

Research

GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION: IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS' GENDER PARTIALITY IN EVALUATING MONO- MIXED GENDER EFL LEARNERS' WRITING PERFORMANCE

Ali Rahimi,

Bangkok University, Thailand

Ali Mohammad Fallahi,

University of Kashan, Iran

Ali.r@bu.ac.th

Abstract

Gender plays a significant role in education and evaluation. Accepting it as a fateful variable, many researchers have discussed gender and its influence on education and have come to various and contradictory results in this area just to compound the problem. Unfortunately, in Iran, there is a dearth of gender studies on education and EFL situations and this ignorance can lead to the expansion of prone-atmosphere to gender bias and its undesirable effects. The present study conducted a quasi-experimental method and explored the existence of the gender partiality in Iranian EFL contexts. To achieve this purpose, two samples were singled out: 1) students (N=49) who were asked to produce writing samples; and 2) teachers (N=30) who consented to score these papers. The teachers were asked to score twin-papers produced by the EFL learners with their names changed to the mixed-sex during predetermined and specified time intervals in two various cycles. The results of the study confirmed the existence of gender partiality among Iranian EFL teachers towards their students of the opposite-sex.

Keywords: Gender, Evaluation, EFL, Writing skill, Partiality

Introduction

The importance of fair judgment as a fundamental principle in human life is axiomatic. In education and in EFL situations, many efforts have been made to avoid undesirable effects gender causes in scoring and evaluation. Meanwhile, crucial discussions have been made on the imperceptible and unobtrusive variables which may bring about a nebulous position in such situations. So meticulous care and painstaking researches have been carried out while further investigations have been accentuated. Variables like gender, race, and ethnicity have always been treated as key terms in cultural studies in educational contexts. These terms are, despite being neglected as the vital and effective elements in different scopes of education, testing and assessment, justice, test fairness, and ethicality of assessment in relation to gender which are the main focus in this study. The aforementioned categories will be investigated in writing as a subjective skill in EFL situations.

Review of Related Literature

Evaluation

The terms “evaluation,” “assessment,” and “testing” are treated differently in various English textbooks but the general notion introduces an entangled relationship in a network. In other words, although differentiated, the terms may have been used in many situations interchangeably. Evaluation is regarded as an umbrella term which embodies assessment and testing (Nunan, 1999) while the way teachers evaluate their students' progress is usually referred to as “teachers' assessments.” Evaluation and scoring are the inseparable ingredients of all teaching and learning processes. Chastain (1988: 378) notes that “Evaluation serves as a prime source of motivation for many students”. No score on any given test can represent adequately what the students have learnt (Chastain, 1988). Yet scores are the main criteria for measuring students' abilities in their studies. Scores are the ultimate criteria against which all decisions are made and all programs are designed. So if the scores are not reliable or valid, all judgments will go awry. Weir (2005) unpacks scoring validity as “the extent to which test results are *stable over time, consistent in terms of the content sampling and free from bias*” (p. 23).

As Childs (1990) puts it, test results are often regarded as the basis for decisions that have considerable influence on students' educational future; tests should provide equal opportunities for all students to demonstrate their

abilities and knowledge. The issues of gender bias and fairness in testing are concerned with differences in opportunities and behavioral factors for men and women.

In most EFL situations in Iran, teachers, usually, rule the roost in assigning grades to their students. In natural EFL situations, especially in writing assessments, Iranian teachers usually tend to read their students' writing papers/samples without any special framework and to assign scores to them according to their own tastes and criteria.

Gender

Gender has been studied from multifarious dimensions. Some scholars (Dominguez, 2003; Blumberg, 2007) have studied gender bias in textbooks, for example, Blumberg (2007) using Myra's and Sadker's work on Curricular Bias identifies different gender bigotries in textbooks. Others (Van Houtte, 2007; Siskind & Sharon, 1997; Simpson & Erickson, 1983; Saft, & Pianta, 2001; Kikkinos, Panayiotou, & Davazoglou, 2005) have discussed the student-teacher interactions, behavior and relationships in relation to gender.

Gender and sex, generally, are not two separable entities. Although in social and psychological sciences they may be treated as two different entities, the general assumption is to utilize sex and gender synonymously. In educational situations and in linguistic behavior, however, the relationship becomes closer. Eckert (1989) argues that, "the correlations of sex with linguistic variables are only a reflection of the effects on linguistic behavior of gender—the complex social construction of sex—and it is in this construction that one must seek explanations for such correlations" (p. 245). In this study, however, the discussion over gender views male and female characteristics both from biological (sex) and social (gender) aspects. So the terms will be used interchangeably.

Gender is an unstable variable. It brings about different results when it is studied in accordance with different features (race, ethnicity, age, etc.). But the case is that in different geographical or regional situations, same features vis-à-vis gender may lead to completely different outcomes. In other words, a research done about gender in two different situations (e.g. two different cities in a country or in different periods of time) may result in two entirely different conclusions.

Features affecting gender in social and educational sciences are abundant. Kovar and Doty (1994), for example, investigate evidence for the

effect of gender and self-esteem and they discuss the importance of childhood education, gender, and self-esteem:

There is clearly need to be seriously concerned about the effects of gender bias upon a population. Gender identity is relevant to individual self-esteem and individual self-esteem impacts societal well being. Building self identity, self-esteem, and skills for social interaction are two major tasks in the early childhood education. Children are aware very early that color, language, gender and physical ability differences are connected with privilege and power (p.12).

Likewise, both boys and girls suffer because of sex bias in society and in education (p. 22). Lakoff (1975) believes that the female gender is behaved partially more than male gender and she calls the women's language "the language of powerlessness". She (2003) argues that there are different expectations about the way men and women conduct themselves linguistically. She states that, according to the social stereotypes, women's language is regarded as "incompetent, inappropriate, or unintelligible-and therefore worthy only of ridicule, punishment, or inattention" due to their powerless status in society (p. 177). Some researches vindicate the role of attractiveness in gender-biased demeanors. According to Agthe, Spörrle, and Maner, reported by Bolen (2010). men and women gave the advantage to attractive candidates when dealing with the opposite-sex but the situation is reversed when being judged by someone of the same sex.

It is generally vindicated that there is a relationship between the attributes (e.g. evaluation, ethnicity, age etc.) of teachers and students, which affects teachers' verbal and nonverbal behavior and perceptions of their students' behavior and their relationship with them (Borg, 1998; Saft & Pianta, 2001; Simpson & Erickson, 1983; Kokkinos, Panayiotou, & Davazoglou, 2005). It is believed that, in teacher-student interaction, girls receive less attention from teachers due to the teachers' tendency to interact more with boys (Jones, 1989; Simpson & Erickson, 1983; Einarsson & Granstrom, 2002; Sadker, Sadker, & Klein, 1991). Van Houtte (2007:827) argues that "these gender differences may result from the differential behavior that boys and girls exhibit. Boys are found to be more active in class and to interact more with the teachers, which leads to more teacher contact and feedback for boys than for girls".

Some scholars, (Good, Cooper& Blakey, 1980; Davies, 1979) however, believe that teachers have more manipulation, discipline, and control over

boys than girls. Girls' behaviors are generally deemed to be less problematic than boys' (Kokkinos et al., 2005). It is believed that boys are preferred in general due to their behavioral actions and as a result, it is assumed that teachers trust boys more than girls, but teachers have higher expectations about norms and academic stuff from girls (Schneider & Coutts, 1979; Davies, 1979, 1984). Other studies (Dusek & Joseph, 1985; Huges, Cavell, & Willson, 2001; Ingleby & Cooper, 1974) reveal that teachers prefer girls because they are more punctual, responsible and cooperative. Similarly, Myhill and Jones (2006) suggest that students themselves perceive that teachers treat boys harshly and negatively while their treatments towards girls are gentle and soft. They further report that students regard female teachers to be more fair and impartial. Van Houtte (2007:828) reiterates Schneider and Coutts (1979) that "male teachers seem more tolerant of restlessness and aggressiveness and attach more importance to freedom and autonomy", while female teachers are believed to emphasize on "order, obedience, and cooperation".

The research by Van Houtte (2007) shows that, according to such evidence, "it might be expected that teacher gender affects the teacher-pupil relationship" (p. 828). Einarsson and Granstrom (2002) assert that the gender of the teacher does not have any effect on teacher-student interaction. Van Houtte (2007) recapitulates her findings in this way:

(1) male teachers have more interaction with their pupils at the intermediate level than do their female colleagues, but that this pattern changes at the upper level when female teachers have more interaction with their pupils than do male teachers; and (2) boys, in general, are given more attention than girls, but at the upper level male teachers pay relatively more attention to female pupils (p. 828).

Researches also demonstrate that the field of study and major can be of significance in gender-related studies. Holmlund and Sund (2008), for example, disclose that "girls clearly score higher than boys on Swedish and English tests, there is no obvious gender difference in mathematics" (p. 38). In a similar vein, they quote Lavy (2004) "who studies the significance of gender stereotypes in the evaluation of the student grades". They cite the study conducted by Lavy (2004) as follows:

Using a natural experiment which allows for comparisons between a gender-blind test score and a non-gender blind score, he finds, contrary to his expectations that the gender bias is in favor of girls. Girls have systematically

higher scores on the non-blind test compared to the blind test, but these seem to be a small systematic difference based on teacher's gender in the discrimination against boys. The gender bias in favor of girls is larger among male math teachers than female math teachers, but the opposite is true about physics, biology and chemistry (cited in Holmlund & Sund, 2008: 39).

Holmlund and Sunk (2008) conclude that "gender interactions cannot explain the gender grade gap in school performance for students of theoretical tracks in Swedish upper-secondary school...it seems like teacher's gender have [sic] no or little effect on student outcomes" (p. 50).

It is a general assumption that, the discussions over gender as an attribute in educational settings with regard to other attributes (e.g. evaluation, ethnicity, age, etc.) are completely baffling and contradictory. Many scholars in this field unanimously stress the tentativeness of their studies and suggest the need for further research. It is recognized that gender studies are situational-bound due to the fact that what might be considered sexist in a situation cannot be generalized to a new setting (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004, cited in Biglar Beigi, 2009). As it was mentioned earlier, gender is a protean variable and in a state of flux. It is why a copious amount of homogeneous studies end in heterogeneous results. The research by Vandrick (1999) suggests that "girls [in America] do not receive equal attention from teachers, that girls are often sexually harassed in schools, that adolescent girls lose confidence in their academic abilities (particularly in math and science)". She further continues that "cultural variables affect the research results" (n.p.).

Studies on Gender in Iran's Education

Evidence shows the paucity of research conducted on gender studies in Iran, especially in EFL situations. The joint study conducted in Iran and India (Shobeiri, Omidvar, & Prahallada, 2006) argues that "gender has influence on environmental attitude of teachers. In both countries, female teachers manifested better attitude than males towards environment" (p.356). In another study, Ahanchian (2003) states that the gender of the students/teachers do not have any effect on the students' appraisals of their teachers. He further reports that these appraisals might be significantly different when they are studied in different faculties with different majors. Dabiri (2008), in her study over female teachers' class management, reveals that more than 59.09 percent of female teachers tend to teach male students. Ahanchian (2003) also mentions that "people generally have negative attitudes towards women and the black persons and disregarding their real

potentials, people misjudge them" (p. 186). Another study conducted by Rezazadeh, and Tavakoli (2009) demonstrate the relationship between gender, academic achievement, years of study, and levels of test anxiety. The study reports that "female students have a higher level of test anxiety in contrast to male students" (p. 68). Other studies have been conducted on other issues (e.g. textbooks evaluation) in relation to gender (Nazari, 2010). These studies confirm the dearth of research on the effect of gender on teacher-student relationships especially in EFL situations.

Methodology

Research Design

Experimental researches share three main characteristics generally known as: 1) Randomization, 2) Observation, and 3) Treatment. If one or more of these features that characterize experiments are violated, the study will be recognized as a quasi- experiment . The present study enjoys the two features of an experimental research except randomization. The samples in the current study were singled out by convenience sampling so one of the aforementioned features (randomization) is supposed to be violated. In this regard, the present study is regarded as a quasi- experimental research. To avoid possible bias in this study, the researcher did not inform the participants about the trend of the research. To use a more technical term, the so-called "blind experiment" was employed to avoid any permissible partiality.

Participants

The study was conducted with different groups of participants. In the main procedure of the research investigating the non-existence of gender partiality in Iranian EFL situations, the students of two intact classes at the English department at the University of Kashan were asked to write samples on some given topics. From these students (group A, N= 49) whose age ranged between 18-27, 23 (46.93%) were BA students of English translation and 26 (53.06%) were BA students of English literature. The translation and literature students were both at their 6th term of English studies. 33 (67.34%) of these students were female and 16 (32.63%) were male.

The teachers of English as a foreign language also participated as the raters of writing samples in this study. It should be noted here that the term

“teacher” is used as an umbrella term for all academic ranks, i.e., teachers, instructors, assistant professors, etc. The teachers, who were EFL male and female non-native speaker teachers (group B, N= 30), were asked to score these writing samples on scoring sheets in specified time tables defined by the researcher (discussed later in procedure section). The scoring sheets were used to make sure that the raters were cognizant of the students' gender (by writing the students' names on the scoring sheets). Of these teachers who were aged between 22-42, 17 (56.66%) were male and 13 (43.33%) were female with at least 1 and at most 15 years of experience. These teachers were selected from four universities and different institutes by accidental sampling: the University of Qom, 2 (6.66%), the University of Kashan, 5 (16.66%), Islamic Azad University, 3 (10%), Payame Noor University, 2 (6.66%), and different language schools, 18 (60%). Among these teachers, 3 (10%) had BA, 15 (50%) were MA students, 6 (20%) had M.A, 2 (6.66%) were PhD students, and 4 (13.33%) had PhD.

The following tables illustrate the summary of the participants' backgrounds.

Table 1: General Demographic Background of the Students

Group	N	Gender		Major		Age (M)*	Learning Experience (M)
		Male	Female	Lit.	Trans.		
A	49	16 (32.63%)	33 (67.34%)	26 (53.06%)	23 (46.93%)	20.71	4.33

*The character M stands for the Mean.

Table 2: General Demographic Background of the Teachers

Group B		N=30	N	Percent
Gender	Male		17	56.66%
	Female		13	43.33%
Degree	BA		3	10%
	MA student		15	50%
	MA		6	20%
	PhD student		2	6.66%
	PhD		4	13.33%
Affiliation	University of Qom		2	6.66%
	University of Kashan		5	16.66%
	Azad University		3	10%
	PNU		2	6.66%
	Institutes		18	60%

Mean	Age	29.5	4 missings for Age & Learning Exp.
	Learning Experience	6.63	

Instruments

To fulfill the aims of the study, students' writing samples as instruments were used with the original and changed (bogus) names to measure the raters' evaluations about the role of gender in EFL situations.

Procedures

In the quasi-experiment method, 49 male and female EFL students at the University of Kashan were asked to write a comparison-contrast paragraph of 100-400 words as a specific task. The students were introduced with three topics; 1. differences and similarities of living at the dormitory and at home, 2. differences and similarities of learning English in/out of an English-speaking country, and 3. differences and similarities between radio and TV. The students' writing samples were, then, photocopied two times: once with the students' original names and once with the students' names changed to their opposite-sex, on the writing samples. Thus out of these 49 students' writing samples, 98 writing samples were collected: 49 writing samples with the students' real names and 49 writing samples with the students' names changed to those of their opposite-sex.

For example, a paper named Ali Asgarzadeh (masculine name) was photocopied once with its original name and once with the name changed to the one of its opposite-sex Maryam Rahmani (Feminine name). The purpose of this activity was to make sure that the papers with original and changed names were exactly the same in appearance. To perform the research procedure in this phase, two cycles were considered.

In Cycle One, the papers were divided into four groups. The groups were organized as: group I) including 3 papers with the students' original names, group II) including 3 papers with the students' names changed to their opposite-sex, group III) including 3 papers with the students' original names, other than the first group, and group IV) including 3 papers with the students' names changed to their opposite-sex, other than the names of the students in group III. In other words, the papers in groups I and II and the papers in groups III and IV were exactly the same. The only difference was that the names changed to their opposite-sex ones.

Each rater at this cycle was asked to score the papers according to their own evaluation, without any special framework, during 5 weeks by a

counterbalance technique. In this way rater A, for example, in the first week scored group I; then after one week s/he scored group III, during the third week no scoring was recorded, and then in the fourth week group II and in fifth week group IV were scored by this rater. The specified time and the counterbalance technique were used to eliminate both the Test effect and the Hawthorn effect. Table 3 illustrates this scoring procedure.

Table 3: Scoring procedure

TEACHER	GROUPS	TIMETABLE	ID
	A	I (O)*	First week
II (C)		Fourth week	N'1
III (O)		Second week	N2
IV (C)		Fifth week	N''2

* The characters (O) and (E) stand for Original and Changed names papers.

The Second Cycle was employed because some raters were not available at the specified times or were very busy or did not, by any reason, tend to participate in the first cycle. So they were asked to score two or three (based on their time and inclinations) writing samples according to their own evaluation, with/without any special framework. In the first stage they were given the papers with original names and after 5 weeks, they were handed out the same papers with the students' names changed to their opposite-sex ones. The raters were not aware of the fact that they scored the same papers in the second stage because of the 5-week duration. This time period was allocated to eliminate both the Test effect and the Hawthorn effect. The raters were both male and female non-native EFL teachers.

Data Collection Analysis

To find out the non/existence of gender partiality between the two groups of scores assessed by the male and female teachers, male and female raters were put into two groups with their assessed scores in pre.post evaluations. The two columns of scores were put into SPSS software (version 16) and after statistical analyses, the results were reported. A correlation between the pre.post evaluations in general, of both male and female teachers, was also used to find the in/consistency between the scores. To analyze the data One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was used to measure the distribution status of variables. Accordingly, as the distributions were normal, paired sample t-test was used as the statistical technique.

Data Analysis and Results

This part presents the results of the experimental method on the existence or nonexistence of gender partiality in male and female teachers' evaluations of their students' writing samples. The scores gathered by teachers' assessments of the students' writing samples with original and changed names, were sorted out: 1) generally in two groups of the scores for the papers with original names and the scores for the papers with changed names (to those of their opposite sex); 2) according to the gender of the raters to male raters' scores and female raters' scores.

Results for One-Sample KS Test and Paired Sample T-Test

For the two groups of scores, assessed by the teachers, for the writing samples, in general, with original and changed names, the following results were obtained:

Table 4: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Original Names

N		98
Normal Parameters ^a	Mean	14.4904
	Std. Deviation	3.20072
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.175
	Positive	.075
	Negative	-.175
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.737
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
a. Test distribution is Normal.		

Table 5: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Changed Names

N		98
Normal Parameters ^a	Mean	14.7168
	Std. Deviation	2.94705
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.171
	Positive	.082
	Negative	-.171
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.692
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.007
a. Test distribution is Normal.		

According to the results of the One-Sample KS Test for the scores of the original names (Table 4), ($\text{sig.} = .005$), and the changed names (Table 5), ($\text{sig.} = .007$), it was concluded that the distribution of the data for these two datasets was normal. So the Paired Sample t-Test was used to analyze the data.

Table 6: Paired Samples Statistics for Original and Changed Names

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair I	original	14.4904	98	3.20072	.32332
	changed	14.7168	98	2.94705	.29770

Table 7: Paired Samples Correlations for Original and Changed Names

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair I	original & changed	98	.731	.000

Table 8: Paired Samples Test for Generalizability

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair I	male - female	-.22643	2.26726	.22903	-.68098	.22813	-.989	97	.325

The first t-test table (table 6) represents the mean for the scores with original names ($M=14.49$), and the mean for the scores with changed names ($M=14.71$). According to this table it is proved that changing the students' names to those of their opposite-sex affects the mean of scores in the sample population. The second t-test table (table 7), ($\text{sig}=.000$) presents a strong correlation between the variables (correlation= $.731$). According to the third t-test table (table 8), ($\text{sig}=.325$) the amount of t ($t=-.989$) indicates that the results of this test are not generalizable. *Results for One-Sample KS Test and Paired Sample T-Test for the female raters*

The scores assigned by teachers' assessments of the students' writing samples with original and changed names were categorized into male raters' outcomes and female raters' outcomes. The results for female raters' scores were analyzed as follows:

Table 9: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Female Raters

N		35
Normal Parameters ^a	Mean	14.7703
	Std. Deviation	3.65336
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.245
	Positive	.098
	Negative	-.245
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.450
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.030
a. Test distribution is Normal.		

According to the results of the KS Test (Table 9) for the scores of the female raters (sig.=.030) it was concluded that the distribution of the data was normal so the t-test was applied to analyze the female raters' scores.

Table 10: Paired Samples Statistics for Female Raters

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair I	Male	14.7703	35	3.65336	.61753
	female	14.7600	35	3.23021	.54600

Table 11: Paired Samples Correlations for Female Raters

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair I	male & female	35	.645	.000

Table 12: Paired Samples Test for Female Raters

The first t-test table (Table 10) for female raters represents the means for the scores of male students ($M=14.77$) and female students ($M=14.76$). The second t-test table (Table 11), (sig.=.000) represents a strong correlation (correlation=.645) between the variables and it is concluded that gender partiality among the female teachers in the sample population is in favor of the male students. The third t-test table (Table 12), though, (sig.=.984) shows that the results of this test are not generalizable to the larger populations.

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair I	male - female	.01029	2.92344	.49415	-.99395	1.01452	.021	34	.984

Results for One-Sample KS Test and Paired Sample T-Test for the male raters

The results for male raters' scores are illustrated as follows:

Table I3: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Male Raters

N		63
Normal Parameters ^a	Mean	14.2262
	Std. Deviation	3.03232
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.140
	Positive	.091
	Negative	-.140
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.114
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.167
a. Test distribution is Normal.		

According to the results of the KS Test (Table I3) for the scores of the male raters (sig.=.167) it was concluded that the distribution of the data was normal so the t-test was applied to analyze the male raters' scores.

Table I4: Paired Samples Statistics for Male Raters

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair I	male	14.2262	63	3.03232	.38204
	female	14.8016	63	2.68439	.33820

Table I5: Paired Samples Correlations for Male Raters

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair I	male & female	63	.817	.000

Table I6: Paired Samples Test for Male Raters

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair I	male - female	-.57540	1.76070	.22183	-1.01882	-.13197	-2.594	62	.012

The first t-test table (Table I4) for male raters represents the means for the scores of male students (M=14.22) and female students (M=14.80). The second t-test table (Table I5), (sig.=.000) represents a very strong

correlation (correlation=.817) between the variables and it is concluded that gender partiality among the male teachers in the sample population is in favor of the female students. Based on the third t-test table (Table I6), (sig.=.012), ($t = -2.594$) it is concluded that the results of this test are generalizable to the larger populations. These tables also indicate that there is no gender partiality from teachers towards same-sex students.

Discussion

To answer the research question: "Does the students' gender have any effect on teachers' evaluation of the students' written texts?" it is discussed that, first and foremost, it should be recalled from the literature review that researches on the role of gender and teacher-student interactions had been baffling and contradictory. Some scholars (Plumm, 2008; Kovar & Doty, 1994; Lakoff, 1975) stressed the bias of sex and gender affecting both education and society. Other researches (Agthe, Spörrle, and Maner, reported by Bolen, 2010) held that men and women gave the advantage to attractive candidates when dealing with the opposite sex but the situation changes to opposite when being judged by someone of the same sex.

In educational ambience, Plumm (2008) states that "gender-biased education has been examined for many years and has been shown to exist in three main areas: teacher instruction, student social interaction and materials used for teaching and learning" (p. 1065). Holmlund and Sunk (2008) proposed the idea that teachers had preferences towards either their same or opposite sex. Van Houtte (2007) reported that "the gender context itself is significantly associated with teacher trust: the greater the proportion of girls at schools, the more teachers indicate trust into their pupils...female teachers have less trust in their pupils than male teachers have" (p. 833).

Some studies indicated that in teacher-student interaction girls receive less teacher attention due to the teacher's tendency to interact more with boys (Jones, 1989; Simpson & Erickson, 1983; Einarsson & Granstrom, 2002; Sadker, Sadker, & Klein, 1991). Some other studies (Good, Cooper & Blakey, 1980; Davies, 1979), however, demonstrated that teachers had more manipulation, disciplines, and controls over boys than girls. The general assumption is that there is a correlation between gender as an attribute and teacher-student interaction (Borg, 1998; Saft & Pianta, 2001; Simpson & Erickson, 1983; Kokkinos, Panayiotou, & Davazoglou, 2005). The results of the present study are in line with this assumption. According to the findings, teachers tend to be partial towards the students of their opposite sex in their evaluations. The results of current study demonstrated that male teachers assigned higher scores to the writing samples of female students

despite the fact that the writing samples with male and female names were exactly the same. The same results were achieved for female teachers. Female raters also assigned higher scores to the writing samples of male students despite the fact that the writing samples with male and female names were exactly the same. Einarsson and Granström (2002) believe that there are sexual tendencies in evaluating the mixed sex.

Conclusion

The present study was an attempt to explore the effect of gender on teachers' evaluation of their mono/mixed sex students. The conclusion is that there was a significant gender partiality on the part of Iranian EFL teachers in evaluating the writing samples of their opposite-sex students. Copious amounts of research conducted in this area (Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Kovar and Doty, 1994; Holmlund and Sunk, 2008; Männynsalo, 2008; Sunderland, 1998; Van Houtte, 2007; Simpson & Erickson, 1983; Einarsson & Granstrom, 2002) have come to different and, at times, contradictory conclusions. The reason is assumed to be the cultural-specificity nature of gender. By and large, it was ascertained that gender played a key role in teachers' evaluation of the students of their opposite sex.

References

- Ahanchian, M. (2003). Ta'sire Moafeq o Mokhalef Budane Jensiat dar Arzeshyabie Daneshjooyan az Azaye Heiat Elmi (The Effect of Gender in Students' Evaluation of the Faculty Members). *Journal of Psychology & Education*. 33(1), 183-199.
- Biglar Beigi, A. (2009). A New Approach in Perception of Gender in Education: Gender Biases in Iranian Textbooks. Retrieved on August 7, 2010 from; http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED506245&_ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED506245
- Blumberg, R. L. (2007). *Gender bias in textbooks: A hidden obstacle on the road to gender equality in education*. United Nations: Educational, scientific and Cultural Organization. 1-54.
- Bolen, M. (2010). Yahoo! Canada News in July 29, 2010. Reporting Agthe, M., Spörrle, M., & Maner, J. K. Don't Hate me because I'm Beautiful. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*.

- Borg, S. (1997). Unifying concepts in the study of teachers' cognitive structures. Unpublished manuscript. In Borg, S. (2003). *Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, and do*. (pp. 81-109). United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Borg, M. G. (1998). Secondary school teachers' perception of students' undesirable behaviors. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 68, 67-79.
- Borg, S. (2003). *Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, and do*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press. 81–109.
- Brown, J. D. (1996). *Testing in language programs*. Prentice Hall Regents.
- Chastain, K. (1988). *Developing second language skills: theory and practice*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
- Childs, R. A. (1990). Gender bias and fairness. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 2(3). Retrieved on July 18, 2010 from <http://PAREonline.net.getvn.asp?v=2&n=3>
- Dabiri, O. (2006). An investigation of teacher's class management vis-à-vis students' genders (barresie raveshe classdarie amouzegaran bar asase jensiyate daneshamoozan). *Andishehaye Novine Tarbiyati (New Educational Thoughts)*. 2(1, 2), 43-69.
- Davies, L. (1979). Deadlier than the male? Girl's conformity and deviance in school. In L. Barton, & K. Meighan (Eds.), *school, pupils and deviance* (pp. 59-73). Driffield: Nafferton Books.
- Davies, L. (1984). *Pupil Power. Deviance and gender in school*. London: Falmer Press.
- Dominguez, L. M. (2003). *Gender textbook evaluation*. Centre for English Language Studies, Department of English, University of Birmingham. 1-19.
- Dusek, J., and Joseph, G. (1985). The bases of teacher expectancies. In J. Dusek (Ed.), *teacher Expectancies* (pp. 229-249). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbanm Associates.

- Eckert, P. (1989). The whole woman: sex and gender differences in variation. *Language variation and change*, 1, 245-267.
- Einarsson, C., and Granstrom, K. (2002). Gender bias interaction in the classroom: the influence of gender and age in the relationship between teacher and pupil. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 46(2), 117-127.
- Good, T., Cooper, H., and Blackey, S. (1980). Classroom interaction as a function of teacher expectations, student sex, and the time of year. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 72(3), 378-385.
- Haswell, R. H., and Haswell, J. T. (1996). Gender bias and critique of student writing. *Washington State University, USA*, 3(1), 31-83.
- Holmes, J. (1992). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. New York: Longman, p. 314.
- Holmes, J., and Meyerhoff, M. (Eds.) (2003). *The Handbook of Language and Gender*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, p. 1.
- Holmlund, H., and Sunk, K. (2006). Is the Gender Gap in School Performance Affected by the Sex of the Teacher?: Forthcoming in *Labour Economics*.
- Holmlund, H., and Sunk, K. (2008). Is the gender gap in school performance affected by the sex of the teacher?: *Labour Economics 15*, 37-53.
- Hughes, J. N., Cavell, T. A., and Willson, V. (2001). Further support for the developmental significance of the quality of the teacher-student relationship. *Journal of School Psychology*, 39(4), 289-301.
- Ingleby, J., and Cooper, E. (1974). How teachers perceive first-year school children: sex and ethnic differences. *Sociology*, 8(3), 463-473.
- Jones, M. G. (1989). Gender issues in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(1), 33-38.
- Kikkinos, C. M., Panayiotou, G., and Davazoglou, A. M. (2005). Correlates of teachers appraisals of student behavior. *Psychology in the Schools*, 42(1), 79-89.

- Kovar, P. M. and Doty, L. (1994). *Gender Bias in Early Childhood Education*. Elmhurst College. USA. ERIC Document Reproductive Service. I-30.
- Lakoff, R. (1975). *Language and woman's place*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Lakoff, R. (2003). Language, gender and, politics: putting "women" and "power" in the same sentence. In Holmes, J. & Meyerhoff, M. (Eds.). *The Handbook of Language and Gender* (pp. 161-177). USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Lakoff, R. T. (2000). *The language war*. Los Angeles and Berkeley: university of California Press.
- Männynsalo, A. (2008). *Gender in the EFL classroom: Differences in the teacher's reactions to boys' and girls' responses*. MA thesis, University of Jyväskylä Department of Languages.
- Myhill, D., and Jones, S. (2006). 'She doesn't shout at any girls': Pupils' perceptions of gender equity in the classroom. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 36(1), 99–113.
- Nazari, M. S. (2010). *Gender positioning in ELT: critical discourse analysis of a series of internationally and locally produced textbooks*. M.A. Thesis, Faculty of Humanities: Department of English Language. University of Kashan.
- Nunan, D. (1999). *Second language teaching and learning*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle.
- Plumm, K. M. (2008). Technology in the classroom: Burning the bridges to the gaps in gender-biased education?. *Computers & Education*, 50, 1052–1068.
- Rezazadeh, M., and Tavakoli, M. (2009). Investigating the Relationship among Test Anxiety, Gender, Academic Achievement and Years of Study: A Case of Iranian EFL University Students. *English Language Teaching*, 2(4), 68-74.
- Sadker, M., and Sadker, D., and Klein, S. (1991). The issues of gender in elementary and secondary education. *Review of Research in Education*, 17, 269-334.

- Sadker, M., and Sadker, D. (1994). *Failing at Fairness: How American Schools Cheat Girls*. New York: Scribners.
- Saft, E. W., and Pianta, R. C. (2001). Teachers' perceptions of their relationships with students: effect of child age, gender, and ethnicity of teachers and children. *School of Psychology Quarterly*, 16(2), 125-141.
- Schneider, F., and Coutts, L. (1979). Teacher orientations towards masculine and feminine: Role of sex of teacher and sex composition of school. *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science*, 11(2), 99-111.
- Shobeiri, S. M., Omidvar, B. and Prahallada, N. N., (2006). Influence of gender and type of school on environmental attitude of teachers in Iran and India. *Int. J. Environ. Sci. Tech.*, 3 (4), 351-357.
- Simpson, A. W., and Erickson, M. T. (1983). Teachers verbal and nonverbal-communication patterns as a function of teacher race, student gender, and student race. *American Educational Research Journal*, 20 (2), 183-198.
- Siskind, G. T., and Sharon, P. K. (1997). Gender Bias in the Evaluation of Female Faculty at The Citadel: A Qualitative Analysis. Charleston: *Sex Roles*, 37.
- Sunderland, J. (1998). Girls being quiet: a problem for foreign language classrooms? *Language teaching research* 2 (1), 48-82.
- Vandrick, S. (1999). The Case for More Research on Female Students in the ESL/EFL Classroom. *TESOL Matters*, 9(2). Retrieved on August 9, 2010 from http://www.tesol.org/tesol/sec_document.asp?CID=196&DID=560
- Van Houtte, M. (2007). Exploring teacher trust in technical/vocational secondary schools: Male teachers' preference for girls. ELSEVIER: Science Direct, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23, 826-839.
- Weir, C. J. (2005). *Language testing and validation: an evidence-based approach*. Palgrave Macmillan.