

GENDER IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY

Rowshon Ara

Eastern University, Bangladesh

ABSTRACT: *The impact of Gender in EFL classroom has always been an issue of discussion. With the difference of social and cultural background, the role of gender differs from nation to nation. In Bangladesh, gender role is defined based on social, cultural, and traditional beliefs. This study is an attempt to find out whether genders of learners as well as genders of teachers create barriers in EFL learning in Bangladesh. In the study a number of 198 students responded to the questionnaires prepared for a survey to find out the impact of gender of students and teachers in EFL classroom. Adding to this, 20 students and 9 teachers from a university further illustrated this issue by participating in semi-structured open ended interviews. The findings of this mixed method study reveal that the socio-culturally defined gender role of male and female in the society impacts inside English as a foreign language class in Bangladesh. Self-efficacy of teachers and learners may help address the issue. In this regard, emphasis may be put on teacher self-efficacy to raise awareness among the teachers and learner self-efficacy to help learners to consciously avoid gender discrimination in classroom at the tertiary level.*

KEY WORDS: Gender, EFL learning, Culture, teacher, learner, self-efficacy

INTRODUCTION

Gender, generally, is seen as a factor affecting the relationship of teacher and students in ESL/ EFL classroom. “In a second language setting, students of different first language and cultural backgrounds may hold conflicting, often gender bound, expectations of the communicative behavior of the self, peers, and the teacher. In a foreign language classroom, too, ethnic background or national origin may lead to differentiations” (Chavez, 2001: 9). As such, the difference a male and a female student have in the classroom reaches beyond their physicality. They have a major difference in personality as well. Gender roles, in Bangladesh, are defined by the traditional, cultural and religious belief of the people. Therefore, the roles of women in the society are far below men. In addition to these social differences, the teacher plays an important role in guiding the pupils in certain directions and building certain stereotypes that can be hard to overcome. Gendered behavior is recognized by many social, critical and feminist researchers to be the consequences of the cultural norms and influences. Different studies reveal that from the very early levels at school to the university level, female students remain victims of bias in classroom interactions and the curriculum. The study asks a vital question regarding the gender of learners and teachers in classroom.

Research question:

To what extent does gender in classroom leave any impact on learning English as a foreign language in Bangladesh?

Hypotheses:

In a society where gender roles are unequally defined it is bound to leave an impact in learning a foreign language in class. In Bangladesh females are positioned below men socially and religiously. These social and religious views, which are cultural phenomenon, can act as barriers to communicate on a personal or professional level. They also cause a difference in attitudes of the male and female students in classroom learning.

Significance of the study:

Like all settings in society, gender role is able to leave an impact in language teaching class, especially, if the language is not the native one but plays a vital role in the society, like English in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, due to gender discrimination women have a weaker position in the society. Moreover, due to the colonial background and cultural difference, learning the major functional language English in class room naturally brings in the discrimination in the classroom environment. However, not much research is done so far on this issue. Sunderland (1998, 49) informs that though the issue of gender is not new in foreign language education, still the number of research done on this is very few and this field needs more rigorous speculation. In Bangladesh studies are fewer and less significant. This study attempts to scrutinize the field and bring significant results that will help the stakeholders, i.e. policy makers, curriculum designers, teachers and learners to look into the impact of gender roles in foreign language classroom and develop and implement a curriculum which will help to gradually diminish gender discrimination in EFL classroom and beyond.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

A review of the existing literature on the related aspects of the topic of this study will unfold the issues and explain the relevance of the study.

Culture and Gender role:

Gender is a defined phenomenon whereas sex is a biological feature. Gender portrays the roles of different sexes in terms of their characteristics, value and meanings. The social scientist Ann Oakley (1972), related “sex” and “gender” saying that in a parallel mode gender is related to male and female sex but is interpreted according to the distinction and value addition of the society of masculinity and femininity. The concept of gender is a social construction. This is reflected through the facts that certain traits are attributed by individuals, groups and communities to individuals solely because of their sex. These ascribed traits posit their statuses or values in the society. These traits vary from culture to culture across societies. Often they vary within the same society. Gender is a cultural phenomenon. Thus men and women grow up within the culture and tradition of a defined gender role. The “appropriate” behaviors of men and women are the result

of roles and responsibilities culturally portrayed in a society. According to Goddard and Patterson (2000), Gender is a “fixed and unalterable dimension that is imposed on us from on high” and we accept it as a part of our everyday social behavior (27). Traditionally, women are considered more “nurturing” which fixate their mother role and men having “leadership” qualities within are thought to be “heads” of the household. Men provide the “home” financially by working outside and women nurture the family by staying home.

Biologically and anthropologically men and women have more features uncommon than common. However, prescribed gender roles given by the society cannot be inferred due to the obvious biological reasons. The way gender roles are prescribed in societies obviously concludes manipulation to promote inequalities. The means of gender construct in our society is similar to the categorization of age, race, ethnicity, social status and class. Some developed countries along with the United States of America struggled to bring gender discrimination down in the countries and still trying to eliminate this. More research is required to come across effective theories derived from social psychology to appropriately approach the elimination of gender discrimination worldwide.

Gender is a cultural phenomenon. Cultural as well as religious beliefs affect the identities of male and female genders in the society. Often certain religious belief defines roles of women in the society and this promotes practice of discrimination. This situation is known as institutionalized sexism. According to Aronson, Wilson, & Akert (2011), often in a society certain stereotypical beliefs and attitudes that reflect sexist behavior become a norm. This attitude of the majority of people is known as institutionalized sexism. People living in the society abide by these norms and establish these attitudes. As for example, in different countries around the world women are considered as weak and need protection. For this reason, they are not allowed to go out of their home, let alone work outside. This major religious discrimination is present among people of different religious beliefs in the world.

Gender role in Bangladesh:

Gender role has difference of definition at different countries as it is culture bound. According to Henslin (2006), in Arabian countries, Africa, and India, due to cultural and religious beliefs, women are considered as “minority” and not “equal” to men in terms of their social rights. Being a Muslim country where 95% people are followers of Islam and also previously being a part of undivided India, Bangladesh falls under the religious and cultural categories of gender discrimination. Women, here, are seen as the weaker sex and are often forbidden to go out of the house. There is little scope of rational understanding among the people as almost all the time people try to blend in by conforming to the group and practice the discriminatory behavior so that other members will accept them. This normative behavior helps people fit in the society (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2011)

The results of studies done in western countries on the issue of gender roles in the society cannot be generalized for a country like Bangladesh where religious and traditional belief define the roles of male and female gender in social settings. Social beliefs on the role of male and female gender affect their responses at different spheres of their lives. In Bangladesh, men are identified as

responsible, strong, independent, self-confident, aggressive, and successful, whereas women are described as passive, emotional, nurturing, and warm. At every sphere of life in this country a certain level of social, religious and cultural discrimination of the gender roles is present. Thus in Educational institutions in Bangladesh, gender discrimination is present. Ferdousi (2012) relate that gender gap is closing up in recent years in school enrolments. This is working in both primary and secondary levels of education in Bangladesh. However, a major concern in education sector is the higher proportion of female dropout. Moreover, in many cases literacy is a major concern for female children in Bangladesh.

Gender in Classroom:

Teacher and student gender affect interactions in classroom. From 1960s to 1990s research on this issues has revealed that at pre-college and college level treatment of teachers towards male and female students has been unequal (Tannen, 1991). According to Hall (1982), teachers respond to male students with “attention” and female students with “diffidence”. Sadker & Sadker (1992) address that male students are given more time for interaction whereas female students are given less time for interaction by male as well as female teachers . They also reveal that at colleges teachers ask male students questions demanding answers with more critical thoughts. Teachers are also accused of being partial by Thorne (1979) for making more eye contacts with males and also calling on male students more than female students. Thus, unequal treatment of the male students brings them more to the “spotlight” whereas female students are left invisible at the “sidelines” (Sadker, 1999). Kelly (1988) concluded that teachers paying more attention to male students in class are a fact and this phenomenon is existent in wide range of classroom learning along with EFL and ESL settings. From the past till now studies have proved that male and female students are treated differently due to their manner of interaction with teachers in class. Meece (1987) believes that male students “respond to” as well as “initiate” conversation in class. This causes teachers to respond more to male students than female students (Duffy, e.al. 2002).

Through different research it has been found that gender of the teacher also affect in classroom activities. Hopf and Hatzichristoo(1999) support saying teacher gender is affective in classroom. In this case, classroom activities of teachers of different gender are characterized with different activities. Male teacher dominated classroom turns out to be faster-paced with teacher using more time on the floor and giving students shorter time and having frequent change of topics. On the other hand, female teachers are seen as more keen on topic selection along with asking relevant questions to keep the flow of the conversation running (Chavez, 2000).

On the other hand, Chavez (2000) describes female teachers to be “facilitators” who are more lenient towards the use of native language in EFL class for effective communication. While picking topics for classroom discussion they work more persuasively and ease away the topic for better understanding with more relevant question answer sessions. Through their study on Iranian context, Rashidi and Rafiee Rad (2010) proved that male learners tend to communicate more with their teachers. They often answer questions voluntarily though the answer might be wrong. While interacting in class they often tend to take longer turns. With regards to this, while trying to find out the female traits, Chavez (2000), discloses that female learners are more eager to meet up the

expectations of the teachers in order to please them. They remain less humorous in the dueling of classes.

Female learners take shorter turns in conversation and in these cases; teachers help them to complete the sentences to express their intentions. So, it seems female learners are able to create a stronger bond with their teachers than male learners. As a result teachers tend to call on female students more than the male students. Moreover, female learners seem more attentive in class than male peers and more intent on taking notes on teacher lectures.

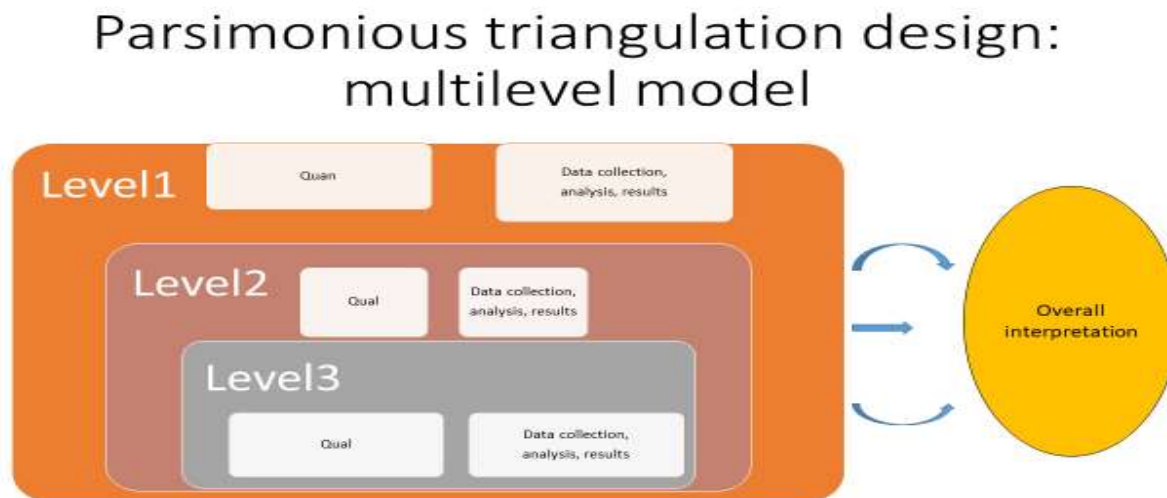
These studies tend to signify that female students are better in classroom performance in terms of creating a positive bond with teachers whereas male students fail to do so even though they seem much bolder in classroom performance than the female learners. On the other hand, while considering the gender of the teacher in classroom performance no clear idea emerges. Some studies reveal male and female teachers perform almost similarly in classroom whereas numerous other studies rectify on the impact of male and female gender in both teacher and learner performance. The possibilities of these studies can never be neglected. These studies clearly indicate that at different societies the impacts of gender come different as they have a difference of the culturally defined social roles they play. As such, it is quite possible that the gendered behavior of teachers and learners are taken all the way to their classroom.

Keeping these in mind the study analyzes the classroom behavior of teachers and learners of Bangladesh at EFL settings to find out the effect of gender. Not much study has been taken on this issue in the context of Bangladesh. Therefore, this situation requires more speculation as it may reveal a unique knowledge unlike anything ever found before. The findings of the study will be enlightening for future researchers on this issue at other countries with the same social setting.

METHODOLOGY:

This is a mixed method study. For data collection and analysis the multilevel model of Parsimonious triangulation design is used. Parsimonious triangulation design is suggested by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007). Data is collected and analyzed at three different levels through quantitative and qualitative sampling respectively. At the first level 198 students participated in a survey through the website www.surveymonkey.com. The second level of qualitative research is done to get more subjective response from the male and female students. Semi-structured open-ended interviews are conducted on 20 students (10 males and 10 females). At the third level nine teachers (5 male and 4 female) took part in semi structured open-ended interviews. Through the sequential method of data collection and analysis the researcher tried to find out a holistic interpretation of the issue of gender in EFL classrooms in Bangladesh.

Figure 1: Methodology: Parsimonious design: Multilevel model by Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007



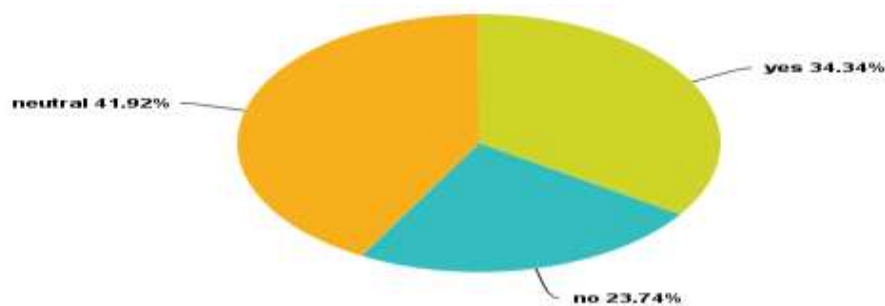
FINDINGS:

Learner Gender:

198 students answer to the question whether learner gender is an issue in the class or not. In case of the gender of learners the pie chart shows that 34.34% that is 68 out of 198 students support the idea of the presence of opposite gender as a learning barrier in ESL classroom. 23.74% that is 47 students responded in the negative. On the other hand, 41.92% that is 83 students responded neutral. A good number of students are unaware of the effect of gender in class. Learners are asked the following question:

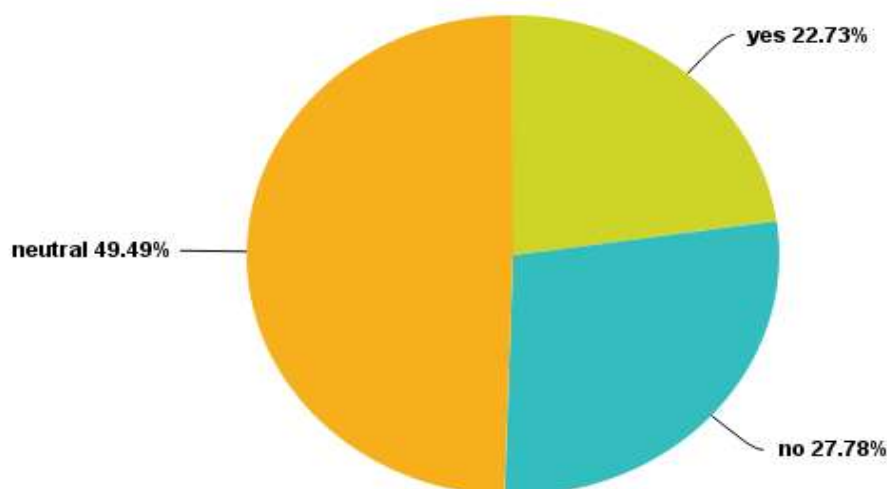
- Do you think presence of classmates who are of the opposite gender than yours create difficulty in learning English in class?

Figure 2: Learner Gender



Teacher Gender:

Gender of the Instructor is another concern in ESL classroom. In many countries where females are regarded as lesser beings this may turn out to be a major barrier in learning. Hesitation accepting female teacher authority and also preferring same gender for teachers as that of the learner turn out to be issues in these cases. In Bangladesh female authority is only gaining confidence so there is every chance of this issue affecting classroom learning. When asked whether teacher gender is a barrier in class or not 198 students answered the question. Out of 198 students, 45 students (22.73%) responded in the positive, 55 students (27.73%) responded in the negative and 98 students (49.49%) gave their neutral response.

Figure 3: Teacher Gender**Student interview information:**

Ten female and ten male students from a university were asked the following questions in semi-structured and open-ended interviews. Questions asked in the interviews are:

1. Do you find any difference between male and female teachers in terms of their classroom performance? If so, please mention.
2. In a female teachers class do male students or female students participate better? Why do you think so?
3. In a male teachers class do male students or female students participate better? Why do you think so?

Table 1:

Response of 10 female students on teachers' performance and students' feelings about it			
	Male teachers	Female teachers	Both
Perform better in class	2	3	5
Feel comfortable with	1	9	0

Reasons for feeling more comfortable with female teachers:

1. It is easy to interact and share problems
2. Can share feelings anytime easily
3. It is difficult to share certain issues with male teachers
4. Feel shy to talk to male teachers

* 1 female student feels comfortable with male teachers for they are more energetic to talk to.

More opinions on the issue:

1. Male teachers are more commanding than female teachers.
2. Often boys also feel afraid to talk to male teachers.
3. Male students talk more in female teachers' class for they find them attractive.
4. Female students often talk more in male teachers' class because they wish to perform better in front of male teachers.
5. In general female students participate more in class for they are more "serious" and "attentive".
6. Those students perform better in classes who have better English language proficiency.

Table 2:

Response of 10 male students on teachers' performance and students' feelings about it			
	Male teachers	Female teachers	Both
Perform better in class	4	4	2
Feel comfortable with	5	3	2

Reasons for feeling more comfortable with male / female teachers:

1. Both male and female teachers help with studies
2. But often male teachers are rough with the students especially with male students
3. Female teachers become friendly very easily and take good care of students.
4. Teacher needs to be friendly for a student to feel comfortable.
5. Female teachers understand students better.

More opinions on the issue:

1. Often female teachers perform badly because they hesitate in front of male students.
2. Female students perform better in class because they have nothing to do than stay at home and study.
3. Female students remain attentive in class but male students often disturb in class.
4. It is not gender but the humanitarian and professional behavior of a teacher makes him/her more acceptable for students.
5. Students like friendly teachers more than strict and professional teachers. Both the qualities are found in male and female teachers.
6. Male teachers help raise curiosity of learners.
7. Female students are serious so try to make teachers aware of their seriousness.

Table 3: Teacher interview information

Teacher	Gender role in class
A (female)	Gender of teacher and student both affect class. Learners of opposite gender always feel shy to communicate with teachers.
B (male)	Female students feel shy asking questions to male teachers.
C (male)	Not much of a problem where younger students are involved. Causes problem in adult teaching. Female teachers are more reaching out to students.
D (male)	Does not play any role that might hinder in classrooms but heard from female colleagues that male students often do not feel their teaching style reliable (at tertiary level).
E (male)	Did not find much of gender difference. But students who are weak in English feel shy to communicate and speak up in class.
F(female)	Major problem. Male students try to dominate class and neglect instruction from female teachers.
G (male)	In main stream education not an issue. We see more female teachers in schools. But in Madrassa (religious)system of teaching we find male teachers for male students and female and male teachers for female students.
H (female)	Body language for girls is a problem. They feel too shy to participate in class with the male students and teachers.
I (female)	Teacher gender is not a problem in class. Female students feel shy to speak.

Deductive reasoning from the findings:

- ▶ Learners are more aware of the impact of their own gender than teacher gender in EFL class.
- ▶ Teacher need be aware that learning environment in class is affected by teacher behavior.
- ▶ Male teachers need be more patient in class.

- ▶ Female teachers need be more dynamic in raising learner enthusiasm.
- ▶ Though a good number of learners feel comfortable with teachers of their own gender in class, teacher of any gender can make learning environment comfortable being aware of the situation.
- ▶ Male teachers should help female students more to make classroom performance easy for them.
- ▶ Teachers need to take care of male students to be more serious like female students.

DISCUSSION:

Wood (1994) , puts emphasis on the sensitivity of the issue of gender in educational programs (pp. 227-228). Linguists have mentioned the differences of participatory behavior in classroom discussions and speaking activities between male and female learners. A difference of characteristics due to their gender has also been observed among the teachers. Moreover the characteristics of the teachers affect classroom teaching and learning based on what gender he/ she is reacting to. A female teacher in a male learners' class is guarded in her characteristics, whereas in a female learners' class she is not at all reserved. Jones and Dindia (2004) suggest that student factors like student gender, student classroom behavior, student achievement and student race; and teacher factors like teacher gender and teacher's gender role orientation are also very influential on teacher treatment of students. One thing must be mentioned that the affective factors here, in terms of psycho and sociolinguistics, are contextually related to religion and culture. The factors cannot be generalized in comparison to any western countries for they possess different attitudes and perspectives. Cultural values and social norms build up our mindset, behavior and values and affects other aspects of life. In Bangladesh, Women, from a very early age, are taught to be conservative and are prohibited to talk and mix freely with men other than their family members. So, self-consciousness for female students in class turns out to be an added inhibition than the male students. One teacher opined in the interview that in mainstream education gender in class is not a problem but in Madrasa system (religious) of education, which is a religious system of education, gender discrimination is seen in Bangladesh. As religion defines the gender positions in Bangladesh, gender discrimination of some sort enters in every sphere of life in Bangladesh. As such it is possible that a level of gender discrimination actively works in EFL classrooms in Bangladesh. Sunderland (1992), investigates that gender bias is likely to operate at different levels in EFL classrooms. As for example, he puts emphasis on classroom materials, English language and procedures of classroom working at a particular sociolinguistic, political and educational context. In the social context of Bangladesh, male gender is always overrepresented and seen as a dominant character. On the other hand, female role is socially defined as submissive and gentle.

In this study, most students (41.92%) feel neutral about their classmate's gender in class. But a great many (34.34%) find this a problem. Only 23.74% students responded in the negative about this issue. While responding about their teacher's gender in class most of the students (49.49%) were neutral. This may explain the unawareness or the conscious avoidance of the impact of gender. Only 22.73% find this a problem in learning in class. The rest of them responded in the negative.

On the other hand, teachers believe gender sometimes is a problem in class. One male teacher said he heard from his colleagues that often adult male students are not willing to accept instructions from female teachers. Another male teacher claimed that female students in class feel shy asking questions to male teachers. A female teacher said, female student's body language turns out to be a problem in class participation. This is due to the religious and social norms present in the culture of Bangladesh. The culturally defined female role imposes that females are to be submissive, soft spoken and not much expressive. As a consequence they become very self-conscious while speaking in front of a class full of students and teachers of the other gender. Teacher interview results focus on the fact that most of the students participating in the survey are unaware of the gender influence in class. The number of students aware of the influence is very few. Ha (2008), in a study finds out that "males tend to speak more than females in L2 classrooms, and females tend to listen more and to use shorter statements". Burr (1998), about a mixed gender group of learners, expresses that, men interrupt more and are very direct in their requests and statements whereas women are more likely interrupted and they are more supportive to other speakers and more indirect in requests. While teachers and students are opposite in gender or male or female teachers are giving lessons to students of a mixed group, effort should be given from the teachers side to minimize the difference as much as possible. One major aspect that needs to be kept in mind is that, in such a class the shared level of knowledge is very less and it is the teacher's responsibility to bring out the learners of their inhibition and ensure a neutral flow of classroom activities.

In classroom, students not only gather academic knowledge, but also socialize to understand his/her as well as the others role in society. Teachers' are role models for the students and their actions and advices shape up student beliefs as well as raise self-confidence. Biased attitude from the teacher's side, inadvertent or not, (as for example, putting more emphasis on male student behavior, asking them more intellectual questions etc.) will lead towards a gender biased understanding of the teacher's behavior. Female students may get frustrated or may accept teacher response as a definition of their role in the society, that is, quiet and inactive. Vice versa, male students may also get the impression that their defined role in the society is outspoken and active. With regards to this, M. Sadker & Sadker (1994) mentions that at different studies it has been found that from early stages of their studies through university level, female students remain as the victims of biased treatment in teacher interactions as well as in the curriculum even though they are supposed to gather the same knowledge. Koca (2009), again complains that being influenced by gender-defined beliefs, both male and female teachers interact more with male students.

On the other hand, Dabiri (2006) suggests that students' gender specifies the positive or negative feedback that they receive. She discusses that teachers define male roles emphasizing on mastery and competence. On the other hand female students are portrayed as submissive and dependent. This outlook affects teacher's response towards male and female students. Furthermore, the dominant male role of the students in the classroom may affect the role of the female teacher's mastery.

Ifegbesan (2010), in his study, discusses teachers' belief and understanding of gender bias in classroom practices, and accuses the educational system for reinforcing traditional gender roles in the society and the stereotyped attitudes toward gender. D. Sadker et.al. (1984) propose teachers and administrators to detect this bias and plan out proper teaching methods. This needs to be directly and openly addressed for all to understand whether it is intentional or not. When teachers are aware of their difference of treatment of male and female learners in class they will be able to consciously avoid the bias in class and become more equitable in their responses. Different teaching program evaluations show that biased teaching patterns can be eradicated and replaced with a more effective one. D. Sadker et.al. (1984) also comment in their research that this type of training helps elementary and school teachers as well as college teachers with more equitable and effective teaching.

As gender is a very powerful and pervading issue in every aspect and sphere of the society, presence of gender issues in EFL classrooms must also be accepted and dealt in an expert manner. Learners need be aware of the presence of these issues at such a level where they are able to use their rational discretion to absorb the intensity of the issue. Learners of the tertiary level are aware of the social discriminations as well as the backgrounds of the positions of the language they are learning. In Bangladesh, the language Bangla is often discriminated due to its origin related to a different religion. The religious background of the country favors Arabic, Urdu, Farsi etc. languages as much holier than Bangla. In this situation, due to religious and cultural background of English, it is often treated in a different manner. Moreover, English is also often in disfavor due to being the language of the colonizers. However, it can never be denied that English has a functional superiority in Bangladesh. The language plays a major role in global communication. Hence a certain level of dilemma works while learning English as a foreign language. However, it must never be forgotten that these learners are adults and along with their rational mind they also bring with them a culturally shaped up understanding of their gender in EFL classroom. These learners from Bangladesh either have a positive acceptance towards English or possess a negative understanding of the language due to the different religious and socio-cultural background.

Teacher works as the facilitator in classroom. He/she can easily make learners aware of the impact gendered behavior brings in classroom. The learners of this study are all university students and adults. So, it is easier for them to accept the sensitive issues relating gender than school or college students. Moreover teachers in Asian countries have more authority over learners than teachers of the western countries. In Bangladesh teachers demonstrate total authority over classroom and are able to make learners understand and accept the issues sensitive in classroom. For this teacher needs to be well aware of the issues and well trained to execute them in class. Teacher's self-efficacy plays a major role to help teachers in this act.

Self-efficacy as defined by Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy (1998), is the course of action a teacher designs and implements to contextually and successfully complete a teaching task for the purpose of the learners to learn. However, it is also important to know that teacher's self-efficacy is not only molded by his /her intelligence, knowledge, skills and beliefs but also affected by the culture and society that impact the roles of teachers, their social relations and expectations (Chacon, 2005: 258). As such this clarifies that teacher's self-efficacy is affected by his/her gender.

However, there exists a bit of controversy among researchers regarding this. Some researchers believe that there is no controversy between teacher's gender and her self-efficacy, whereas, some others believe that gender plays a vital role defining the self- efficacy of male and female teachers. Female teachers practice more self-efficacy than male teachers.

Executing self-efficacy in classroom is a major responsibility for a teacher. Teachers often fail treating male and female students equally whereas they believe they are actually being neutral (Freeman, 1996). Poynton (1998) pointed out that in these cases teachers often end up allotting female learners less time in classroom activities. This situation brings forth the suggestion that teacher's assessment towards her self-efficacy is also necessary.

Learners must be helped to shift towards a neutral position accepting the cultural differences of the native as well as the target language. This cultural understanding of a foreign language would bring the culture close while focusing on the specific differences of the languages. Sunderland (1998) discusses that while teaching curricular subjects it is possible to make a difference in classroom. Teacher can pick a gender neutral strategy by ensuring more student speaking time irrespective of their gender and lessening teacher speaking time. She suggests that as learners use at least two different languages in a language classroom, this will help lessen the gendered talk in foreign/second language classroom (p.52-53). This will ensure cultural mingling and contrasting aspects of one language will help clarify the other. Based on this, Sunderland also claims that the general question on teacher's self-efficacy that is; whether teacher pays more attention to boys and girls may not be applicable in a language classroom. Thus it would be possible for the teacher to put gender discrimination at bay in a language classroom. Swan (1992), supports by saying that teachers need to know that "diversity" and "contradictions" are present in classroom environment but teachers must know how to "exploit" those in order to promote "change" in the classroom environment. This is done to benefit the learners of both genders with equal opportunities (p. 11). According to Vygotsky (1978), language diminishes imbalances and helps learner to express themselves by acquiring understanding of the necessity and importance of its use in the society. With the help of the teachers, learners will be able to grow an understanding of the discrepancies they have been subconsciously subject to and will be able to grow tolerance, understanding of the proper course of action and respect towards the opposite gender, be it a fellow classmate or a teacher. At this stage learners' self-efficacy will help them. An understanding of this will have a deeper impact and learners who entered the EFL classroom with a gendered view would emerge in the society with a more confident and equitable mind.

CONCLUSION:

Gender, defined through traditional, religious and cultural belief, is a sensitive issue in the life of Bangladesh and should be dealt in a very sophisticated manner so that it does not cause any sort of miscommunication while teaching the target language and culture. To fulfill these purpose teachers need to work with appropriate methods. There should be a training program developed to address this situation. An awareness of the issue both from the teacher's and learner's side would help minimize gender discrimination in classroom and is sure to affect the social life beyond educational institutions.

REFERENCE:

- Aronson, E., Wilson, T.D. & Akert, R.M. (2011). *Social Psychology* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall/Pearson.
- Burr, Vivien. (1998). *Gender and social psychology*. London, UK: Routledge..
- Chavez, M. (2000). Teacher and student gender and peer group gender composition in German foreign language classroom discourse: An exploratory study. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 32, 1019-1058
- Chavez, M. (2001). *Gender in the Language Classroom*. In The McGraw-Hill Second Language Professional Series.
- Chacon, C.T. (2005). Teachers' perceived efficacy among English as foreign language teachers in middle schools in Venezuela. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 21, 257-272
- Dabiri, E. O. (2006). baresi-eravesh-e kelasdari-e amuzegar bar paye-ye jensiat-e danesh amuzan [Investigating teacher's classroom management based on students' gender]. *Modern Educational Notions*, 2, 43-69.
- Duffy, J., Warren, K. and Walsh, M.(2002). Classroom interactions: gender of teacher, gender of student, and classroom subject. *Sex roles*, 45 (9/10), 579 – 593
- Ferdousi, A. M. 2012. "Examining Gender Difference in Socio- economic Development: Implications for Developing Countries". *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 4(3): 8-12.
- Freeman, R (1996) *Language Planning and identity planning for social change*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University.
- Goddard, A & Patterson, L.M. (2000). *Language and Gender*. London: Routledge.
- Hall, R. (1982). The classroom climate: A chilly one for women? Association of American Colleges, Project on the status of women
- Henslin, J. M. (2006). *Essentials of Sociology: A down-to-earth approach* (6th e.d.). Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon
- Hopf, D. and Hatzichristou, C.(1999). Teacher-gender related influences in Greek Schools. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 69, 1-18
- Ifegbesan, A. (2010). Gender-stereotypes belief and practices in the classroom: The Nigerian post-primary school teachers. *Global Journal of Human Social Science Research*, 10, 29-38
- Jones, S.M. & Dindia, K. (2004). A meta- analytic perspective on sex equity in the classroom. *Review on Educational Research*, 74, 443-471
- Koca, C. (2009). Gender interaction in coed physical education: A study in Turkey. *Adolescence*, 44, 165-185
- Meece, J. L. (1987). The influence of school experiences on the development of gender schemata. In L. S. Liben & M. L. Signorella (Eds.), *Children's gender schemata*. (pp. 57-73). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
- Oakley, A. (1972). *Sex, gender and society*. London: Maurice Temple Smith Ltd.
- Poynton, C. (1985). *Language and gender: Making the difference*. Oxford University Press.
- Rashidi, N. and Rafiee Rad, M. (2010). Analyzing patterns of classroom interaction in EFL classrooms in Iran. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 7(3), 93-120
- Sadker, M., & Sadker, D. (1994). *Failing at fairness: How America's schools cheat females*. New

York, NY: Scribner

- Sadker D., Sadker M., Bauchner J. (1984, April). Teacher reactions to classroom response of male and female students (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED245839). Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, Louisiana.
- Sadker, D. (1999). Gender Equity: Still Knocking at the Classroom Door. *Educational Leadership*, 56(7): 22-6
- Sadker, M. and Sadker, D. (1992). Ensuring equitable participation in college classes. In. Border L.L.B. & Chism N.V.N. (Ed), *Teaching for Diversity: New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 49-56. Jossey-Bass, San Fransisco
- Sunderland, J. (1992). Gender in EFL classroom. *ELT Journal*, 46, 81-91.
- Sunderland, J. (1998). Girls being quiet: a problem for foreign language classrooms? *Language teaching research* 2 (1), 48-82
- Swann, J. (1992). *Language in education: girls, boys & language*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Tannen, D. (1991). Teacher's classroom strategies should recognize that males and females use language differently. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. 37, B1
- Thorne, B. (1979). Claiming Verbal Space: women speech and language for college classrooms. Paper presented at the Research Conference on Educational Environments and Undergraduate Women, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA
- Tschannen-Moran, M., Woolfolk Hoy, A. & Hoy, W. K. (1998). Teacher efficacy: Its meaning and measure. *Review of Educational Research*, 68, 202-248
- Vygotsky, L. (1978) *Mind in Society: The development if higher education process*. Cambridge:Harvard University Press.
- Wood, J. T. (1994). *Who cares: Women, care and culture*. Carbondale,IL: Southern Illinois University Press.