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GENDER IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHING STRATEGIES

Teaching English is considered as a subject that shares all the spheres of human life through developing skills and teaching language items. In this aspect roles of girls and women as well as boys and girls are presented in a social view within explicit or implicit status of gender.

Using non-sexist language, male-female ratios in teaching materials, avoiding gender stereotyping in the educational system will allow to keep teaching strategies in the framework of ideas-based model. Arranging an interaction in the field of foreign language teaching indicates differences in the complexity of asking questions for boys and boys' willing to express their own ideas without been afraid to be mistaken, and girls' keeping silence in order to avoid mistakes. As for a motivation boys and girls differ in the types of it as girls tend to integrative motivation and boys' outcomes depend on using instrumental motivation.

Recent theoretical developments have revealed that gender differences are a complex problem in education due to many contradictions. Thus, Wiliam suggested that sex differences in cognition are small and become narrowed in some subject areas. Additionally, Hyde analyzed that males and females are quite similar on most, but not all, psychological variables. However, the differences between girls and boys in emerging language skills were confirmed by The British Psychological Society: girls are slightly ahead of boys in early communicative gestures, in productive vocabulary and combining words. As to boys, they were not found to be more variable than girls.

Most of the theories of gender differences in language use are however focused on explaining cognitive achievement attributed to anatomical differences in male and female brains. Researches Springer and Deutsch concluded the differences of the right and left hemisphere in men, meanwhile women have more integrated brain function than men. One of the major topics to be investigated in this field by the researches from Northwestern University is the language processing which is more sensory in boys and more abstract in girls.

The teachers' contradictory answers in the survey about gender sensitivity highlight the problem that the Ukrainian schools are not ready for accepting a gender as a part of English language education.

Keywords: *gender; English language textbooks; secondary language education; gender differences; male and female learners; questionnaire.*

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ГЕНДЕР У НАВЧАННІ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ: ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ НАВЧАЛЬНИХ СТРАТЕГІЙ

У статті розглядаються окремі ґендерні моделі за їх компонентами та висвітлюється їх вплив на освітнє середовище в процесі вивчення англійської мови. Виявлено, що мовна освіта по-різному інтерпретує вплив статі на формування мовної особистості учнів за змістом мовних матеріалів, мотиваційних практик, взаємодії на основі ґендерних відмінностей тощо.

Було проведено ґендерний аналіз мовного та візуального змісту вітчизняних підручників з англійської мови, а також запропоновано викладачам англійської мови пройти опитування, щоб визначити рівень їхньої ґендерної чутливості.

Ключові слова: *стать; підручники англійської мови; мовна освіта у закладах загальної середньої освіти; ґендерні відмінності; учнівство різних статей; анкета.*

Introduction. Language has been stereotyped as female-dominated for many centuries. Furthermore, nowadays foreign languages are considered as mostly female area of knowledge, what can be easily demonstrated by the recent findings of researches concerning gender, gender differences, gender curricula, gender language practices, sociological analysis, etc. [3]. Clearly, if we want to change this situation, we need to act at an early stage in the learners' lives and at a stage of pre-service language teacher education as a whole cycle.

Analysis of relevant research and publications. Gender and its influence on human beings is defined in two models. The first model considered as a people-based one according to which the notion of gender is applied to human individuals almost inevitably and associated with biological and physiological sex that defines men and women. The

previous researches using gender approach have shown that women and men are indicated in a natural conservative way in view of education as a means of educating boys and girls into their 'natural' roles as men (breadwinner, work-oriented, head of the family) and women (nurturer, carer, family-oriented) [3, 16].

The second model as ideas-based one, where the ideas about women, men, boys, girls and/or gender relations are socially and ideologically shaped. This approach, perceives men and women's social roles as shaped largely by influences arising out of history, culture and society, and thus constantly in the process of change as society itself changes. Education is here regarded as an instrument for creating awareness of why particular sex differences are seen as important at particular times and for encouraging greater equality between the sexes, as well as for challenging dualistic and stereotyped assumptions [3, 16]. In other words, in this context gender is associated with people of different biological sexes, but with ideas of learning, socialization, social construction and representation rather what is innate (musculature, genes etc.) [8, 9].

Most of the research in this filed is conducted within approaches mentioned above. Thus, Maccoby and Jacklin [5], Hyde and Linn [4] in their studies investigate gender differences and similarities, Jukasz Pakuia, Joanna Pawelczyk and Jane Sunderland empirically explore gender and sexuality in relation to classroom interaction and textbooks in the primary and secondary English language classroom in Poland [8], gendered education in Ukraine in its social aspect has been studied by the group of Ukrainian researchers whose field of scientific interests is gender theory [13].

Research methodology: analysis and generalization of the literature sources, analysis of the online questionnaire.

The aim of the paper is to elucidate some peculiarities of the perspectives of teaching strategies in English Language Education on the base of gender approach. The tasks of the paper are focused on learning prior researches concerning gender and literature reviews of gender differences inside and outside of language education; making an attempt to analyze the main peculiarities of English language textbooks within gender approach; conducting an online questionnaire for determining the level of teachers' gender awareness.

Results. The notion of gender as a social system is rather important for language study as it involves the idea that language and language use are interrelated in a social context of class and age, determined by gender or sex. Teaching English is not only about teaching language. It is a subject that shares all spheres of human life through such channels as writing, reading, listening, speaking, grammar, lexical and phonetic exercises. All of them present people in a wide range of social roles. Furthermore, English Foreign Language (EFL) students learn about the world from English textbooks, classroom talks and interaction, which are prescribed by syllabus and curriculum.

A number of themes are to be found in the literature on gender and language education which deal with educational practice of foreign language teaching. These are the curriculum (official and hidden), classroom materials, motivational and psychological factors of students, classroom management and classroom interaction, teacher attitudes, assessment, etc. Now it is important to concretize some of them.

During the conducting of research 'Gender and Sexuality in English Language Education: Focus on Poland' [8] funded by British Council, researchers Jukasz Pakuia, Joanna Pawelczyk and Jane Sunderland often heard comments of EFL teachers such as 'Oh, I only teach English, there is nothing related to gender in my classes'. But gender is still in educational establishments with its explicit or implicit existence. Very often we are witnesses of such situations when boys, for example, in a mixed FL secondary classroom consistently receive lower marks than girls, or the teacher pays more attention to boys than to girls, or allows girls to talk in FL more than boys. All these may be a source of academic disadvantage to girls, and to boys, respectively and in this way we can speak about explicit existence of gender.

In contrast, in the language acquisition process we notice lots of examples of implicitly gendered features of the target language. For instance, EFL teachers mostly neglect gendered features of the target language. For instance, '*man*', *chairman*', '*The student may exercise his right to appeal. He must do so before the due date*' instead of *'person', 'chairperson'*, *'The student may exercise her/his (their) right to appeal. She/he (they) must do so before the due date'*, or *Hello! Hi, guys!* instead of gender neutral *Good morning, everyone!* etc.

The teacher's ability to incorporate linguistic and social differences into their own methodology requires to build strong programs based on the campaign for non-sexist language in English and gain the commitment of the dedication of teachers in teaching vocabulary. For instance,

The most visible issue that aligns with gender in English language education is classroom materials: textbooks, teacher's books, workbooks, grammars, dictionaries, hand-outs etc. All of them present human

Chart 1.

Samples of English Non-Sexist Vocabulary in Education [9]

Alternative item	Intended to replace	Reason
Ms	Miss/Mrs	to achieve equivalence with Mr and to end the practice of women being 'defined' by their marital status
human beings, woman and man, person chairperson, coordinator, workforce, staff, human resources artificial, constructed, fabricated, handmade average person, ordinary people spokesperson barperson police officer fire fighter business person, business executive	man manpower, chairman man-made man in the street spokesman barman (especially as referents for women) policeman fireman businessman	to put an end to the 'think male' phenomenon, and the 'rendering invisible' of women
s/he, 'singular *they*'	'generic *he*'	as above
doctor usher flight attendant actor waiter, server secretaries, office assistant ask my secretary/assistant	lady doctor usherette air hostess, stewardess actress waitress girls in the office ask my girl	to achieve equivalence with 'masculine' terms, and to end the practice of 'trivialising' and 'marking' feminine terms

characters, who carry out a range of social actions etc. Content lines, plots and colorful images transmitted through the content of language textbooks often serve as an example for students to follow.

Polish researches observed pioneer works on language textbooks (1980 – 1994 years) of such authors as Karen Porreca, Marlis Hellinger, Karrol and Kowitz, Adam Jaworski [8, 19]. Their studies mostly indicated relative invisibility of women and girls in gender-stereotypical occupations with predictable differences in prestige and gender imbalance in favour of men etc.

Language textbooks provide important indicators of the extent of gender stereotyping in the education system as a whole. Our findings of English language textbooks that are recommended by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in 2006-2008 years are important reminders of the need to be vigilant:

1) women and men in gender stereotypical occupations with predictable differences in prestige as '*our English teacher Nina Ivanivna'* [12, 55], *'Paul wants to become a doctor now'* [12, 77], *'He's a computer programmer'* [12, 86], *'Olha's aunt, Maria, is a librarian'* [12, 88], *'My father, James Bell, is a journalist. My mother, Emily Bell, doesn't work. She's a housewife'* [12, 18], or in visual and content disproportion – among eight jobs only one is female (*ballerina*) and rest of them are visually presented by men (*writer, traveler, scientist, mechanic, painter, television news reporter, clown*) [12, 80];

2) descriptions of women and girls in terms of physical appearance and emotion like *pretty girl*, *nervous woman* or visual disproportion concerning girls appereance" [12, 106];

3) girls and boys in gender stereotypical mental abilities as *'she is fond of foreign languages'* and sentence that students must say as "false" *'Rona is good at many subjects, especially Geography and Science'* [12, 76];

4) children as speakers in dialogues and vocabulary or grammar exercises in English language textbooks collect and describe gender-stereotypical things, e.g. boys – *coins, balls, computer games, stamps, badges, toy soldiers* etc., girls – *dolls, soft toys, cactuses, clothes* etc.

In the Ukrainian context, boys in language textbooks still tended to be more active, courageous and sporty meanwhile girls are taught to be pretty, perfect, bright pupils dreaming about summer holidays and avoiding risk with failure [12, 34–35, 54, 128]:

Chart 2.

The Sample of Gender Stereotyped Exercise [12]

boys write about in their letters		**girls write about in their letters**	
Paul	pet animals	Sophhie	beautiful clothes
Dan	baseball	Taoru	singing
Marco	sport	Natasha	doing homework
Eric	riding a bicycle	Anita	planting flowers
Kostas	music	Carmen	telling about holidays
Marec	playing football		
Cheng	swimming		

But some language textbooks of Ukrainian authors [11, 14] tend to minimize any bias in content, such as over-generalisation and stereotyping: *'why was your classmate ...?', 'ask your classmates ...', 'tell your partner ...'* [11, 8], *'the librarian/the parents/the teachers tell(s)/ask(s) ...'* [11, 39], *'the doctor told the patient to ...', 'the PT lessons teacher asked the schoolchildren not to ...'* [11, 40].

When it comes to classroom interaction gender is still influential in the field of FLT Eggen and Kauchak declares that teachers treat male and female students differently. Teachers ask more complex and abstract questions for boys and their answers are getting more evaluated for creativity [6, 177]. What is more, male students are more eager to express their own ideas and they are not afraid to make mistakes. On the contrary, female students, in spite of the fact that they are rather sociable and are constantly encouraged to speak more, would like to keep in silence in order to avoid mistakes and becoming embarrassed in the language classroom. We consider that all these issues are interrelated due to physiological, psychological and social factors in the framework "gender – language education".

Motivation as one of the psychological items which defines the level of learners' feelings of interest and excitement in the process of language learning is also concerned in the framework of gender approach. It is assumed that females, more than males, demonstrate integrative motivation as one of the socially based orientation aimed to be identified with the language group [7, 326]. Furthermore, as was mentioned by S. Baron-Cohen, girls are inherently more emphatic than boys. The communication with others is very important part of their lives, so it stands to reason that the communication with others also affects learning processes for girls. Thus, we can suppose, that girls can benefit from collaboration and interaction with a positive impact on educational outcomes. In contrast, boys use instrumental motivation, in which knowledge of the language is mainly desired for their job advancement [7, 326]. So, males are more pragmatic learners focused of their future professional perspectives.

Research on comparing male and female characteristics and performance in education has a long tradition. For decades, one of the most popular ideas in literature is the idea that girls demonstrate superiority in verbal skills (reading, spelling, grammar tests) and boys – in mathematical and visual-spatial skills. However, later few studies were focused on the validity of tests and other forms of assessment, which indicated sex differences. As a result, it was highlighted the problem of understanding responses from people when confronted by test situations, but not identifying and working with sex differences (Gipps & Murphy, 1994). Nevertheless, Gipps and Murphy (1994) noted, like Maccoby and Jacklin previously, that the range of differences is small compared to the similarities existing between the sexes. Moreover, Wiliam suggested that sex differences in cognition are small and become narrowed in some subject areas [10]. Very few of the tests show a standard mean difference in favour of either males or females of more than 0.4 which means that less than 4 % of the variation in individuals' test scores is related to sex differences [10, 661]. Additionally, Hyde analyzed that males and females are in fact quite similar on most, but not all, psychological variables. She proposed the term a 'gender similarities hypothesis', which she described as follows: the gender similarities hypothesis stands in stark contrast to the differences model, which holds that men and women, girls and boys, are vastly different psychologically. The gender similarities hypothesis states, instead, that males and females are alike on most-but not all-psychological variables... A few notable exceptions are some motor behaviours

(e.g. throwing distance) and some aspects of sexuality, which show large gender differences. Aggression shows a gender difference that is moderate in magnitude [4, 590].

Differences between girls and boys in emerging language skills were explored by the group of researchers from ten non-English language communities on the base of The British Psychological Society [2]. The results showed that girls are slightly ahead of boys in early communicative gestures, in productive vocabulary, and in combining words. And contrary, boys were not found to be more variable than girls. Researchers admitted that despite extensive variation in language skills between language communities, the difference between girls and boys remained. It was suggested that the difference is caused by strong factors that do not change between language communities.

A different approach to the research on gender differences in language use in partly given in cognitive achievement attributed to anatomical differences in male and female brains. What is more, researchers Springer and Deutsch concluded that the left hemisphere in men is more specialized for verbal activity and the right hemisphere is more specialized for abstract or spatial processing; women have a more integrated brain function than men due to a richer connection between the two sides of the brain [6, 88]. On top of that, researchers from Northwestern University and the University of Haifa showed that areas of the brain associated with language work harder in girls than in boys during language tasks, and that boys and girls rely on different parts of the brain when performing these tasks. The findings of Douglas Burman and Games R. Booth suggest that language processing is more sensory in boys and more abstract in girls. The researchers found that girls still showed significantly greater activation in language areas of the brain than boys. The information in the tasks got through to girls' language areas of the brain – areas associated with abstract thinking through language. And their performance accuracy correlated with the degree of activation in some of these language areas. However, in boys' accurate performance depended when reading words on how hard visual areas of the brain worked. In hearing words, boys' performance depended on how hard auditory areas of the brain worked [1].

In early 2021 by the author of this article was conducted the survey as online Google form questionnaire in which 42 female English teachers took part. After analyzing the responses of English teachers with different experiences and places of work, we want to focus on the following positions:

- only 24% of English teachers pay attention to such an element as the gender of students when planning a lesson;

- teachers' opinions diametrically differ on the peculiarities of learning language aspects by both genders (almost 50% by 50%);

- denying the idea that girls are more successful in languages, teachers, answering on another question, point to a more effective formation of productive skills in girls, despite the fact that speaking and writing are traditionally more complex in the process of developing;

- an important factor was the response focused on enriching their methodological variety of methods and techniques – 76%, but only 54% of all respondents consider it necessary to involve diversity of methods and techniques due to genders.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. The contributions of this work are presented as follows: every language community is capable to have a good impact on the boundaries of gender differences by minimizing them, on the one hand, and taking into account to have a clear sense of purpose of educational effects, on the other hand; gender differences in language are proved as well on the neuropsychological level that demonstrate for educational system of Ukraine the necessity of immediate considering gender approach in FLT; the Ukrainian school is not quite ready to recognize the presence of such an element in education as gender, which is not implemented methodically in the process of professional development of an English student teacher at the university and in their continued professional development in service.

The conducted study does not cover all aspects of the research problem. Prospects for further studies include the analysis of the teaching strategies in English grammar and vocabulary within the gender approach.

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"Бувають учителі з природженим педагогічним талантом, які вміють під час уроків жити спільним життям усього класу, забувати про себе, про свої власні турботи, радощі і тривоги. Кожний урок такого вчителя є розширенням розумового кругозору учня, задоволенням його природної допитливості, розбудженої попередніми успіхами, є насолодою, а не мукою".

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