

## Gender Differences in English Language Acquisition

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### Abstract

In the modern era, it is said that male and female are equal but it's a fallacy, while reviewing many studies it is clear that both the genders are unique and are different. Human being is the best creation but have some distinctness between male and female, it can be hormonal, physical structure, behavior, cognition, language and so on. Based on biological and anatomic factors natural differences exist between the male and female. Both male and female have some deviating characteristics in them, if one is excellent in one, then the other counterpart is best in some other field, so it is not easy to say who is superior. Gender is an important factor in the acquisition and learning of language. The role of English teacher in teaching and learning process for different genders is really a tenacious job. To develop the English language proficiency the English as second language (ESL) teacher has to use new multidimensional strategies and methods. This review is trying to broaden awareness about gender difference in English language acquisition and strategies to overcome the differences towards English language proficiency of both the gender.

**Keyword:** *gender differences, ESL, language process in brain, language acquisition*

### I. Prologue

Language is one of human's key abilities and a universal attribute for human maturity. The time courses of language acquisition differ to a great extent among children. In case of language acquisition differences exist between both the genders. Prime prominence has so been on universal processes of language acquisition by focusing on children's achievement of milestones (Barbu et al. 2015). In earlier days, research was conducted on homogeneous population mainly about male, the results were biased but now heterogeneous populations are studied and think about that basically male and female are different in each trait but in case of language acquisition female is better than male (Barbu et al. 2015). Gender differences in language acquisition have been continually verified with outcome pointing to female as more competent language acquirers than male and the appearance of lexical creations in language learners' productions can be considered as come to appear a productive use of vocabulary. These lexical inventions offer insights into the mental processes that underlie productive vocabulary use. Studies devoted to explore gender differences in productive vocabulary use as regards the particular aspect of creating new creative lexical items are scarce. Female have an accelerated ability in language learning. Gonzalez (2017) affirms that in mixed groups male talked more than female although female are labeled as chatty.

### II. Gender differences

Llach (2012) Gender is one of the most basic criteria of classifying people into groups. Male are superhuman in physique and female are dominant in language acquisition. Female start to speak earlier than male because the part of the brain associated with selecting language performs harder in female than in male. Language processing is abstract in female and more sensory in male. Female naturally had a superior ability to pick up verbal fluency and better at articulating than male because female have a wider vocabulary than their male counterparts in their mental lexicon.

Gender difference plays a vital role in the growth of linguistic abilities in children. In similar environmental conditions, gender difference in language acquisition is clearly visible. Biological proof shows that processing of language in female is more abstract, since in males, is sensory. Hanlon, Thatcher and Cline's (1999) experimented on children aged two months to 16 years of age by taking electroencephalography (EEG) and show that on comparing male and female brain, male's brain develops four year in advance for process, spatial rotation and targeting, alternatively, females brains cerebral area develop six-year earlier for language, verbal-emotive, social cognition and fine motor skills. Gurian & Stevens, (2006) analyzed that for verbal-emotive functioning male use half the brain space in comparison to female. Barnea, Rassis, and Zaidel (2005) analyzed that the brain's ability can be trained within a fairly small timeframe, while studying and training the brain of children aged 12 to 14 years

through EEG neurofeedback they analyzed that enhanced activity in the cortex regional area was different for both the gender and their brain responded positively to the neurofeedback.

Gonzalez (2017) quotes that females are more traditional and male are more pioneering in using neologisms, it is a myth since, female writing in blogs use twice as many neologisms as female writing for the print publication of newspapers as female and male are equal.

### **III. Language acquisition**

Markovic (2005) reveals that male and female are wired differently for learning. Male and female think and learn in different ways since, their cerebral structure and cognitive functioning is diverse. According to Markovic (2005), "little girls on average learns to talk earlier and more quickly than boys; they outstrip them in talking correctly; their pronunciation is not spoiled by many bad habits and awkwardness found in male". Chambers, (2009) reveals that in terms of linguistic variation female are more traditional and use more frequent language than male while male are more innovative than female. Ullman (2005) evaluated that due to finer lexical abilities, female are better than male at verbal memory errands, for instance remembering word lists because they tend to retrieve from memory complex forms that male generally compose with the grammatical system. Gender is an important factor in the acquisition and computation of language.

According to Liach (2012) female are more able language acquirers than male. Come to be visible lexical creations in language learners' productions can be considered as manifest a productive use of vocabulary. These lexical inventions offer insights into the mental processes that underlie productive vocabulary use. The sex difference in phonological neighborhood effects is taken to suggest that female tend to produce over-regularizations in associative lexical memory. Shuy (1969) says that female's pronunciation is better than male's. Lakoff (1975) mentions that at the time of answering a question female usually answer a question with rising intonation pattern rather than falling intonation.

Xia (2013) states that female have their own style of choosing vocabulary; they use more adjectives to portray things and express their feelings. It show that female are more sensitive to the situation and more likely to express their emotions in the form of heart touching words, which makes female's language more interesting than male's occasionally. Female use adjectives, adverbs, diminutives, and pronouns, and male use swear words. In speech modulation, male tend to ask something directly, while female tend to be more polite. While speaking, female use interrogative sentences and correctness of grammar and male use imperative sentences.

### **IV. Language process in brain**

The brain structure is same for both the gender. Gender differences in language appear biological. Brain is divided into two hemispheres: left (analytical and logic function) and right (musical, visual and non-linguistic processes). While conversation both hemispheres are used by female and only one is used by male. Female are more creative and engaged in learning than male. Male learn better with the help of visualization and hearing, while female process languages more efficiently. Burman, Booth and Betan (2008) experiment that EEG show both the brain areas associated with language work harder in female during language tasks, while male and female rely on very diverse parts of the brain, when performing these tasks. Language processing is more abstract in female and more sensory in male. Female showed much greater activation in language areas of the brain than male in written or spoken form.

In male, correct performance depend on how hard visual areas of the brain work at the time of reading words. In hearing words, male' performance depended on how hard auditory areas of the brain worked. Bilateral activation in the inferior frontal and superior temporal gyri and activation in the left fusiform gyrus of female was greater than in male. Activation in the left inferior frontal and fusiform regions of female was also correlated with linguistic accuracy regardless of stimulus modality, where correlation with performance accuracy in male depended on the modality of word presentation. Female rely on a supramodal language network, whereas male process visual and auditory words differently.

Wheeling (2015) affirms that As soon as scientists could image the brain, they began hunting for sex differences. Some modest disparities have been reported male tend to have a larger amygdala, a region associated with emotion. Such differences are small and highly influenced by the environment, yet they have still been used to paint a binary

picture of the human brain, “even when the data show much more overlap than difference between males and females”.

## **V. English as Second Language (ESL)**

Noack (2015) says that female spend more time to study and read compared to male. Female are better than male at learning English as Second Language. Female uses a wider range of learning strategies, which helps them to memorize vocabularies better. Despite observed gender differences in learning styles, rates and behaviours, ESL teachers use same gender-blind approach to teach English language for both male and female.

## **VI. Ingress to perk up language learning for male**

Caine and Caine (1990) explain that brain tissue and cognitive processing are different for males and females. For teachers, cerebral sexual dimorphism is of pedagogical concern, though it indicates the affect, how children think, learn, and behave. While this wiring is different for each gender, it is not correct to say that male and female are opposites in their learning styles. Magon (2005) says that there are many learning activities and teaching methods that can be jointly beneficial for both male and female. Several activities worked better for boys and others for girls in terms of commitment, learning rate and retention. Female may learn language faster, it doesn't mean all male lag behind, or that they have a tough time developing their speech. Games, activities, playing, interacting, personal choices, behaviour, and way of speaking with people of the same age and everyday conversations can greatly help male in learning language fast.

Teacher can make male learn language through provide hands-on and experiential activities. For male, this is particularly important because their brains are highly geared toward the physical universe. During physical activities teachers can ask male students to describe their experiences verbally and in writing. When physical activities are connected to communication, it becomes easier for male to express themselves clearly and precisely. The physical activity gradually calms the student's anger down and allowed him to articulate his frustrations. Gurian & Stevens (2004) say that male students cannot sit silent and motionless in a place for more times, since they have low attention span. The ESL teacher can arrange comfortable seating arrangements by creating sufficient space between desks. Allow the male students to concentrate on learning activities by allowing them to swing leg or flap arm. Leg swinging or arm flapping in the class room will unconsciously engage the spatial-mechanical areas of the male student's brains.

Sax (2006) states that in the ESL classroom, verbal instructions should not be too long or too complex, especially for younger male. Instructions should be delivered in a loud voice, since speaking softly puts male to sleep and might even prove weakness or inferiority. Teacher can use a loud voice, at the time of speaking to students and be directive, concise and brief with instructions. Male get bored by lengthy instructions, so minimized verbal and written instructions can be used. Teacher can avoid lots of translations and give adequate time to the students to translate between topics on their own. Slightly cool temperature in the classroom will keep the male students calm and help in increasing concentration. Male should be given enough physical space to move freely in classroom and offer activities that promote bonding between students and with teacher

## **VII. The wind up**

Functions of brain in male and female, while, learning ESL is different. Male and female need to be stimulated in a different way while ESL learning. Female are better than male in language learning. In place of using gender differentiated instruction, same methods are used by the teachers for both the genders, which is not a right strategy. In learning ESL male students need more care and diverse strategies compared to female. Teacher's role is prominent in ESL classroom. Engagement and enjoyment in learning lessons do not always correlate to successful learning of content. Gender-specific methodologies should be used by the teachers. Keeping in mind the gender differences and the diverse needs of both the genders, the teacher has to give special care, adopt new methodologies and diverse strategies while teaching ESL. Create a favorable classroom environment for both the genders, so that they can learn English with interest and enthusiasm. This interest to learn English will enhance their learning and help them in the survival of fittest.

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