ms. Fida Stephan was the only teacher whose male students as well as female students had equal access to classroom interactions.

Along the same lines, the findings indicated discrepancy between the majority of the participants' responses to the questionnaires on one side and the majority of the interviewees' responses in addition to the observation reports on the other side. The majority of the interviewees as well as the majority of the observation reports revealed
that male students dominate in the ESL classrooms; however, the majority of the participants in the questionnaire refuted the notion that male students are the dominant in the ESL classrooms.

*Overcoming the Problem*

The results indicated discrepancy between the interviewees' responses as well as the participants' responses to the questionnaires and the observation reports. The majority of the participants asserted that they follow procedures to counteract gender bias in their classrooms; however, the observation reports revealed that gender bias was reinforced in the observed ESL classrooms rather than counteracted.

Concurrently, the results indicted that there was consensus among the majority of the participants that their education and teacher's training did not include gender issues. These results correspond to Sanders (2002) who maintained that several studies conducted in the 1990s confirmed that gender equity is still in its earliest stages of consideration.

*Final Conclusion*

This study indicated that the participants are unaware of the various forms of gender bias existent in their ESL classrooms. All of the participants maintained that they are not gender bias; however, the classroom observations revealed the existence of the problem. Consequently, the researcher concluded that the gender bias elicited by the teachers and reinforced in the ESL classrooms is unconscious. The reviewed literature in this study confirmed that gender bias hinders students' aspirations and achievements. Educational institutions should bring the problem of gender bias to the spotlight and
equip all the educators with strategies to eliminate gender bias for the sake of the educational well being of both genders.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Implications for future research could be summarized in the following points:

1- The results of the study revealed many discrepancies between the participants’ responses to the questionnaires, the interviewees’ standpoints, and the researcher’s observation reports; therefore, future research need to probe these discrepancies.

2- The sample of the study was small; eight teachers (4 males and 4 females) were interviewed as well as 40 participants (7 males and 33 females) responded to the questionnaires. Future research need to involve a larger sample to strengthen the results.

3- The scope of the study was limited to three schools in Lebanon. Future research need to comprise a variety of schools of various socioeconomic statuses, across the country.

4- Research need to further investigate the role of the communicative approaches to language teaching in promoting and fostering equitable ESL learning environments.

Last but not least, further research about gender bias and ESL learning is imperative to assure all students, males and females, optimal learning experiences in the ESL classrooms.
References


*Language Teaching Research, 4*(2), 95-121.


Appendix A

Interview Questions

1- Are you aware of the problem of gender bias in classrooms in general? If yes, how do you know that?

2- Do you permit any form of gender bias to take place in your ESL classrooms?

3- Do you make sure that ESL instructional materials are free of sex stereotyping?

4- Which approach to language teaching do you follow in your ESL classes? Why do you use this approach?

5- Do you believe there is any difference in ability between boys and girls in relation to ESL learning? Why?

6- Do you believe there is a difference in interest between boys and girls in ESL as a subject area?

7- Do you interact more with your male students? Why?

8- When you ask questions, do boys call out answers more often than girls?

9- There is a notion that boys dominate in classrooms, do you believe this notion to be true in your ESL classrooms? Why?

10- Do you come across student gender biased behaviors in your classrooms? If yes, how do you deal with them?

11- Do you use gender-neutral language? Why?

12- What assessment procedures do you use?

13- Do you prefer your students to work individually or in groups? Why?

   If in groups: a- how do you group them? b- Do you monitor their work?
14-Do you encounter classroom behavior problems with your male students more than your female students? If yes, how do you deal with them?

15-Do you discuss issues of gender bias with your students? How?

16-Did you get teacher education/training that involves gender issues?

17-Do you believe yourself to be gender biased in your ESL classrooms? How do you know that?
Appendix B

Interview with female ESL teacher

Date: October 17, 2005

Age: 52

Previous education: Bachelor of Arts in English language and Literature from the Lebanese University. In process of Masters of Arts in education, emphasis in TESOL from the Lebanese American University, LAU. Attended many training workshops in Lebanon and the United Kingdom

Teaching experience: 35 years

Grade level: Coordinator and Secondary level ESL teacher

1- Are you aware of the problem of gender bias in classrooms in general?

Yes, of course, especially that female teachers tend to address boys more often than they tend to address girls. As a coordinator, I usually go into classes and observe teachers’ performance in their classes. You can easily feel it, in most of the classes. Sometimes you cannot find an explanation to that bias. Female teachers usually favor male students, and I have observed this bias in classrooms. In my classes I usually prefer girls. I have a selection of girls every year; I usually have a preference for a few.

2- Do you permit any form of gender bias to take place in your ESL classrooms?

It’s not a matter of permission; of course you don’t permit it. It’s whether you allow gender bias. It is something that automatically happens. Without you noticing it, it happens. In my own classrooms I try to avoid it. I try to treat all my students equally.

3- Do you make sure that ESL instructional materials are free of sex stereotyping?

Yes, of course.
4- Which approach to language teaching do you follow in your ESL classes? Why do you use this approach?

Usually my approach is very eclectic. I usually train my teachers and I myself to do what is appropriate with my students’ needs. So based on their needs, I choose the approach.

5- Do you believe there is any difference in ability between boys and girls in relation to ESL learning?

No, I don’t think it’s a matter of ability; I think there are learning preferences. Learning preferences affect students. Usually girls like to work within small groups, while boys like to be independent in their learning. This is usually observable in the classrooms. I think it’s a learning preference rather than a heredity issue.

6- Do you believe there is a difference in interest between boys and girls in the ESL as a subject area?

I think this all depends on how much you can motivate them. It’s not that they like or dislike language; it’s how much you can get them motivated and interested in the subject. It’s the role of the teacher.

7- Do you interact more with your male students?

No, No; I’ve never observed that very bluntly. No I usually try to make sure that within a class session I make all the students speak and interact. Everyone has a chance in one way or another.

8- When you ask questions, do boys call out answers more often than girls?
No, No; when I ask questions, whoever is ready answers. It depends on the level of the student. Sometimes you have very witty girls in the class who have the answers most of the time.

9- Have you observed that boys are faster in calling out answers than girls?

No; you see it’s more related to character. Those who are interpersonal and like interaction, usually give the answers faster than the others.

10- There is a notion that boys dominate in classrooms, do you believe this notion to be true in your ESL classrooms?

Usually yes; it’s not because it is an ESL classroom, it’s because they are used to be dominant everywhere.

11- Why do you think so?

I think it’s an upraising issue; the way they were upraised. They try to make the girls more obedient. I think it’s a culture issue more than anything else.

12- Do you come across student gender biased behaviors in your classrooms?

Students try to, but we try to avoid it most of the time. We try to make them feel that they are equal. They cannot offend each other; it’s not that males are dominant or females are dominant, no, we try to control it.

13- Do you use gender-neutral language? Why?

Yes, we do. When addressing my students I always use the he/she. If the writer of a text is a male, I make it clear to my students that ‘he’ is the writer not the speaker. I made it very clear to them that he is the writer because he is a male.
14- What assessment procedures do you use?

We usually have formative texts in the form of short quizzes or oral dictation; and we have project presentations. We also depend on group work and evaluate them according to their performance in the group work. We always make sure that in the same group there are males and females.

15- When they are involved in group work, do you monitor their work?

Yes.

16- Do you prefer your students to work in groups?

No; I believe that within the classroom situation you should have a mixture of individual group and whole class instruction. You cannot have a group work all the time. I usually prefer pair work because it gives room for everyone to speak, and then you make sure that every one is participating; after that we move each pair to become four members in each group. I usually give instruction for two minutes then ask students to jot down an idea or two related to the topic, and then they share the ideas.

17- Do you encounter classroom behavior problems with your male students more than your female students?

In my classes I don’t have problems, but as a coordinator we usually have more male problems than female problems, in all subject areas.

18- How do you deal with those problems?

It depends on the situation. Usually, I talk with the students in my office and I tell them to let off what they feel or what they think or what triggers their emotions or whatever. Once we feel that it’s out of our control and it’s related to parents or family issue, we try to call the parents.
19- Do you discuss issues of gender bias with your students?

If there is room for that, we do, but usually we try to act in a very normal situation. I'm a mother of both genders and I never try to treat the girls differently than boys.

20- Did you get teacher education or training that involves gender issues?

No.

21- Do you believe yourself to be gender biased in your ESL classrooms?

No, I don't believe that.

22- How do you know that?

Because I treat my students similarly. I work according to my students' ability and I take into consideration their interests, whether they are boys or girls. I try to involve them in activities that are related to their learning styles. For example, I know that boys like to move in the class so I prepare activities that need kinesthetic work and I know that there are more of incidents where I prepare activities that call for auditory participation, and this is how I consider myself as not gender bias.
Appendix C

Interview with male ESL teacher

Date of interview: October 27, 2005.

Age: 26

Previous education: Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from the United States of America, University of Los Angeles, UCLA. Teaching Diploma in TEFL and pursuing a Master of Arts in education, TESOL, at LAU

Teaching experience: Five years

Grade level: Brevet and Secondary

1- Are you aware of the problem of gender bias in classrooms in general?

If yes, how do you know that?

Yes, I am. Through my classroom observations during my practice teaching; however, those who I have observed are not aware of their bias.

2- Do you permit any form of gender bias to take place in your ESL classrooms?

No, I do not permit it and I do not initiate it.

3- Do you make sure that ESL instructional materials are free of sex stereotyping?

Of course, and good materials are free of sex stereotyping. As a teacher I do not have any bias towards any gender; I believe that the mind is a parched desert that needs to be filled with clean water in order to blossom.

4- Which approach to language teaching do you follow in your ESL classes? Why do you use this approach?

I’m a very dynamic teacher. I follow student-oriented approach where students gear discussion and perform; because it’s rich.
5. Do you believe there is any difference in ability between boys and girls in relation to ESLL learning? Why?

Not at all.

6. Do you believe there is a difference in interest between boys and girls in the ESL as a subject area? If yes, how do you counteract this?

No, it all really depends on the teacher whether s/he can trigger the interest of the students.

7. Do you interact more with your male students? Why?

No; equal interaction.

8. When you ask questions, do boys call out answers more often than girls?

No.

9. There is a notion that boys dominate in classrooms, do you believe this notion to be true in your ESL classrooms? Why?

On the contrary, no. I believe there is equality; sometimes there are certain subjects that trigger boys and others trigger girls.

10. Do you come across student gender biased behaviors in your classrooms? If yes how do you deal with them?

No.

11. Do you use gender-neutral language? Why?

Yes, of course.

12. What assessment procedures do you use?

I use multiple assessment procedures.
13-Do you prefer your students to work individually or in groups? Why?
    If in groups: a- how do you group them? b- Do you monitor their work?
    It depends on the situation. I have no preference. I group them according to their
learning abilities. I definitely monitor their work.
14-Do you encounter classroom behavior problems with your male students more than
your female students? If yes, how do you deal with them?
    No.
15-Do you discuss issues of gender bias with your students? How?
    In the language classroom, No. In the literature classroom, definitely yes because
the materials lends itself to such discussions.
16-Did you get teacher education/training that involves gender issues?
    Not teacher training. I took a course in USA about gender issues.
17-Do you believe yourself to be gender biased in your ESL classrooms? How do you
know that?
    No, unless by mistake; something that is unintentional.
Appendix D

Interview with male teacher

Date: October 20, 2005

Age: 49

Previous education: BA in English language and literature from the Lebanese university. MA in applied linguistics from NDU

Teaching experience: 25 years

Grade level: 11 and 12

1- Are you aware of the problem of gender bias in classrooms in general?

If yes, how do you know that?

Definitely; through the competition in class. There is a kind of sexism among students but it is implicit.

2- Do you permit any form of gender bias to take place in your ESL classrooms?

I'm not prejudice; with other teachers, yes; but with me, no.

3- Do you make sure that ESL instructional materials are free of sex stereotyping?

To tell you the truth, I don't pay attention because most of the books come from the west so I expect them to be free from sex stereotyping.

4- Which approach to language teaching do you follow in your ESL classes? Why do you use this approach?

The communicative approach because it's the most recent and effective.
5- Do you believe there is any difference in ability between boys and girls in relation to ESL learning? Why?

I believe that girls, according to what I have read and observed, are able to imitate more than boys; especially their accent. I have no explanation for this except that maybe they would like to prove they are better than others; as a kind of superiority.

6- Do you believe there is a difference in interest between boys and girls in the ESL as a subject area? If yes, how do you counteract this?

Not really. Boys use computers and Internet more than girls and this is reflected in their interest to learn the language and they acquire it better; as means of understanding other things.

7- Do you interact more with your male students? Why?

No difference; because this is my approach and my feeling. I treat them equally; I am unbiased.

8- When you ask questions, do boys call out answers more often than girls?

It depends on the question, topic, and group of students.

9- There is a notion that boys dominate in classrooms, do you believe this notion to be true in your ESL classrooms? Why?

They try to in some cases but they don’t often succeed. Because of culture and they are aware of that; that males are brought up to be males.

10- Do you come across student gender biased behaviors in your classrooms? If yes how do you deal with them?

Not very frequently. If it happens I think it’s because of culture and religion.
11-Do you use gender-neutral language? Why?

Yes. Sometimes I use he/she and then she/he. I believe that males and females are equal, yet not the same.

12-What assessment procedures do you use?

Multiple assessment procedures.

13-Do you prefer your students to work individually or in groups? Why?

If in groups: a- how do you group them? b- Do you monitor their work?

Both. I like a technique called think, pair and share. It depends on activities. You should never neglect individual work even if methodologies don’t say so. If students are working in groups I allow them to group themselves. I give them the freedom to group; I don’t interfere. Sometimes mixed sex grouping and sometimes single sex grouping. Yes, I monitor their work.

14-Do you encounter classroom behavior problems with your male students more than your female students? If yes, how do you deal with them?

I encounter problems with male and female students in the economical sciences section. With others, I don’t have problems. I deal with the problems on case bases and friendly; as grown-ups.

15-Do you discuss issues of gender bias with your students? How?

Very often. I raise the issue, discuss and write about it. We discuss extensively and intensively in class and then I ask them to write essays about it. I get their feedback orally and then writing.

16-Did you get teacher education/training that involves gender issues?

Not really.
17-Do you believe yourself to be gender biased in your ESL classrooms? How do you know that?

No; through all my behaviors I am sure that I am not gender biased in my ESL classrooms.
Appendix E

Interview with male ESL teacher

Date: October 20, 2005

Age: 50

Previous education: Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Arts in English Literature from the Lebanese University

Teaching experience: 33 years

Grade level: Secondary level

1- Are you aware of the problem of gender bias in classrooms in general?

If yes, how do you know that?

An experienced teacher wouldn’t be gender biased. If one is lazy, regardless of gender, you want to push him. Maybe, and especially with new teachers; but he shouldn’t fall into this trap.

2- Do you permit any form of gender bias to take place in your ESL classrooms?

No, not any under condition. I won’t allow my students to pull my leg into it.

3- Do you make sure that ESL instructional materials are free of sex stereotyping?

Let me tell you, in Broummana high-school there is a department who wouldn’t allow it.

4- Which approach to language teaching do you follow in your ESL classes? Why do you use this approach?

I like to brainstorm the topic by relating it to real experiences in life. They may be answering questions without even knowing. Basically we discuss everything because discussions and the communicative approaches to language teaching give me the result I
want which is they feel at home when they discuss anything. I believe in practice more than theory.

5- Do you believe there is any difference in ability between boys and girls in relation to ESL learning? Why?

   No, girls tend to work hard, but in ability there is no difference. We can see that girls can be much better. I have noticed that girls do not have things as boys to distract them so they work harder.

6- Do you believe there is a difference in interest between boys and girls in the ESL as a subject area? If yes, how do you counteract this?

   It depends on the question and the topic.

7- Do you interact more with your male students? Why?

   No the same.

8- When you ask questions, do boys call out answers more often than girls?

   This also depends on the topic.

9- There is a notion that boys dominate in classrooms, do you believe this notion to be true in your ESL classrooms? Why?

   Maybe, but it is slightly visible. If it exists, it’s not dangerous. Some would encourage others to dominate in the classroom. It has to do with their characters. To draw attention, if they are lazy. In order to show off, that we are here too.

10- Do you come across student gender biased behaviors in your classrooms? If yes how do you deal with them?

   Yes. Many of the boys tend to think that they are superior to girls. They would say something like “girls should follow because I am the master” “I’m the man”. Gender
bias among students is there but you try to deal with it before it becomes serious. It is because of our culture. We discuss it in class and I try to reason with them but reasoning in class is not enough because when they go home, everything changes.

11-Do you use gender-neutral language? Why?

I avoid sexist language, but sorry to say that many language teachers are sexist without them noticing. Head of department or a manager is always a he. Anyway I don’t want to be the bad example; say something and do something else.

12-What assessment procedures do you use?

In Broummana, we use multiple assessment procedures, where as in this school we mainly use paper and pencil tests, in addition to essays and quizzes.

13-Do you prefer your students to work individually or in groups? Why?

If in groups: a- how do you group them? b- Do you monitor their work?

Usually I prefer individual work in order not to disturb the whole floor.

14-Do you encounter classroom behavior problems with your male students more than your female students? If yes, how do you deal with them?

Usually yes, especially in grade 12. Especially in the school which accepts all applicants to it, regardless of their academic level. In one class you may find different levels. I handle such problems by giving them warnings, if they continue; I try to keep them busy. I don’t believe in kicking them out of the class. But I usually encounter problems with males more than females.
15-Do you discuss issues of gender bias with your students? How?

Sometimes yes. We discuss if their parents distinguish between males and females. You find inequality of treatment to males and females among parents who are uneducated. We discuss such issues in class, especially when something comes up.

16-Did you get teacher education/training that involves gender issues?

Not really but I attend every year two or three workshops.

17-Do you believe yourself to be gender biased in your ESL classrooms? How do you know that?

No, because I never received any complaint from my male students.
Appendix F

Interview with female ESL teacher

Date: October 19, 2005

Age: 23

Previous education: BA and MA in English Literature from AUB, and TD from LAU

Teaching experience: first year teaching

Grade level: 7, 8, 9, 10

1- Are you aware of the problem of gender bias in classrooms in general?

Yes, because when I was in school I noticed that some teachers were biased either towards me or against me based on my gender. It was mostly women teachers were biased towards boys, and the male teachers biased towards the pretty girls in class.

2- Do you permit any form of gender bias to take place in your ESL classrooms?

No.

3- Do you make sure that ESL instructional materials are free of sex stereotyping?

Yes, I try to make sure of that.

4- Which approach to language teaching do you follow in your ESL classes? Why do you use this approach?

A combination of all the approaches I guess. But basically I follow the communicative approaches which I find more effective with students and appeal more to them.
5- Do you believe there is any difference in ability between boys and girls in relation to ESL learning? Why?

   No. They're both the same, it depends on the teacher, I guess.

6- Do you believe there is a difference in interest between boys and girls in the ESL as a subject area? If yes, how do you counteract this?

   No, at all.

7- Do you interact more with your male students? Why?

   No, I don't. I interact more with students who participate more in class, regardless of their gender.

8- What about those who do not participate?

   I always try to let them participate, but sometimes they completely refuse to speak so I try not to pick on them and just give them some more time.

9- When you ask questions, do boys call out answers more often than girls?

   No.

10- There is a notion that boys dominate in classrooms, do you believe this notion to be true in your ESL classrooms? Why?

   Dominate...they don't exactly dominate. They are just louder because in my grade 7, for example, they are the ones who are jumping around and making the most noise. As intellectually speaking like their participation in class, they are equal.

11- Why do you think they are so loud?

   They have this macho thing that they have to show off in front of each other and they have to be like really cool.
12- Do you think it’s natural?

I don’t think it’s natural, I think it’s cultural.

13- Do you come across student gender biased behaviors in your classrooms? If yes how do you deal with them?

Yes. If somebody stereotypes somebody based on gender, I try to point out to the students that what they said or what they did, whatever the behavior was is wrong. I try to explain why; mostly I ask them the question about why it’s wrong and I discuss it with them.

14- Can you give me an example of such an incident?

Well today one of the students was not taking notes so I asked him why, he said that if he does everyone would think that he’s a ‘geek’; because he has this macho image that he likes to keep up. So I told him that’s completely ridiculous and you shouldn’t care about what other people say.

15- Do you use gender-neutral language? Why?

Yes, I try to as much as I can.

16- What assessment procedures do you use?

Portfolio, depending on what they do in class. I use several procedures but basically performance-based.

17- Do you prefer your students to work individually or in groups? Why?

If in groups: a- how do you group them? b- Do you monitor their work?

It depends on their age; like the younger ones, when they work in groups they get really loud, and they don’t stay on task very much; but generally speaking I do prefer group work; because I feel that they can learn from each other. Through student-student
discussions they can definitely learn a lot from that. In grade 7, I group them according to behavior because I have to, because grade 7 is a behaviorally challenged class. From the higher grades I group the strong ones with the weaker ones so that the stronger students can pull up the weaker ones. I always monitor their work.

18-Do you encounter classroom behavior problems with your male students more than your female students? If yes, how do you deal with them?

More no, it's just from a different sort. For example my girl students in grade 10 are always gossiping between each other, I keep telling them to be quiet. My male students; the comments that I usually give to them ‘please don't be so loud, don't make jokes so loud in class; they are inappropriate’.

19-Do you discuss issues of gender bias with your students? How?

Yes, actually at the beginning of the year we discussed stereotypes in general and we talked about gender stereotypes in particular; we wrote an essay about it.

20-Did you get teacher education/training that involves gender issues?

Training, no. It came up through my personal readings so I'm aware of it.

21-Do you believe yourself to be gender biased in your ESL classrooms? How do you know that?

No. I try to make it a point to pay attention to both genders.
Appendix G

Interview with female ESL teacher

Date: October 19, 2005

Age: 37

Previous education: BA in English language and TD from AUB. In process of an MA in education (TESOL) at LAU

Teaching experience: 15 years

Grade level: 9-11-12

1- Are you aware of the problem of gender bias in classrooms in general?

If yes, how do you know that?

Well, I have read about it. I have also prepared some research in the Educational Psychology about gender bias in Math and English. I am aware of the problem through my research and readings.

2- Do you permit any form of gender bias to take place in your ESL classrooms?

Not that I’m aware of.

3- Do you make sure that ESL instructional materials are free of sex stereotyping?

No.

4- Which approach to language teaching do you follow in your ESL classes? Why do you use this approach?

We use different approaches but basically we use the thematic approach and sometimes we work on the project-based, but not all the time. We use the theme based because it is in accordance with the international curriculum. As for the project-based it’s very helpful for the communicative competency of the students.
5- Do you believe there is any difference in ability between boys and girls in relation to ESL learning? Why?

Actually, in my experience I have noticed that some boys have a problem with writing but I cannot generalize. I think it’s because of their ability and not because of their sex, gender. I can tell you that those who have good ability in English can produce regardless of their gender. I can say there is no difference in ability between girls and boys.

6- Do you believe there is a difference in interest between boys and girls in the ESL as a subject area? If yes, how do you counteract this?

No, I don’t think so. It’s mostly in terms of culture; it has nothing to do with their gender. When they are in grade 9, English is as important as Math because of its coefficient; but in grade 12 the number of English classes that they take is fewer than Math classes. That’s what leads to the less interest. It’s related to how much value of the subject. It has something to do with the system, the teachers and the administration. It has nothing to do with gender.

7- Do you interact more with your male students? Why?

No, equally.

8- When you ask questions, do boys call out answers more often than girls?

No, they don’t. Sometimes... but I haven’t paid attention to that. I can’t be sure. Especially that I teach grade 9 and grade 12, so there is difference among different grade levels.
9-There is a notion that boys dominate in classrooms, do you believe this notion to be true in your ESL classrooms? Why?

   Yes, I think that some boys dominate in order to mark their territory. I can feel that some male students do that. They raise their voice for example.

10- Why do you think they do that?

   I think it’s because of culture, and not because they are boys.

11-Do you come across student gender biased behaviors in your classrooms? If yes how do you deal with them?

   No. I haven’t had an incident in my class that I can recall, but if it happens I would take the students and discuss the issue, but not in front of the class. I think it’s more appropriate if we do it in private.

12-Do you use gender-neutral language? Why?

   I cannot be very certain.

13-What assessment procedures do you use?

   We use different types. Tests, quizzes, writings, oral presentations and projects.

14-Do you prefer your students to work individually or in groups? Why?

   If in groups: a- how do you group them? b- Do you monitor their work?

   I prefer them to work in groups because group work is very helpful especially if it’s monitored by the teacher. I group them according to different levels of ability.

15-Do you encounter classroom behavior problems with your male students more than your female students? If yes, how do you deal with them?

   No, it’s not about behavior problems. It’s just that boys tend to be careless about the subject, that’s the problem; I don’t have behavior problems with them.
16- What do you do in such situations?

Well basically we discuss this problem and I tell the student what is expected of him so that he can perform well and get a good grade.

17- Do you discuss issues of gender bias with your students? How?

Sometimes yes; but we don’t highlight it; we integrate it. If it is discussed I notice that the male students say that they are better, stronger and that women and men are never equal. They improvise their opinion in class and it’s the same in grades 9 and 12.

18- Did you get teacher education/training that involves gender issues?

No.

19- Do you believe yourself to be gender biased in your ESL classrooms? How do you know that?

No. I know that because I don’t have any problems with all my students. I try to give equal attention to both genders and I make sure that we don’t have any problems. I think I would know if my girl students would have an attitude towards me and they don’t. If they have an attitude I would think it’s because I was gender biased and I don’t have that. I can notice it from their behavior.
Interview with female ESL teacher

Date: October 20, 2005

Age: 22

Previous education: AA Interior Design, BA English Language, TD- Intermediate and High-School level, MA in Education (TESOL), LAU

Teaching experience: Two years

Grade level: Grade 6

1- Are you aware of the problem of gender bias in classrooms in general?

If yes, how do you know that?

   Yes, I am aware of that. Basically from the way students treat each other and from the way teachers treat their students. The male teachers are more tolerant with the female students, and the female teachers with the male students. I have observed that.

2- Do you permit any form of gender bias to take place in your ESL classrooms?

   In my classrooms, no. I had only one case when I was grouping my students they were biased and they didn’t want to work with the opposite sex. Even among them they are gender biased.

3- Do you make sure that ESL instructional materials are free of sex stereotyping?

   I try my best.

4- Which approach to language teaching do you follow in your ESL classes? Why do you use this approach?

   I follow different approaches usually. I follow the cooperative learning a lot. I do a lot of hands on activities, things that they could use. For example how to fill in
application forms, anything necessary that they would need. I do this because they can make use of them later especially with their communication skills. Basically things they would use throughout their life.

5- Do you believe there is any difference in ability between boys and girls in relation to ESL learning? Why?

I don't think so, but my general notion is that girls would be better off when it comes to learning English, but in my classes I don't see a difference. If they are willing they can work on it; if not of course they won't do it.

6- You mean it's a matter of will?

Yes, it's a matter of will and not gender; but my personal notion is girls.

7- Do you believe there is a difference in interest between boys and girls in the ESL as a subject area? If yes, how do you counteract this?

I used to feel that girls are more interested because I used to be in Saudi-Arabia, but here in the school I teach at I think it's even; maybe 40-60 but I think it's even.

8- Do you interact more with your male students? Why?

I handle them both very well but usually the males ask more questions in class so I do have that sometimes; so this leads to more interaction with them.

9- When you ask questions, do boys call out answers more often than girls?

Not really.

10- There is a notion that boys dominate in classrooms, do you believe this notion to be true in your ESL classrooms? Why?

Not in my class because girls are the dominant ones in my classroom. I think they are more active. They are in grade six now, and boys are still through the shy phase and
not so comfortable; the girls are comfortable in everything; they speak up and comment in class and not the guys. In this particular class the girls are stronger; maybe it’s an exception but they’re stronger in my class.

11-Do you come across student gender biased behaviors in your classrooms? If yes how do you deal with them?

Yes I do. I tell them that they have to work together and I just ignore the whole idea of gender; I say we are all in this together; we are one group.

12-Can you give an example of an incident of gender bias between students?

For instance during group work one of the girls refused to work with a boy and kept saying “No, Ms. Please I don’t want to work with him; he’s a boy” so I told her “look at him, is he an alien, does he have five fingers? He’s like you, he’s like me, so why don’t you work with him?” the girls said that it’s because she’s not used to it since he’s a boy. So I told her that she has to try and I sat with them and we worked on it together and then they managed.

13- Do you think what happened is common?

Well I think there is quite a few of them, not only this particular girl.

14-Do you use gender-neutral language? Why?

Yes, because I don’t believe in biased language especially the men women thing.

15-What assessment procedures do you use?

I use multiple assessment procedures.

16-Why do you prefer your students to work in groups?

Because they learn better than the way they used to be spoon-fed in elementary.
17- How do you group them and do you monitor their work?

According to their ability; and I always monitor their work. I even work with
them; I get involved with the groups.

18-Do you encounter classroom behavior problems with your male students more than
your female students? If yes, how do you deal with them?

Yes. But I’m pretty good with classroom management so I deal with them
according to the seven rules that I set with them in the beginning of the year. I notice that
they may try to impress me because I’m young and I’m a female.

19-Do you discuss issues of gender bias with your students? How?

No, not really.

20-Did you get teacher education/training that involves gender issues?

No, not really.

21-Do you believe yourself to be gender biased in your ESL classrooms? How do
you know that?

No, because whenever I pick my students, I don’t pick the ones whose hands are
always up. I have this habit of alternating so I always alternate because I was the victim
of this when I was at school so I know how it goes.
Appendix 1

Interview with male ESL teacher

Date: October 19, 2005
Age: 47
Previous education: BA English Literature from the Lebanese University
Teaching experience: 20 years
Grade level: 7-8-9

1- Are you aware of the problem of gender bias in classrooms in general?
   If yes, how do you know that?
   Yes, because most of the female students are not given the chance to continue their studies. Their parents prefer to marry them off at a young age.

2- Do you permit any form of gender bias to take place in your ESL classrooms?
   No.

3- Do you make sure that ESL instructional materials are free of sex stereotyping?
   Yes, they are free.

4- Which approach to language teaching do you follow in your ESL classes? Why do you use this approach?
   Communicative approach because it is recommended by the school supervisor.

5- Do you believe there is any difference in ability between boys and girls in relation to ESL learning? Why?
   Yes, I think that girls are better in learning English. I don’t know why, but I have observed this during my teaching years.
6- Do you believe there is a difference in interest between boys and girls in the ESL as a subject area? If yes, how do you counteract this?

Girls are usually more interested. I try to get the boys be more interested in our discussions.

7- Do you interact more with your male students? Why?

No.

8- When you ask questions, do boys call out answers more often than girls?

Sometimes, yes.

9- There is a notion that boys dominate in classrooms, do you believe this notion to be true in your ESL classrooms? Why?

No, because some girls like to work more and they are more productive.

10- Do you come across student gender biased behaviors in your classrooms? If yes how do you deal with them?

No.

11- Do you use gender-neutral language? Why?

Yes, I avoid using sexist language.

12- What assessment procedures do you use?

Paper and pencil tests.

13- Do you prefer your students to work individually or in groups? Why?

If in groups: a- how do you group them? b- Do you monitor their work?

In groups. I group them according to their ability and I monitor their work.
14-Do you encounter classroom behavior problems with your male students more than your female students? If yes, how do you deal with them?
   No.

15-Do you discuss issues of gender bias with your students? How?
   No.

16-Did you get teacher education/training that involves gender issues?
   No.

17-Do you believe yourself to be gender biased in your ESL classrooms? How do you know that?
   Absolutely no.
Appendix J

Questionnaire

This survey is conducted by an MA graduate student at the Lebanese American University LAU, in partial fulfillment of the thesis-project required for graduation. It is addressed to ESL intermediate and secondary level teachers. Your feedback is very important for my case-study.

P.S. Your feedback will be kept confidential.

A. Background information:

* Please tick the appropriate answer or fill in with the correct information.

1- Age: 20 - 25 26 - 30 31 - 35 36-40 41-45 46-50 50 & above
2- Sex: Male Female
3- Previous university attended: 
4- Degrees/Diplomas obtained: 
5- Years of experience: 
6- Name of school you teach at: 
7- Grades you teach: 

B. Please circle one number in each row to indicate your answer.

1- Strongly disagree
2- Disagree
3- Don’t know
4- Agree
5- Strongly agree

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<td>I use instructional materials that are free of sex stereotyping.</td>
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<td>I interact more with my male students.</td>
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<td>I give more attention to my male students because they are always loud.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I use gender-neutral language in my ESL classrooms.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I ask my male students questions that require higher order thinking skills than those of my female students.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I use multiple assessment procedures</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>My ESL classrooms are teacher-centered.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>My students work on projects.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>My classroom practices are engaging to my students.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>There is no difference in my treatment to my male and female students.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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C. Please answer the following questions.

25- Which approach to language teaching do you follow? Why?

__________________________________________________________________________

26- What are the instructional strategies that you implement?

__________________________________________________________________________

27- How do you assess your students?

__________________________________________________________________________

28- Do you prefer your students to work individually or in groups? Why?

__________________________________________________________________________

29- If in groups, how do you group them?

__________________________________________________________________________

30- Who achieves higher grades, boys or girls? Why do you think so?

__________________________________________________________________________
31- Do boys interrupt girls when they are talking? If yes, how do you respond to this?

32- There is a notion that boys dominate in classrooms, do you believe this notion to be true in ESL classrooms? Why?

33- Do you follow any procedure to raise awareness of gender bias?

34- Are you gender biased in your ESL classrooms?

35- Would you like to add anything else?

Please check that no answer has been inadvertently missed out. Thank you. 😊
### Appendix K

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Response 1</th>
<th>Response 2</th>
<th>Response 3</th>
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<td>Procedures</td>
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<td>Cooperative Work</td>
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<td>Ability Grouping</td>
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<td>Girls</td>
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Appendix L

Classrooms observed: Grades 10, 11, and 12

Teacher: Jamal Salem

Age: 50

Previous education: Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Arts in English Literature from the Lebanese University

Teaching experience: 33 years

Dates of observations: October 25-27-28/2005

Time period: Nine classroom periods (each grade was observed for three ESL sessions over the three days)

Grade 10

In this classroom there were 11 males and 12 females. The seats looked like benches where each two students sit on one bench. The classroom appeared divided into two sections because on each side there were couples of either males sitting next to each others or females. The walls in the classroom neither had a bulletin board nor any picture of role models from both sexes.

Mr. Jamal did most of the talking in this classroom. In the beginning of the first classroom session corrections of homework took place. Students, from both genders, who did not do their homework, were scolded. After correcting the homework, Mr. Jamal started a new lesson. During the explanations of the lesson, students were allowed to ask questions as Mr. Jamal always reminded them that “if you have any question, please ask!”
The boys in this classroom seemed more outspoken than the girls; they asked most of the questions. The teacher was answering their questions all the time and seemed willing for any further explanation. I did not observe any form of gender bias in Mr. Jamal’s lesson especially that he was explaining about the writing process. During his explanation he would address questions to the whole class and boys would call out to answer. The girls were very quiet.

During the second ESL period in grade 10, Mr. Jamal asked each of his students to write one page about his or her dream. Prior to the activity he had a quick revision with his students about the steps they should follow in the writing process. The discussion that took place during the revision revealed that most of the students had known the basic steps in the writing process; however, the males were always faster than the females in answering Mr. Jamal’s questions, which were basically “what is the first step you follow before you start writing?...what is the second step?...” and so on. Only two female students raised their hands but the male students managed to answer faster.

After Mr. Jamal seemed sure that his students understood everything regarding the writing process (since he did get answers for all the questions he had asked) he told the students to begin writing. The bell soon rang and Mr. Jamal told the class “we’ll continue next time”.

The third day observing grade 10, Mr. Jamal again reminded his students of the writing process in terms of the steps they should follow. He told them that they had half the session to write about their dream. All the students started writing (individually) and Mr. Jamal wandered around in the classroom checking on their work.
Most of the time had finished and the students were still writing. Five minutes before the end of the period Mr. Jamal asked them “who’s ready to tell us about his dream?” Four male students and one female student raised their hands and proposed to present. Most of the students were done but only those students raised their hands. Then Mr. Jamal told them to review what they had written at home since the next period everyone will present “his dream”.

This class was extremely boring. It was teacher directed all the time. Students neither seemed interested nor motivated. Mr. Jamal used the pronoun ‘he’ several times to refer to both genders. Prior to the observations I had informed Mr. Jamal about the purpose of my study; I have observed that all the time he was trying ‘not to be gender bias’. “…he is doing his best not to have classroom behavior problems”; “No smiles on any of the students’ faces”; “No student-student interactions”; “very few teacher-student interactions”.

*Grade 11*

In this classroom there were 8 males and 12 females. Every two students were sitting on one seat. Female students were sitting on the same seats, so were the male students; “girls with girls and boys with boys”.

The walls in the classroom did not have any picture of role models from both sexes. In the beginning of each classroom period Mr. Jamal checked the homework for all the students. The students who did not do their homework were also scolded “you are irresponsible people” regardless of their gender. After going over the homework with the students they worked on the lesson, which was covered during the three observed classroom periods. The text they worked with was about the working women.
All through discussions, two girls seemed assertive and replied to the teacher’s questions. One of Mr. Jamal’s answers to one of the girls was, “What a logical mind you have...”; the girl then looked totally embarrassed; she tried to rephrase her idea but she couldn’t. Only two females out of the other twelve, who kept quiet, were raising their hands to participate.

During the discussions I noticed stereotyping regarding women’s role. Mr. Jamal said based on the text, “It’s the mother’s job to take care of the children...” Mr. Jamal did not try to portray non stereotypical roles of women. Male students were more involved in the discussions than the female students. Mr. Jamal said: “…in the 18th century, women were not educated; now education is compulsive”. I wrote in my notes “his comment implies that if education isn’t compulsive; then women will still be uneducated!”

Throughout the discussions Mr. Jamal was modeling the correct English in terms of sentence structure, but most of the time he was stopping students from speaking in order to correct their grammar mistakes. He was also reminding them not to speak Arabic.

Some of the girls, who were not participating during discussions, were engaged in side talk. In response to that Mr. Jamal flipped his fingers several times and said ‘hshshsh.’ (That was a common habit during all his sessions). Most of the time was spent on discussing the comprehension questions in the text. Mr. Jamal said at one point “the key to a man’s pocket is his stomach; you don’t have to be reminded”. The instructional materials used in the classroom were full of gender bias. Mr. Jamal could have utilized the materials in order to highlight the problem of gender bias especially that he was aware that it was the topic of my research.
Mr. Jamal also said, “If your wife cooks and her food is not good; try to praise her work but later give her your comments”. My comment on the teacher’s statement was “What Mr. Jamal is doing in this classroom is promoting gender bias and portraying women in stereotypical roles most of the time”. The text they were working with also talked about house cleaning as a part of women’s duties. The text was mainly about women in the 18th century, had Mr. Jamal handled it properly he could have employed it for the sake of refuting the stereotypical roles of women. One of the comprehension questions was “why do women prefer cooking to house cleaning?” Although the text is about the women in the 18th century; the use of the present tense, implies that it’s a fact that women prefer cooking to house cleaning. The conveyed message is that such a fact was applicable in the past and still is.

The boys in this classroom were way more outspoken than the girls. It was an active classroom; however, dominated by males. One girl was picked on by Mr. Jamal whenever she attempted to speak. The teacher did not try his best to engage the entire classroom in the discussions. When we went out of one of the classrooms, he told me “the level of the students here is very low; in this school they accept all the applicants. If you observe my ESL classrooms in the other school I teach at, you will see the difference” (Mr. Jamal also teaches at another school but of a high economic-status). In this statement he seemed prejudice. He also became defensive; had he been sure of his instructional approaches and his teaching performance in the classroom he wouldn’t have had to give me any excuses. In this classroom, I also observed the use of the pronoun ‘he’ by the teacher and the students in order to refer to both genders. The following are some
quotations from my notes: "The classroom is teacher-centered rather than student-centered"; "No smiles on the students’ faces".

**Grade 12**

In this classroom there were 10 males and 11 females. Same as the other classrooms set-up; each two students of the same gender were sitting on one seat, "girls with girls and boys with boys". No picture of role models from both sexes.

The session started by correcting the homework. The students who were calling out the answers to the previously done exercises were mainly males. They were really loud; Mr. Jamal commented, "One generator can be at work". Only two female students gave the answer to two exercises. Mr. Jamal's feedback can not be considered as constructive. He would correct any wrong answer but not in a constructive or encouraging way to any of the students. In the first classroom period I did not observe any use of sexist language. After the correction of homework, Mr. Jamal explained the importance of the thesis statement when writing an essay. Then he talked about compound sentences and parallel structure... He talked about the official exams and highlighted the importance of the topic sentence and supporting details; he addressed his students by saying, "you should have studied these things during your first year of schooling". He explained that until the bell rang, "it was a boring session".

The second classroom period started with a new lesson about morality and values. Prior to the discussions, Mr. Jamal warned his students by saying, "whoever comments rudely, leaves the class". The students were talking to each other and did not seem interested at first in participating or paying attention to what the teacher had to say.
In response to that, he said “If some of you are trying to be cute, believe me this is neither
the time nor the place”; being upset he further commented, “what kind of manners do
these students have! Some of you are not even mature”. Mr. Jamal started explaining
about teachers’ respect and the importance of respecting each others. He started
discussing the topic of the lesson by asking questions; most of the answers came from the
male students who did so many language mistakes; so Mr. Jamal would always stop them
and correct. One of the girls in this classroom had good command of English so she was
always participating and answering the teacher’s questions who seemed very pleased
with her communicative abilities. The students complained about their previous
experiences with teachers. They always used the pronoun ‘she’ to refer to their teachers.

The third classroom period I observed in grade 12 was not different from all Mr.
Jamal’s classes. No activities took place, which eventually meant no group work. In this
specific session, Mr. Jamal addressed his students by “ladies and gentlemen”. Then the
lesson plan for today was to practice reading with few discussions meanwhile. One of the
male students began to read upon Mr. Jamal’s request. Several students read several
excerpts from the text and what I noticed is that the female students read with a low voice
while the male students read with a relatively high voice. The text was about mothers’
duties at home. Such a text also lends itself either to gender bias or to counteract gender
bias. Unfortunately, Mr. Jamal did not handle it as he should have. Mr. Jamal started
initiating discussions about the text. The boys were very loud and started calling out
answers without raising their hands, so Mr. Jamal’s response to that was “civilized people
raise their hands before speaking”; still his comment did not work and he wasn’t able to
handle the situation. At one point, one of the three girls who mostly attempted to talk in
this session said a statement and one of her male colleagues agreed to what she said and commented further, so Mr. Jamal said to the boy “because she’s a lady you blindly follow her... is she the boss?” by this comment I wrote in my notes “I think he’s trying to joke around and add some humor to the classroom, I only wish he had done it differently!”

The following is a dialogue between Mr. Jamal and one female student, whom I will call Rana, during the classroom discussion. They were discussing whether parents treat their children equally:

Rana: I want my freedom to go out at night

Mr. Jamal: If you do this you feel you are free and your parents love you?

Rana: I feel that my parents care more for my brother because they let him go out late at night and they don’t let me do the same

Mr. Jamal: So you feel you are treated unequally?

The time was up and the discussion was over. The classroom for this session was active and not boring at all; a lot of arguments and a lot of interactions took place. Those interactions were lead by the teacher and the male students. Boys in this classroom along with the teacher were dominant. Only three girls participated, which is a relatively small number. Eight girls were not involved in the classroom discussions at all.
Appendix M

Classroom observed: Grade 9

Teacher: Jana Omran

Age: 33

Previous education: Bachelor of Arts and Teaching Diploma in TEFL from the American University of Beirut AUB.

Teaching experience: 8 years

Dates of observation: November 8/2005

Time period: Two classroom periods

Grade 9

In this classroom there were 18 girls and five boys. Students were seated separately. No pictures of role models were observed in this classroom. The teacher was very strict in the way she was dealing with her students. She never smiled during the observed sessions. Most of the attention was going to the boys. Very little classroom discussions took place; however, during the discussions the teacher alternated between students raising their hands. I observed that the teacher’s feedback towards the boys was more encouraging than that towards the girls. Several times girls answered and got no reply or feedback; the teacher only continued with another point. On the other hand, when the boys answered with similar ideas or thinking level to that of the girls, the teacher’s reply would be “good idea!” The teacher used the generic he several times to refer to both genders.

Ms. Jana called on to her male students using their last names and the female students with their first names. During both ESL sessions students looked bored and were
not actively involved in the learning experience that was taking place. Most of the time students were involved in drills and practice. They also had a pop up quiz as soon as they entered the class. The teacher was very traditional in her teaching style; students were not allowed to communicate with each others. The teacher talked about a previously read text that was describing the great achievements of a man. Ms. Jana did not tackle any similar text that deals with the achievement of a woman. This classroom had no classroom management problems; it was an extremely quiet classroom and very traditional in its style of instruction. Students were passive receivers of knowledge most of the time.
Appendix N

Classrooms observed: Grades 10 & 11

Teacher: Fida Stephan

Age: 31

Previous education: Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Arts in TEFL from the American University of Beirut AUB. Currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Education.

Teaching experience: 10 years

Dates of observations: November 8/2005

Time period: Two classroom periods; one for each grade

Grade 10

This classroom had 16 boys and 9 girls. Each pair of students of the same sex was sitting next to each other. No pictures of role models from both sexes were found on any of the walls. The teacher was providing her students from both sexes with constructive feedback. All students were having equal chances to participate during classroom discussions. I wrote in my notes “I think she follows the school curriculum but she has her own touch in making her classroom an active and a nontraditional one”. Ms. Fida was scaffolding her students whenever needed. She was supportive to all her students. She used the deduction method when explaining Grammar. The four language skills were integrated. Male students were louder than the female students; however, Ms. Fida’s was handling the class in a way that gave equal access to classroom interactions for both genders. Students worked in pairs and groups of three to perform several tasks; however, students grouped themselves according to their sex. Therefore “single sex grouping”.

During instruction all the examples that were given used the pronoun *he*. For instance "*he* is worried".

*Grade 11*

This classroom had 12 girls and 17 boys. No pictures of role models were found on the bulletin boards. Same sex students were sitting in pairs on bench-like seats. This was a non-traditional classroom. The teacher did not follow the traditional style where she is the encoder of knowledge. All the students were active. Students were interacting with the teacher and with each others. Ms. Fida was following alternating strategies during interactions. All the students were anxious to participate in the classroom discussions. The teacher and the students used sexist language several times.

The ESL students did power point presentations to previously researched topics. Ms. Fida was using a scoring rubric for evaluation. The students were learning new Vocabulary words within context. Ms. Fida was the entire time active and she was scaffolding her students and encouraging them during their presentations. All the four language skills were integrated. She asked all her students to do a synthesis of the information they retrieved from the Internet. From time to time she joked in class and these jokes kept the class going in an active manner. The comments she gave her students were "don’t forget to keep good eye contact with your audience; try not to be monotonous". Ms. Fida was modeling the right answers or the right use of English rather than interrupting her students to correct them. At the end of the classroom session one of the male students approached me looking very proud and asked me "what do you think of our teacher? Isn’t she great?" I replied "yes she is great and I think you’ll get somewhere because of your teacher". It was an interesting class!
Appendix O

Classroom observed: Grades 12
Teacher: Joan Saher
Age: 52
Previous education: Bachelor of Arts in English language and Literature from the Lebanese University. In process of Masters of Arts in education, emphasis in TESOL, at the Lebanese American University, LAU.
Teaching experience: 35 years
Dates of observations: November 8 /2005
Time period: One classroom session

Grade 10

This class had 12 females and four males. There were no pictures of role models on the bulletin board. The teacher was using gender neutral language all the time. Students did not engage in group work; instead previously done tests were corrected with the teacher. The four males showed as if they had a problem with the teacher who seemed on good terms with the female students although she did try to engage the males in the classroom interactions. Mrs. Saher was friendly to her students and she scaffolded them whenever needed. When she was addressing one of the male students regarding the test, she said “this is the second time you do this mistake in the test!” the student replied “I think the problem is in the test”. The student was very rude in his reply. In this classroom the female students were more at ease than the male students who were not involved and seemed left out. They looked like they had taken a negative position from the teacher. Girls dominated in this classroom. At the end of the session, Mrs. Joan approached me...
and asked me about my observations. She was concerned in knowing my negative comments. For this reason I told her that I think she has problems with her male students that she should work them out. Mrs. Joan became defensive and said "what can I do for them!" as if she gave up on them.
Appendix P

Classroom observed: Grade 7 & 8

Teacher: Florence Abi Nader

Age: 34

Previous education: Bachelor of Sciences in Marketing Management from the University of Saskatoon, Sask, Canada

Teaching experience: 10 years

Dates of observations: November 16/2005

Time period: Two classroom sessions

Grade 7

Same as all the other classrooms this classroom had no pictures of role models. Every two students of the same sex were sitting next to each other. At this school all the students are required to stand up whenever the teacher or any authority figure enters the classroom. There were five quiet girls in this classroom and 13 active boys. The boys were more outspoken than the girls and they caused classroom management problems for the teacher. The student-student interactions that took place were mainly side talks and not in the English language. During the first period the students had a pop quiz and the teacher spent part of the time writing the questions on the board and trying to stop the boys from talking. The teacher’s comments were rude most of the times. At one point she told one of the male students “Don’t ask silly questions; just do the obvious”. None of the girls seemed to dare to ask any question. After the students were done with the quiz, the teacher gave them back previously done quizzed and read their graded out loud so that they all knew each others’ grades. The teacher spent the second classroom period
explaining about how to recognize adverbs in sentences. And gave them exercises where they had to work on individually and give her the right answer. This classroom was very traditional in terms of the teacher’s instructional strategies. The girls were passive while the boys were very active and loud thus getting most of the teacher’s attention. Several times the students and the teacher used the generic he to refer to both genders.

*Grade 8*

This classroom had no pictures of role models. Every two students of the same sex were sitting next to each other. All the students stood up when the teacher entered the classroom. There were 9 quiet girls in this classroom and 10 active boys. The boys were more outspoken than the girls and they caused classroom management problems for the teacher. The student-student interactions that occurred were only side talks in their mother tongue. During the first period the students had a pop up quiz and the teacher spent part of the time writing the questions on the board and trying to stop the boys from talking. The teacher’s comments were rude most of the times. At one point she answered a male student’s question by saying “You’re blind today, suddenly!” None of the girls asked any question. After the students were done with the quiz, the teacher gave them back their previously done quizzes and read their grades out loud so that they all knew each others’ grades. The teacher spent the second classroom period explaining about the importance of subject/verb agreement. Then the students were individually involved in drills and practice. The teacher used sexist language several times. The male students in this classroom were dominant and the females were quiet. Most of the interactions that took place were with the male students; the females avoided answering any of the teacher’s questions.