Gender Differences in Language Use and Behavior in EFL Classroom Interaction: Primary Schools in Greece

by

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DEDICATION

To those who inspire the aspiring:

To my beautiful and sweet Mom, Mariam, my greatest inspiration.

To my devoted and caring Dad, Mikayel, my driving force in life.
Dr. Mattheoudakis Marina
Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics

Dr. Tsokalidou Petroula
Department of Early Childhood Education

Dr. Sougari Areti-Maria
Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSP</td>
<td>Behavior-Specific Praise</td>
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<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Conversation Analysis</td>
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<td>CA</td>
<td>Cluster Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>CofP</td>
<td>Community of Practice</td>
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<td>CR</td>
<td>Classroom Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>English as a Foreign Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>Early Language Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPI</td>
<td>Educational Policy Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>One-person-at-a-time Floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>Collaboratively Developed Floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPDA</td>
<td>Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIG</td>
<td>High Input Generator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRE</td>
<td>Initiation-Reply-Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRF</td>
<td>Initiation-Response-Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIG</td>
<td>Low Input Generator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OED</td>
<td>Oxford English Dictionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SETT</td>
<td>Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOWER</td>
<td>Thessaloniki Organisation for Women’s Employment and Resources</td>
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ABSTRACT

The present research endeavors to shed light on the role that gender plays in the language classroom in the Greek context. Due to the fact that to date no systematic investigation has considered special aspects of gender and interaction in primary school classrooms, this study seeks to investigate how teachers and students position themselves within different discourses in the EFL classroom interaction. The issues discussed include turn-taking and interruptions, praise and reprimand, class dominance, teacher attention and class participation in classroom interaction. Drawing on language and gender research, it was hypothesized that gender of the learner affects the learner’s language use and behavior during EFL interaction. In order to complete the research objectives, a study was undertaken in order to investigate and to reveal whether there are any correlations between gender and linguistic behavior of fifth grade learners by adopting both a qualitative and a quantitative approach. The methodology employed in this investigation is that of questionnaires distributed to seventy teachers designed to capture data in relation to the extent, pattern, nature of gender differences in language use and behavior, as well as observations conducted in four different classes of eighty two students. This study advances our understanding of gendered classroom interaction and highlights important ways in which students’ gender influences teacher-student, as well as student-student interaction. Moreover, this study sheds light on gender bias which occurs in the classroom and thus impedes teachers’ abilities to work successfully with all students. The Greek data revealed great similarity with findings of previous studies by supporting the assumption that (a) teachers are biased in favor of boys especially in respect of giving them more attention, (b) male students demand more teacher attention and more instructions from the teacher than their female peers, (c) female students are more likely to receive praise and positive comments, whereas male students are reprimanded by the teacher, (d) male students are more active in class participation, by taking more turns, volunteering and calling out. The concluding chapter submits recommendations and conclusions, encapsulating the main findings that have been obtained from the research, and demonstrates how it can be extended to future research in relation to gender bias.

Keywords: gender differences, interaction patterns, gender bias, classroom discourse, Greek primary school classroom
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Identifying the Area of Research

Owing to a vast and undoubtedly increasing amount of research on gender theories in the language area, the field of language and gender has become “one of the most lively, sophisticated, and interdisciplinary areas of linguistic inquiry” (Pavlenko & Piller, 2001: 2). One particularly popular question has been the extent to which men and women use language differently. This popularity stems, in part, from the fact that language is an inherently social phenomenon which provides insights into how men’s and women’s language use can affect their social worlds (Zendedel & Ebrahimi, 2013).

Within the social sciences, an increasing consensus of findings suggests that men, relative to women, tend to use language more for the instrumental purpose of conveying information; women are more likely to use verbal interaction for social purposes with verbal communication serving as an end in itself (e.g., Herring, 1993; Brownlow, et al., 2003; Colley et al., 2004). At the same time, a number of theorists have argued against the existence of any meaningful differences in men’s and women’s language (e.g., Bradley, 1981; Weatherall, 2002).

Due to the fact that language is a social phenomenon, it is strongly influenced by social and cultural factors such as gender, age, educational level, social level and so forth. Discovery of the existing relationship between language and linguistic variations is commonly provided through the examination of linguistic and social differences. The study of gender is important to the study of language, and the first step to study gender
is to explore the difference between men and women. Language reflects, records, and transmits social differences, so we should not be surprised to find reflections of gender differences in language, since most societies differentiate between men and women in various marked ways.

Gender as an analytical category continues to motivate researchers in many areas. At first, gender was regarded as a sociolinguistic variable, just like social class, age, ethnicity and social status. Prior to the 1960s, the field of sociolinguistics examined social roles with the assumption that research findings based on men applied to everyone (Kramer, 1977). However, with the rise of the feminist movement, this assumption was called into question, and sociolinguistics began to examine gender differences, in terms of real differences as well as differences that are widely believed to be true, regardless of their actual existence (Kramer, 1977).

It was not until the midst 1970’s when Robin Lakoff’s foundational work *Language and Woman’s Place* was released that science about gender and language was established (Lakoff, 1975); Lakoff’s work is still referenced in almost every gender and language study to date. The different way boys and girls are socialized has significant ramifications on the way they communicate as adults because this encoding of social behavior is carried on into adulthood. In other words, it is consistently reflected in the different social and communicative styles of women and men.

Our research also deals with classroom interaction, which has always been an interesting and a fruitful subject of study (e.g. Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Mehan, 1979; Drew & Heritage, 1992; Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Cazden, 2001; Seedhouse, 2004; Walsh, 2006; Lee, 2007; Constantinou, 2008), because communication in the classroom always differs from communication in a normal social setting. Moreover, when
interaction is considered from the point of view of gender in the EFL classroom (e.g. Sunderland, 1992, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2006; Swann, 1992; Lindroos, 1995; Goddard and Patterson, 2000), it can be extremely fascinating and useful because potentially gender differences influence the academic and social lives of students.

1.2 Need for the Study

Despite the existence of gender differences and inequalities in education in general, and classroom interaction in particular, little attention has been paid to some essential aspects of gender and interaction in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Even though gender has been quite widely investigated in foreign language education, in Greece no research has been carried out before, particularly on gender differences in primary school classrooms. To this end, the present study adopts the differences approach (Cameron, 2005), and indicates the need to consider different discourses associated with teacher and learner variables as well as how teachers and students position themselves within these discourses in the EFL classroom interaction.

The results of the present study may contribute to a greater understanding of the importance of the student-teacher relationship for academic success. With this information, more positive classroom interactions may be facilitated by designing interventions to boost teacher efficacy and improving teacher expectation. Additionally, this study may shed light on cultural or gender bias occurring in the classroom and inhibiting teachers’ abilities to work successfully with all students.
1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to fill a gap in the research of gender in the language classroom in the Greek context by investigating and determining whether the gender of the learner affects the learner’s language use and behavior during EFL classroom interaction in primary schools in Greece, and in particular, in the city of Thessaloniki. The study looked at the various interaction patterns in each of the classrooms, and whether teachers used different patterns of interaction with children based on their gender. This aspect of the classroom environment was chosen because it can be, along with the use of language, one of the most subtle and unconscious factors affecting the classroom atmosphere and consequently, children’s attitudes. Teachers can hold different expectations from girls and boys, respond differently to girls and boys, and interact more with boys without being aware of their own behavior (Sadker & Sadker, 1994).

1.4 Significance of the Study

Through this exploration, we hope to make substantial contribution to the field of research on gender bias in the EFL classroom by uncovering several findings with important implications for our understanding of gendered classroom interaction and by highlighting important ways in which gender influences teacher-student, as well as student-student interaction in Greek primary schools. Therefore, this study is up-to-date, practical and claims to offer benefits to the emerging research on classroom interaction.
1.5 Nature of the Study

The study was undertaken in order to investigate and to reveal whether there are any correlations between gender and linguistic behavior of fifth grade learners by adopting both a qualitative and a quantitative approach. Qualitative research was considered appropriate for this study in the particular EFL classroom setting as far as it occurs in natural settings where human behavior and events occur. In this study, a quantitative component, the calculation of frequencies and percentages, provided the contextual framework for the qualitative component.

1.6 Thesis Outline

Chapter I introduces the background of the research area, as well as the theoretical framework and the social context of the study. It emphasizes the significance of this research in the area and gives its purpose and scope. Moreover, contributions of the study are presented and a detailed description of data collection process is identified.

Chapter II comprises a review of the literature on the subject in the area and is divided into two subchapters. The first subchapter starts with an overview of gender and language study, by giving a distinction between the terms sex and gender, reviewing gender as a social structure, outlining the notion of gender identity and gender dynamics, as well as presenting the concept of doing gender. Afterwards, gender and language are described as a field of study. Moreover, the main theories on gender identification as well as the approaches to gender differences in interaction are briefly presented by making a special focus on the Community of Practice (CofP) approach.
(Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992). The subchapter on EFL classroom research outlines the field of study and provides a brief review of empirical study carried out in the area of classroom research. Gender differences in classroom interaction were highlighted with a particular focus on teacher-student and student-student interactions in the classroom.

Chapter III begins with an overview of the design of the present study and the methodology adopted. Details are provided regarding the setting and the participants, as well as the research instruments used in the study. Moreover, the data collection procedures are outlined and the limitations of the study are given. Finally, the main aims of the study together with their respective research questions are stated, and the research hypotheses are formulated on the basis of the literature on gender and language viewed earlier in Chapter II.

Chapter IV reports the results obtained from the main study, gives presentation and explanation of the data based both on questionnaires and observations. In addition, the hypotheses of the study were tested by means of statistical analysis.

Chapter V discusses the findings presented in Chapter IV in relation to the research questions and hypotheses that were put forth in Chapter III. More specifically, it discusses (a) male and female students’ behavior in order to see whether the teacher actually favored males over females; (b) interaction between the teacher and both male and female students in terms of positive and negative feedback; (c) male dominance in classroom interaction; (d) teacher attention in classroom interaction in terms of the gender of the student; (e) teacher’s selection of students for class participation and differences in teacher’s attitude towards students according to their gender.
Chapter VI summarizes the main findings of the study in relation to gender-specific features in interaction patterns, as well as identifies the contributions of the study to the field of research on gender bias in EFL classroom and any limitations encountered. In addition, it outlines the avenues for future research and gives suggestions concerning possible areas worthy of investigation.

1.7 Concluding Remarks

In the present chapter firstly the general area of research was identified and the importance of the subject was stated. Secondly, the gap in the previous research was indicated. Following this, the purpose of research was outlined and the nature of the present research was stated. In addition, the contributions of the study to the field of research on gender bias in EFL classroom were identified. Finally, Chapter I outlined how the whole thesis is structured and what is covered in each subsequent chapter. The next chapter will elaborate further on the review of literature.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 An Overview of Gender and Language Study

This subchapter aims at introducing the existing theoretical approaches to understanding gender and sex-role development, and here we elaborate on different theories (Social Learning Theory, Cognitive Developmental Theory, Gender Schema Theory and Structural Theory) that provide a theoretical background for the argumentation to follow and may lead to a better understanding of the issues under discussion.

It starts with the distinction between the terms sex and gender so as to clarify their use in the body of the present study. This is followed by the description of the concept of gender as a social structure and as an institution. Some subcategories of gender, including gender status, gender display, gender roles are presented and conceptualized, the focus being made on gender identity and gender dynamics. In addition, the notion of doing gender, developed by West and Zimmerman (1987), calls for a special attention here as far as it is currently used in most gender studies research and accounts for the reproduction of gender through interaction. It is of considerable importance for our research setting, that is, the school and the foreign language classroom interaction.

In this subchapter we also look at gender and language as a field of study in general and, particularly, in educational settings, as our study is based on gender differences in classroom interaction. Finally, we consider the value of Eckert &
McConnell-Ginet’s (1992) concept of community of practice (CofP) approach for the current language and gender research.

### 2.1.1 Sex and Gender

The distinction between sex and gender has been one of the foundations of Western feminist thought. There is a range of definitions of sex and gender that reveal the diversity of individual and institutional understandings on these much-debated terms.

The term gender refers to roles and behaviour patterns which are learned through social and cultural experience as opposed to ‘the sex of a person [which] is biologically determined’ (Abercrombie & Hill, 1988: 103). This means that similarly to sex, gender as well renders individuals into the categories of male and female, however the former does so in relation to reproductive capabilities, whereas the latter connects this duality to the different socialization of men and women (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). The view that ‘linguistic interaction is obviously behaviour which has been learned’ (Talbot, 2010: 11) as part of our socialization process, explains why most authors talk of gender differences in linguistic behaviour instead of sex differences. For this reason, in our exploration of how male and female students’ language use differs, the term gender will be used throughout the course of our study.

Intellectuals have been creating, critiquing, and advancing concepts of gender for the past 35 years. Generally, gender is defined as the socially constructed correlate of sex. The concept of gender as socially constructed has been theorized extensively and illustrated in a variety of arenas from the playground to the boardroom (West & Zimmerman, 1987; Kessler, 1990; Thorne, 1993; Lorber, 1994; Fausto-Sterling, 2000;
Messner, 2000). However, many definitions positing gender as an ongoing accomplishment rely on sex as the ‘master status’ or ‘coat rack’ on which gender is socially constructed (Nicholson, 1994). Dozier (2005) noted, ‘Although there is a general consensus that gender is socially constructed, theorists have too often relied on sex as its initiating point’ (p. 298).

When trying to define the word “gender”, Goddard and Patterson (2000) make a clear distinction between gender and sex so that the latter is about ‘socially expected characteristics rather than biology’ and that gender has to do with behaviour, for example, masculine and feminine characteristics that people possess whether being biologically a boy or a girl (p. 1). According to Goddard and Patterson (2000), gender is a daily, continuous part of our social behaviour, something we do, rather than being ‘a fixed and unalterable dimension that is imposed on us from on high’ (p. 27). This can also be said about classroom behaviour, which is ever changing and altered by the participants in that context.

Graddol and Swann (1989) agree with this kind of definition, as they also see gender as a social phenomenon in the sense that people learn the attitudes and behaviour appropriate to their sex, rather than are born with them. According to Graddol and Swann (1989), sexual inequality is an appealing and popular area of study in the academic community, but also within the wider public. Their definition of gender is similar to Goddard and Patterson’s:

Whether one is male or female is not just a biological fact, it assigns one to membership of one or two social groups. A great many consequences – social, economic and political – flow from this membership. Women and men, girls and boys, are treated in systematically different ways; they have different experiences at school, at work and at home; they do different things and different things are expected of them. In other words,
women and men have different life experiences to an extent that cannot be satisfactorily explained by simple biological differences between the sexes (Graddol and Swann 1989: 8)

Swann (1992) agrees with Goddard and Patterson (2000) in that it can be dangerous to explain the differences between boys and girls only in biological terms as these terms only underline people’s acceptance of inequalities and differences between boys and girls (p. 8). In addition, explaining gender differences only in social terms can lead to a view that ‘external forces are so powerful that there is little possibility of change’ (Swann, 1992, p. 11). When going deeper into gender definitions and characteristics, Morgan (1986) points out that males are seen as logical, rational, aggressive, exploitative, strategic, independent and competitive, as females, on the other hand, are thought to be intuitive, emotional, submissive, emphatic, spontaneous, nurturing and cooperative. Morgan (1986) summarizes these, by implying that man is a leader and decision-maker and woman is a loyal supporter and follower.

According to Butler (1990), ‘if the immutable character of sex is contested, perhaps this construct called ‘sex’ is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps it was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all’ (p. 346).

Delphy (1993) critiqued the overreliance on sex in defining gender. She claimed that illustrating the social construction of gender by describing the cross-cultural variation in men’s and women’s behaviour and social roles only reinforces the notion that gender originates in sex. The description of cross-cultural variation further entrenches the notion of ‘gender as the content with sex as the container’ (p. 3). Both Nicholson (1994) and Delphy (1993) challenged the view that gender derives from sex and, in a sense, posited the opposite: that ‘gender is the knowledge that establishes
meanings for bodily differences’ (Scott, 1988:2). Gender, then, as Dozier (2005) concluded, is the concept that creates and defines sex differences.

Typically, sex is assigned based on genital inspection at birth, but biological sex is a complex constellation of chromosomes, hormones, genitalia, and reproductive organs. The study of intersexed and sex-reassigned children illustrates that social notions of sex are employed when biological sex is ambiguous (Kessler, 1990; Fausto-Sterling, 2000). Because sex is an organizing principle of most societies, people are forced to be one or the other; even when ‘only a surgical shoehorn can put them there’ (Fausto-Sterling, 1993: 24). Given this, sex is both a physical attribute and socially constructed (Dozier, 2005).

West and Zimmerman (1987) grappled with the social aspect of sex by adding a category to the sex, gender and sexuality framework. They defined ‘sex category’ as socially perceived sex and claimed that ‘recognition of the analytical independence of sex, sex category and gender is essential for understanding the relationships among these elements and the interactional work involved in ‘being’ a gendered person in society’ (p. 145). ‘We are left with the ironic conclusion that gender is socially constructed yet it is rigidly defined by sex category – an inadequate framework for the explanation of atypical gender behaviour’, argued Dozier (2005: 299).

As West and Zimmerman (2009: 114) stated, ‘the relationship between sex category and gender is the relationship between being a recognizable incumbent of a sex category (which itself takes some doing) and being accountable to current cultural conceptions of conduct becoming to – or compatible with the ‘essential natures’ of – a woman or a man’. They conceptualised this as an ongoing situated process, a ‘doing’ rather than a ‘being’.
According to West and Zimmerman (1987: 126), ‘gender is not something we are born with, and not something we have, but something we do’, and as Butler stated (1990: 6), ‘gender is actually something we perform’. Gender builds on biological sex, it exaggerates biological difference and, indeed, carries biological difference into domains in which it is completely irrelevant. Eckert and Ginet (2003) admitted that although people tend to think of gender as the result of nurture – as social and hence fluid – while sex is simply given by biology, there is no obvious point at which sex leaves off and gender begins. And they explained it by the fact that there is no single objective biological criterion for male or female sex. Sex is based in a combination of anatomical, endocrinal and chromosomal features, and the selection among these criteria for sex assignment is based very much on cultural beliefs about what actually makes someone male or female. Consequently, the very definition of the biological categories male and female, and people’s understanding of themselves and others as male or female, is ultimately social (p. 10). Fausto-Sterling (2000: 3) defined the situation as follows:

labelling someone a man or a woman is a social decision. We may use scientific knowledge to help us make the decision, but only our beliefs about gender – not science – can define our sex. Furthermore, our beliefs about gender affect what kinds of knowledge scientists produce about sex in the first place.

According to Fagot (1998), the terms sex and gender are neither completely interchangeable, nor completely distinct. For the most part, sex will refer to the dichotomous classification of people as male or female, and sex typing and sex roles will refer to what is assigned to people on the basis of their sex. Gender will be used where the dimensions of masculinity and femininity come into play, as the location of attitudes and behaviors on these dimensions is not limited to the male-female
dichotomy. The term gender-role development will be used to define the complex process by which children come to understand the societal ramifications of their sex.

Researchers use the term sex and the term gender in their writings in distinct ways and as we read the literature it is not usually clear which meaning of the terms is intended. Sometimes these two terms become synonymous and lose the unique meaning they originally had. As a result, this creates confusion for both authors and readers. Thus, Gentile (1993) drew attention to this lack of terminological clarity as it currently exists and proposed to adopt a standard vocabulary for each of the meanings, exploring the histories of the words sex and gender.

Gentile (1993) observed that word “sex” in English can be traced back to at least 1312 meaning ‘either of the two divisions of organic beings distinguished as male and female respectively; the males or the females viewed collectively’ (Oxford English Dictionary, OED, 1989, Vol. XV, p. 107). This meaning has had the longest history in English. In addition, this meaning has had the richest history. The first, second, and third definitions of sex in the OED (1989) all have to do with the quality of being biologically male or female. The fourth definition is sexual intercourse. The fifth definition concerns the many combination words, a few of which are relevant here: sex difference, sex stereotype, sex typed, sex role. Thus, the word sex has long been used referring to the maleness or femaleness of human beings.

Gender, on the contrary, has only recently come to be used in this manner. The first definition of gender is ‘kind, sort, class; also genus as opposed to species’ (OED, 1989, Vol. VI, p. 427). The second definition refers to gender as a technical linguistic term: ‘each of the three (or in some languages two) grammatical “kinds”, corresponding more or less to the distinctions of sex in the objects denoted…discriminated according
to the nature of the modification they require…’ (OED, 1989, Vol. VI, p. 427). These uses of gender also trace their history back to the 14th century.

Gender started to become a synonym for sex only within the past 40 years. ‘In modern (esp. feminist) use, [the term gender is] a euphemism for the sex of a human being, often intended to emphasize the social and cultural, as opposed to the biological, distinctions between the sexes’ (OED, 1989, Vol. VI, p. 428).

In early 1970s the concept of gender was used as an analytical category to draw a line of demarcation between biological sex differences and the way these are used to inform behaviours and competences, which are often assigned as either ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’. The purpose of affirming a sex/gender distinction, according to Pilcher and Whelehan (2006: 56), was to argue that the actual physical or mental effects of biological difference had been exaggerated to maintain a patriarchal system of power and to create a consciousness among women that they were naturally better suited to ‘domestic roles’ (p. 56). Such distinctions were made in anthropology, psychoanalysis, and medical research. Significantly for feminism, Simone de Beauvoir (1972) explored this distinction in *The Second Sex* two decades previously with her statement that ‘One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman’ (p. 295). De Beauvoir’s discussion makes clear the ways in which gender differences are set in hierarchical opposition, where the masculine principle is always the favoured ‘norm’ and the feminine one becomes positioned as ‘Other’. For de Beauvoir femininity can only be defined as lack – ‘between male and eunuch’ (p. 295), so that civilization was masculine to its very depths, and women - the continual outsiders.

Butler’s (1999) theorization about gender introduces the notion of performativity – the idea that gender is involuntarily ‘performed’ within the dominant discourses of
heteroreality. Butler’s conception of gender is perhaps the most radical of all, following a Foucauldian model, and asserting that all identity categories ‘are in fact the effects of institutions, practices, discourses with multiple and diffuse points of origin’ (p. ix). She argues further that the sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders. Assuming for the moment the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that ‘the construction of ‘men’ will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that ‘women’ will interpret only female bodies’ (p. 6).

2.1.2 Gender as a Social Structure

Risman (2004) adopted the view that we should understand and conceptualize gender as a social structure, and by doing so, we can better analyze the ways in which gender is embedded in the individual, interactional, and institutional dimensions of our society (p. 429). With this theory of gender as a social structure, Risman (2004) offers a conceptual framework, a scheme to organize the confusing, almost limitless, ways in which gender has come to be defined in contemporary social science. Four distinct social scientific theoretical traditions have developed to explain gender. The first tradition focuses on how individual sex differences originate, whether biological (Udry, 2000) or social in origin (Bem, 1993). The second tradition, perhaps portrayed best in Epstein’s (1988) *Deceptive Distinctions*, emerged as a reaction to the first and focuses on how the social structure (as opposed to biology or individual learning) creates gendered behaviour. The third tradition, also a reaction to the individualist thinking of the first, emphasizes social interaction and accountability to others’ expectations, with a focus on how ‘doing gender’ creates and reproduces inequality (West & Zimmerman, 1987). The sex differences literature, the doing gender interactional analyses, and the structural
perspectives have been portrayed as incompatible in the writings of Kanter, 1977, Risman, 1987, Epstein, 1988, Risman & Schwartz, 1989, Ferree, 1990. England and Browne (1992) argued persuasively that this incompatibility is an illusion: all structural theories must make assumptions about individuals, and individualist theories must make presumptions about external social control. While we do gender in every social interaction, it seems naive to ignore the gendered selves and cognitive schemas that children develop as they become cultural natives in a patriarchal world (Bem 1993).

The more recent integrative approaches (Lorber, 1994; Risman, 1998; Ferree, Lorber & Hess, 1999; Connell, 2002) treat gender as a socially constructed stratification system.

Lorber (1994) viewed gender as an institution that is embedded in all the social processes of everyday life and social organizations. She further argued that gender difference is primarily a means to justify sexual stratification. Gender is so endemic because unless we see difference, we cannot justify inequality. Lorber provided much cross-cultural, literary, and scientific evidence to show that gender difference is socially constructed and yet is universally used to justify stratification. She stated that ‘the continuing purpose of gender as a modern social institution is to construct women as a group’ (p. 33). Risman (2004) shared this presumption that the creation of difference is the very foundation on which inequality rests.

Martin (2003) extended Lorber’s use of the term ‘institution’ in her argument that gender should be conceptualized as such. She identified the criteria for a social institution as follows: (1) characteristics of groups; (2) persists over time and space; (3) includes distinct social practices; (4) constrains and facilitates behaviour/action; (5) includes expectations, rule/norms; (6) is constituted and reconstituted by embodied agents; (7) is internalized as identities and selves; (8) includes a legitimating ideology; (9) is contradictory, rife with conflict; (10) changes continuously; (11) is organized by
and permeated with power; and (12) is mutually constituted at different levels of
analysis. Risman (2004) built on this notion of gender as an institution but found the
institutional language distracting. The word ‘institution’ is too commonly used to refer
to particular aspects of society, for example, the family as an institution or corporations
as institutions.

This multidimensional picture of gender has also been addressed by Connell
(2009). She stated:

… gender must be understood as a social structure. It is not an expression of biology,
nor a fixed dichotomy in human life or character. It is a pattern in our social
arrangements, and in the everyday activities or practices which those arrangements
govern. (Connell, 2009: 10)

By understanding gender as a social structure, we can more broadly understand and
analyse patterns of interactions, relations and behaviours, instead of simple
dissimilarities. Connell (2009) defined gender as “… the structure of social relations
that centres on the reproductive arena, and the set of practices that bring reproductive
distinctions between bodies into social processes.” (p.11)

Moreover, talking about gender as a social structure, Connell (2009) described
what she terms “gender regime” – an arrangement of gender relations in a particular
environment. Gender regimes are part of organisational life and, as a result, are fluid.
These gender regimes of particular organisations are set among wider social patterns:
the gender order (Connell, ibid). The components of the gender regime – gender
relations – are found in all spheres of life and should therefore always be taken as
identified four dimensions of gender relations, which together construct and structure
the intricate patterns of gendered social life. These are (a) the gender division of labour, (b) the gender relations of power, referring to the way in which control and authority are exercised on the basis of gender, (c) emotional relations, which is the structure of emotional relationships, attachments, and commitments among people and groups, along gender lines, and (d) gender relation of culture and symbolism, referring to the ways in which gender identities are defined or created in culture, language and in the prevailing beliefs and attitudes associated with gender.

2.1.3 Gender Identity

The notion of identity is a slippery one, often used but rarely distinguished, varying from one discipline to another, and an ongoing subject of academic endeavor. Gee (1999: 39) observed critically that ‘some people… tend to reserve the term ‘identity’ for a sense of self that is relatively continuous and ‘fixed’ over time’. Ivanic (1998: 11, cited in Litosseliti) wrote that though identity is a useful term, since it is the everyday word for people’s sense of who they are, it is ‘misleading singular’. She noted:

The plural word ‘identities’ is sometimes better, because it captures the idea of people identifying simultaneously with a variety of social groups. One or more of these identities may be foregrounded at different times; they are sometimes contradictory, sometimes interrelated: people’s diverse identities constitute the richness and dilemmas of their sense of self.

Giddens (1991) similarly conceptualized identity as a series of choices one continually makes about oneself and one’s lifestyle, thus as a process, rather than a state or set of personal attributes. Litosseliti and Sunderland (2002) shared this view of a given individual’s multiplicity of identities, and of affiliation and choices, however, they
argued that identities also come from the attributions and ascriptions of others. Identities can thus be seen as emerging from an individual’s different sorts of relationships with others (perhaps within a community of practice), and as changing as their relationships change. Accordingly, (gender) identity can be seen as multiple and fluid, and never complete: ‘the emergence and re-emergence of self’ (Jaworski & Coupland, 1999: 412-413).

Sunderland (2001) emphasized the importance of gendered identities in current theorizations of gender as socially and discursively constructed, a continual process of negotiation and modification. However, as she pointed out, gender can also be conceptualized as ‘performance’. This is not a question of ‘either/or’, but may be a question of theoretical primacy (Sunderland, 2001: 25).

Lorber (1994, 1999) attempted to detach masculinity and femininity from sex category by developing subcategories of gender including gender status (being taken for a man or woman), gender identity (sense of self as a man or woman), and gender display (being feminine and/or masculine). Even with this delineation, Lorber, like West and Zimmerman (1987), consistently slipped into assumptions of the ‘natural’ link between categories. As stated by Dozier (2005:299), Lorber’s work is important in defining gender as an institution that creates and reinforces inequality, but it also illustrates how easily sex and gender (masculinity and femininity) become elided when sex is used as the initiating point for gendering individuals.

Sunderland (2006) stressed that identity has become a very important concept in gender and language study, to a large extent replacing the fixed and socially or even biologically essentialist notion of ‘gender role’. However, the concept of identity has itself been challenged. First, Butler (1990) developed the idea of gender as performance,
deriving from speech act theory (Austin, 1962), in the sense that one performs, displays, or enacts one’s gender, ‘to open up the field of possibility for gender without dictating what kind of possibilities ought to be realized’ (p. viii). Seeing gender as performance has been widely and diversely taken up by others and indeed revisited by Butler herself (1999: xiv). She respectively characterizes the notion of performativity in her work as follows:

In the first instance, the performativity of gender revolves around… the way in which the anticipation of a gendered essence produces that which it posits as outside itself. Secondly, performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the concept of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration.

Second, discursive psychology (for example Edley, 2001, McIlvenny, 2002, Weatherall, 2002) has rejected the notion of identity as an individual’s ‘inner self’, being concerned rather with the socially shaped accounts an individual articulates.

Rather than a set of attributes or simply a social category, gender is conceptualized as a process: something we do, produce, accomplish, perform. Gender identity is then a communicative achievement, an effect of discursive practices, ‘rather than an a priori factor that determines linguistic behavior’ (Christie, 2000: 34). Gender identities are multi-layered, variable, diverse, fluid, shifting, fragmented, and often contradictory or dilemmatic. Litosseliti (2006) noted that discursive (i.e. social and linguistic) construction of gender identities is accomplished through an ongoing process of selection, negotiation, appropriation, and restatement. Identity work involves making choices from the discourses about femininity and masculinity that are available and appropriate in our social contexts. These choices are not free choices, but shaped by the
highly contextualized enabling and constraining potential of ‘doing’ gender appropriately (p. 63).

Anselmi and Law (1998) introduced three components of gender identity development. One component is the process by which children acquire behaviors related to their sex. This process of mapping particular behaviors and attitudes onto children based on their biological sex is referred to as the acquisition of gender roles. Studies showed that most cultures provide different social roles for boys and girls. Part of growing up involves acquiring the behaviors that are related to these culturally defined gender roles. Although not all children adopt all features of the prescribed gender role, there are differences in behaviors prescribed for the social roles of boys and girls. All sorts of behaviors are related to the socialization of gender identity, such as classroom behavior, displays of emotion, parent-child interactions, or preferences for activities. These behaviors are referred to as the social/behavioral component of gender identity.

Another dimension of gender identity is the child’s knowledge about gender, or the cognitive component of gender identity. Some children begin as young as age 2 to use the label ‘girl’ or ‘boy’ to describe themselves and others but the concern is what meaning is attached to this label for young children (Anselmi & Law, 1998). Contemporary theories of cognitive development are employed here to understand a child’s comprehension of gender.

A third component of gender identity is the affective component (Anselmi & Law, 1998), which refers to what children feel about their identity as either male or female. It is often observable in middle childhood when it is reflected in children’s debates over who are better – boys or girls. As children reach adolescence, the
emotional significance of gender identity may intensify as physical changes intersect with cultural prescriptions to create pressures to adopt gender appropriate adult role behaviors (Huston & Alvarez, 1990).

Obviously, as Law (1998) noted, the development of gender identity must involve all three components - social/behavioral, cognitive, and affective. Children learn to think and act in ways that reflect their gender, and they develop strong feelings about themselves as gendered people.

2.1.4 Gender Dynamics

More than a decade ago, social science and humanities scholars started conceptualizing gender as a dynamic process, as practice, as what people say and do, besides such static properties as an identity, social status, what is learned via socialization, a system of stratification, and so on. This development occurred rapidly. In the late 1980s, Martin (1992) wrote an article in which she used the term gendering to mean gender/gendered practices in a way that was unconventional at the time. Only a short time later, many scholars in multiple disciplines used this term and other similar ones to represent gender dynamics.

Martin (2003) stated that to view gender as practice means, among other things, to view it as a ‘system of action’ that is institutionalized and widely recognized but also dynamic, emergent, local, variable, and shifting. Many gendering practices are readily recognized by societal members as features of a gender institution that is both local and society-wide. Outside the gender institution, these practices could not be viewed or interpreted or understood as gender. Yet, because they are local, some gendering
practices are optional actions that can be invoked or ignored during interaction. People practice the practices that the gender institution makes available and do so, furthermore, ‘in the heat of the moment’, as Bourdieu (1990) noted.

Gender scholars have used diverse terms to represent gender dynamics – doing gender, gendering, performing, asserting, narrating, mobilizing, maneuvering. According to Martin (2003: 352), “practicing gender is likewise more than a person and the activities this person engages in; it is actions learned through repetition. Each practice of gender is a moving phenomenon, done quickly, (often) nonreflexively, in concert or interaction with others”.

Practicing is key to both reflecting and reconstituting the gender institution (Rantalaiho et al., 1997; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Mendez & Wolf, 2001; Quinn 2002). Gendered practices are learned and enacted in childhood and in every major site of social behavior over the lifecourse, including schools, intimate relationships, families, workplaces and so on. In time gendering practices become almost automatic. They sustain gendered relationships and, in turn, reconstitute the gender institution. Over time, the saying and doing create what is said and done (Butler, 1990; Ridgeway, 2001).

Prior to Martin, other scholars also framed gender as dynamic. West and Zimmerman (1987) developed Goffman’s framing of ‘doing of gender’ as an active accomplishment entailing gender displays that are situated actions, that is, actions appropriate to particular contexts. Their work has had a tremendous impact on gender scholarship, and their emphasis on accountability to the gender order has helped understand why people so extensively ‘do gender’.

Kondo’s (1990) framing of gender as a ‘strategic narrative assertion’ and ‘performance’ in her ethnographic study of work, identity, and gender is helpful in
similar ways. Kondo determined that any behavior is capable of being gendered as masculine or feminine based on a person’s talk and action, within the constraints of the societal system of gender relations. In agreement with Connell (1995), she viewed gender identity as a ‘strategic assertion’ that is shifting, fluid, and contested rather than a ‘fixed essence’.

Butler (1990) emphasized the necessity to take account of the material body and the dynamic of performativity in conceptualizing gender. Following Derrida, Lacan, and Foucault, she explored how the material body is gendered through discourse and how ‘individual action’ produces and is produced by a constructivist gender system. In her view, “performativity is not a singular ‘act’, for it is always a reiteration of a norm or set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present, it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition” (p. 12).

Connell (1995) focused on the practices/practicing of masculinity/masculinities rather than the generic dynamic of doing gender. He defined masculinities as ‘a configuration of practice within a system of gender relations’ (p. 84) and ‘simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender relations, and the effects of the practices in bodily experience, personality, and culture’ (p. 71). Practices are the core feature of Connell’s definition. Echoing Kondo, masculinity/masculinities is/are an ongoing ‘gender project’ (p. 72) not a ‘stable object of knowledge’ (p. 33); they are practices rather than fixed, resolutely knowable ‘objects’. Martin (2003) observed that Connell moved away from the global dynamic of doing, asserting, negotiating, or performing gender to a concern with doing, asserting, negotiating, or performing masculinity/masculinities and, by implication, femininity/femininities.
Martin (2003) viewed the notion of gender dynamics as two sided: gendering practices and practicing gender (p. 353). Practices and practicing refer to a set of interrelated activities and actions concerning a particular content about which people have ‘practical knowledge,’ for example swimming, riding a bicycle, or ‘acting like’ a woman or man. Martin (2003) stated that ‘gender practices,’ ‘gendered practices,’ and ‘gendering practices’ stand for a class of activities that are available – culturally, socially, narratively, discursively, physically, and so forth – for people to enact in an encounter or situation in accord with the gender institution. Practices are per se conceptually distinct from people who practice them. They are available to be done, asserted, performed – that is, practiced in social contexts (p. 354). They are potential actions – Connell’s (1995) configurations of practice – that people know about and have the capacity or agency to do, assert, perform, or mobilize. In a binary gendered society one can ‘act like’ a woman or ‘act like’ a man although one can do so only serially, not simultaneously (Lorber 1996, 2000). Smith (1987) interestingly notes that girls and women are observers of men’s and boys’ gender practices; men and boys pay much less attention to the details of girls’ and women’s lives.

2.1.5 The Concept of Doing Gender

The concept of ‘doing gender’ was supported and confirmed during twenty years of intense sociological study and extensive persuasive research. Not surprisingly, this concept became, and remains, immensely salient in sociology, gender studies, and feminist theory.

Messerschmidt’s continuing research on ‘doing gender’ has concentrated primarily on white, working-class, violent and nonviolent teenage boys and girls
(Messerschmidt 2000, 2004). Through life-history interviews, he has revealed detailed accounts of gender interaction in three distinct ‘sites’: the family, the school, and the peer group. Research validates the social processes involved in ‘doing gender’. First, data show that these teens do not possess gender but rather that gender is something they do in interaction with others. Second, youth practices are evaluated by co-present interactants in relation to normative conceptions of gender within each setting. Third, sex category serves as a resource for the interpretation of situated social conduct, as co-present interactants in each setting attempt to hold accountable behavior as a female or male; that is, socially defined membership in one sex category is used as a means of discrediting or accepting masculine or feminine practices.

The concept of ‘doing gender’, as Messerschmidt (2009) noted, provided him with a powerful intellectual tool for conceptualizing gendered behavior and interaction in all three sites. However, the accounts also highlight certain features of youth behavior and interaction that suggest ways to further enhance our understanding of ‘doing gender’. First, some of the youth presented an easily recognized sex category but constructed gender behavior that others perceived as incongruent for that category; the meaning assigned to their gender behavior by co-present interactants was influenced by their perceived sex category (also see Dozier, 2005). This demonstrates that the perception of ‘male’ or ‘female’ is salient in the interpretation of behavior as masculine and feminine. For example, in the school setting, masculine behavior by girls often was devalued by peers because it was not performed in and through a socially perceived male body. This marks the importance of a balance between perceived sex category and gender behavior for validating masculinity and femininity. Second, inconstant with most writings in which ‘doing gender’ ignores the body, the interview data highlight a few ways these youth interact with and through their bodies. Third, this new gendered
self was the outcome of reading and then ‘doing’ certain situationally available gender practices. The practices of interviewees clearly signified ‘doing gender’ according to situational criteria, yet they routinely did not intend their practices specifically as gendered acts.

Taking into consideration the research outcomes, Messerschmidt (2009) believed that the concept of ‘doing gender’ should further be enhanced through future research examining more closely (1) the relationship between perceived sex category and the meaning of situationally practiced gender behavior, (2) how both sex category and gender behavior are socially constructed in and through the body, (3) whether doing gender may or may not be consciously intended as a masculine or feminine act, (4) how individuals may both ‘do’ and ‘undo’ gender, and (5) the important relationship between social action and social structure (p. 88).

The concept of ‘doing gender’ came from West and Zimmerman's article by the same title, originally written in 1977 but not published until 1987. West and Zimmerman (1987) illustrate that gender is performed in interactions, and that behaviors are assessed based on socially accepted conceptions of gender. Rather than focusing on how gender is ingrained in the individual or perpetuated by institutions, they highlight the interactional level as a site where gender is invoked and reinforced.

Smith (2009) emphasized that the ‘doing gender’ approach rightly makes visible methods whereby women are silenced in routine interactions with men. But she challenges feminism’s emphasis on the category of gender over sex, and West and Zimmerman’s preference for the term. As Smith notes, ‘the term gender entered feminist currency to suppress reference to biology as determinative of women’s inferiority. Dropping sex and adopting gender buried biology’ (p. 76).
Risman (2009) offered a critique not of the original concept but how it has come to be used or misused. She argued ‘that the language of doing gender ought to be used carefully and that as society changes, we begin to document the ways in which we find boys and girls, women and men, ‘undoing gender’ (p. 81). Drawing on Butler (2004) and Deutsch (2007), Risman asked how individuals might ‘undo gender’, an agenda that she argues has more potential for transformation. Moreover, she claimed the utility to think about gender as a structure (Risman, 1998, 2004). In her view, every society has a gender structure, in the same way that every society has an economic structure. The gender structure has implications at the level of individual analysis, in shaping interactional expectations that are at the heart of doing gender, and at the institutional level in the organization and policing of social groups (p. 83).

Messerschmidt describes ‘doing gender’ as part of a paradigm shift that responded to the failures of sex-role, radical-feminist, and socialist-feminist theories to confront issues of power, inequality, and agency. However, he argues that most research on ‘doing gender’ fails to address how ‘sex category’ and the body figure into the process. He suggests that future research consider the body as well as individuals’ intent or lack of consciousness about the ways they are doing gender (Jurik & Siemsen, 2009: 74).

Kitzinger (2009) suggested that West and Zimmerman (1987) have made a great theoretical advance in Doing Gender but missed the opportunity to recommend a scholarly method suitable to studying the phenomenon. She identifies the implication of their omission: ‘that the practices involved in ‘doing gender’ can be isolated and described by relatively straightforward sociological observation and informant self-report’. (p. 94)
Deutsch (2007) highlighted the importance of ‘doing gender’ claiming that it changed the focus of study in four important ways. First, it de-emphasized socialization as the basis for gendered difference between men and women (Risman, 1998; Green, 2005). Rather than internalize a set of behaviors and practices or identities that were rewarded and modeled by parents, teachers, and other authority figures, men and women create gender within social relationships throughout their lives. This formulation assumes that gender is dynamic and that what is considered appropriate gender behavior changes over time (Thorne, 1993). While socialization theories assume that individuals internalize the gendered norms that were salient when they were growing up, the doing gender model assumes that people respond to changing contemporary norms. Gender construction points to the possibility of revolutionary change within a much shorter time span than implied by socialization approaches (Deutsch, 2007: 107). According to Andersen (2005), doing gender approach implies that if gender is constructed, then it can be deconstructed. Gendered institutions can be changed, and the social interactions that support them can be undone. Therefore, this revolutionary potential, as Deutsch (2007) noted, is the most important contribution of this approach.

Deutsch (2007) proposed to adopt a new convention, namely, to reserve the phrase ‘doing gender’ to refer to social interactions that reproduce gender difference and use the phrase ‘undoing gender’ to refer to social interactions that reduce gender difference (p. 122). She found the phrase ‘doing gender’ coined by West and Zimmerman (1987) quite fascinating. The word ‘do’ denotes action: ‘to perform, to execute, to accomplish, finish, complete, to exert, to bring about: effect’. ‘Doing’ is an excellent word to emphasize that gender is created continually in ubiquitous ongoing social interactions. However, if ‘do’ refers to something that is accomplished, or brought about, then ‘doing gender’ will bring to mind the accomplishment of gender
difference rather than the dismantling of difference. Although West and Zimmerman defined ‘doing gender’ to encompass both conformity and resistance, Deutsch (2007) assumed that the commonsense use of the language orients us toward conformity. In her view, the phrase ‘doing gender’ evokes conformity; ‘undoing gender’ evokes resistance. The prevalence of research on gender conformity that has grown out of the doing gender approach argues that gender researchers are also influenced by this linguistic frame. In fact, sometimes researchers explicitly use the phrase ‘doing gender’ to mean conformity to gender norms (e.g. Fox, 2001; De Welde, 2003; Risman, 2004).

West and Zimmerman developed their theory of ‘doing gender’ (1987) to account for the reproduction of gender through interaction. Two decades later, the theory reached near canonical status in the sociology of gender (Jurik & Siemsen, 2009). As doing gender has emerged as the hegemonic theoretical framework for understanding gender inequality, feminist scholars have begun to interrogate the theory’s ability to account for social change. A central question in the debate is this: is undoing gender possible? (Connell, 2010: 31)

On one side of the debate are those who argued that the gender binary can be subverted in interaction (Deutsch, 2007; Risman, 2009). These scholars criticize the common deployment of doing gender to document the ways gender oppression is maintained, arguing that it is important also to highlight the ‘undoing’ of gender to further the feminist project of dismantling gender inequality (Deutsch, 2007). In response, West and Zimmerman (2009) stated that gender can never be ‘undone’, but might instead be ‘redone’. They argue that the accountability structures that maintain gender may shift to accommodate less oppressive ways of doing gender, but are never eradicated (as cited in Connell, 2010: 32). Thus far, as Connell (2010) observed, this debate regarding the possibility of undoing gender remained largely theoretical.
2.1.6 Gender and Language as a Field of Study

‘Gender and Language’ can best be described not as an approach, but rather as a topic, or more broadly, ‘field’ of study. The two concepts had been linked in scholarly writings well before the second wave of the Women’s Movement began in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Jespersen, 1922, Labov, 1966).

Since the early 1970s the field of gender and language has developed apace, creating an expanding paradigm which draws on a wide range of disciplines, theoretical approaches (for example, Corpus Linguistics, and then comparatively, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Conversation Analysis (CA) and Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA), epistemologies, as well as methodologies (introspection, sociolinguistic surveys, focus groups, observation, and collection/analysis of naturally occurring spoken data).

Within linguistics, gender and language study has links not only with sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and language change, but also with stylistics, pragmatics, literacy, the history of language and even historical and descriptive linguistics (for example, Corbett, 2004). Current gender and language study is highlighted by its interdisciplinary nature. It crosses the boundaries of Linguistics into Women’s Studies, Queer Studies, Literature, Philosophy, Psychology, Cultural and Media Studies, Politics, History, Religious Studies and Education. Probably associated most closely with the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Gender and Language issues are found also in Law and Management and even in the Natural Sciences (Crowther & Leithe, 1995). Interestingly, as Sunderland (2006) noted, new developments have not only built on their predecessors but have also been premised on challenges to the predecessors. The result is a field with practitioners whose
contributions can be seen as located at different diachronic points, resulting in ongoing yet, hopefully, productive tensions. One ongoing debate, for example, is the role of the study of gender and language in what might be described as emancipatory feminism; another debate is whether conversation analysis (CA) is an appropriate approach for the feminist project that gender and language study is often seen to be.

Gender is embedded so thoroughly in our institutions, our actions, our beliefs, and our desires, that it appears to us to be completely natural. And precisely the fact that gender seems self-evident makes the study of gender interesting (Eckert & Ginet, 2003: 9).

Feminism has inspired gender and language study since the late 1960s, but there have been different types of feminism, with different natures and objectives, not only diachronically, but also synchronically, and this continues to be so (see Tong, 1992). Different types of feminism have had a diverse impact on language and gender study. For example, Spender’s (1980) approach can be seen as a radical feminist one, embracing the notion of patriarchy as primary in women’s ‘struggle’ – rather than class, which has been of prime importance to socialist feminists (Sunderland, 2006).

However, as Cameron (1997) pointed out, what different feminisms have in common is not just an interest in women and men, girls and boys, and gender relations, but also a critical interest. This extends to social arrangements and power relations, although notions of power (who has it, can have it and how it is exerted) similarly vary with different forms of feminism.

Lakoff is considered to be the pioneer in the field of gender and language and she has played a key role in laying the foundations of gender and language study. Lakoff’s Language and Woman’s Place (1975) has been a crucial early work in the
study of language and gender. It has been hugely influential, both in the popular and in the academic sphere. Though she does not use the word, Lakoff was in many ways writing as a feminist (Sunderland, 2006). Lakoff’s work can be seen in part as an example of the ‘(male) dominance’ current of gender and language study (see Cameron, 1992).

Recent research on language and gender has tended to focus on diversity (prioritizing differences amongst women/girls and amongst men/boys rather than seeing gender as a ‘binary’ distinction); on context and performativity (seeing gender as something that is ‘done’ in context rather than as a social attribute, and also seeing language as inherently context-dependent); and on uncertainty and ambiguity (in terms of the meanings of what language users say and do). Several collections covering aspects of language and gender both address and exemplify such preoccupations (e.g. Hall & Bucholtz, 1995; Bergvall, Bing, & Freed, 1996; Johnson & Meinhof, 1997; Wodak, 1997; Bucholtz, Liang, & Sutton, 1999).

There is a substantial and wide-ranging body of research carried out in educational settings. Some studies have focused on teacher-student interactions – i.e. how the teacher’s attention is distributed among girls and boys in class (Spender, 1982; Claricoates, 1983; French & French, 1984; Kelly, 1988). Other studies have focused on student-student interactions – i.e., differences and inequalities in girls’ and boys’ language behavior such as the amount of speech they produce in the classroom, or their turn-taking and interruption sequences (Gass & Varonis, 1986; Holmes, 1989; Swan & Graddol, 1988, 1995). In the Greek context, girls’ and boys’ patterns of participation in classroom interaction, more specifically, one type of verbal initiative on the students’ part – the non-compliance, has been examined by Pavlidou (2003). Studies on gender and corporate discourse, as well as on interruption have also been carried out in Greece
(Kessapidou & Makri-Tsilipakou, 2001; Makri-Tsilipakou, 1994, 2001, 2015). Some works mark a shift away from gender generalizations and differences, to examine the discourses and gender identities that are at work in educational settings (Pavlenko et al., 2001; Norton & Pavlenko, 2004; Norton & Toohley, 2004).

Mercer et al. (1999) noted that interactions that take place in educational settings enable students to develop sensitivity towards their own and others’ rights and responsibilities as citizens in a community. Particularly important is collaborative and exploratory talk in classrooms, which allows students to construct knowledge together and negotiate their own and others’ views. Educational settings also give students an understanding of their social identity in relation to each other and the institution (Freeman & McElhinny, 1996). In other words, they are important settings for the construction and enactment of gender.

Corson (1997) viewed schools as places where highly specialized discursive practices can be observed. He indicates that education enables people to have two types of life chances: ‘options’, which involves a great range of opportunities in their future, and ‘ligatures’, which involves the establishment of stronger bonds between individuals and groups as a result of people’s experiences in education. He suggested that ‘girls derive much more in the way of ligatures from the discursive practices of their education than boys do [while] boys seem to derive more options for themselves’ (Corson, 1997). Accordingly, instead of creating an environment that provides people with equal opportunities for participation in educational and extra-curricular activities, schools develop and reinforce gender segregation and stereotypes. That is, schools play an important role in the learning of the negative aspects of gender roles that occur in real-life situations (Sarah, 1988; Delamont, 1990).
2.1.7 Theoretical Framework

In this subsection the main modern theories on gender identification are briefly presented so as to provide some background information for our area of study, which is gender in language acquisition, that is gender in educational context.

2.1.7.1 Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory suggested that the child develops both gender identity and gender role through a learning process that involves modeling, imitation and reinforcement (Bandura, 1977). The theory is based on the assumption that boys learn to be masculine and girls to be feminine because gender-role-appropriate behavior is rewarded and gender-role-inappropriate behavior is punished or ignored. Children learn which behaviors are gender-role appropriate by observing and imitating adult and peer models, as well as through trial and error in their own behavior. The theory suggests that a child is most likely to imitate a model who is readily available and perceived as powerful, nurturant, and similar to the self (Mischel, 1970). According to this viewpoint, parental models, particularly the same-sex parent, are the most effective in influencing the child’s behavior. Social learning theory proposes that parents and other socializing objects map out gender roles for the child, and then the child is differentially reinforced for following the appropriate one. Children begin to be aware of the two gender roles as early as the first year of life (Pouline-Dubois et al., 1994), and as early as age 3, children imitate same-sex models more than other-sex models (Bussey & Bandura, cited in Lips, 2001).
As the child is repeatedly reminded that he is a boy or she is a girl and differentially reinforced for doing sex-appropriate things, it gradually becomes rewarding for him to think of himself as a boy and for her to think of herself as a girl. Thus, through observation, imitation, and reinforcement the formation of an appropriate gender role precedes and lays the groundwork for establishing gender identity (Lips, 2001).

2.1.7.2 Cognitive - Developmental Theory

In contrast to social learning theory, cognitive-developmental theory focuses almost exclusively on the child as the primary agent of his or her own sex-role socialization, a focus reflecting the theory’s basic assumption that sex typing follows naturally and inevitably from universal principles of cognitive development (Bem, 1981). Cognitive developmental theory portrays the child as actively searching for cues as to how to behave competently and correctly, rather than as being passively shaped by environmental forces (Lips, 2001).

Cognitive-developmental theory (Kohlberg, 1966; Kohlberg & Ullian, 1974) proposes that gender, like other concepts cannot be learned until a child reaches a particular stage of intellectual development. Between the ages of 3 and 5, a child acquires gender constancy – an understanding that a person’s gender is fixed and cannot be altered.

Kohlberg (1966) criticized social learning theory. In his cognitive theory he maintained that sex-role identification results from the development of a clear concept of maleness and femaleness. Kohlberg (1966) contrasted social learning and cognitive-developmental theory as follows:
Learning Theory: ‘I want rewards, I am rewarded for doing boy things, therefore I want to be a boy’. In contrast, cognitive theory assumes this sequence: ‘I am a boy, therefore I want to do boy things, therefore the opportunity to do boy things (and gain approval for doing them) is rewarding.’

The cognitive developmental approach assumes that once the child has categorized herself or himself with some certainty as female or male, she or he will use this self-categorization as an ongoing focus for attaching value to behaviors. The child will attach higher value to gender-appropriate behaviors and will find the performance of gender-appropriate behaviors more reinforcing than gender-inappropriate behaviors. In other words, gender-appropriate behaviors acquire a meaning that makes them self-reinforcing for the child, whereas gender-inappropriate behaviors acquire negative connotations and are avoided. The little girl embraces ‘feminine’ values; the little boy adopts ‘masculine’ ones (Lips, 2001: 68).

Cognitive developmental theory indicates that the adoption of gender roles occurs as a result of identifying with a gender category, but much gender-typing occurs before the age of gender constancy (Downs, 1983; Martin & Little, 1990). Preferences for gender-stereotyped toys and behaviors have been found among children who have not yet developed gender constancy (O’Keefe & Hyde, 1983; Bussey & Bandura, 1992). It has been suggested that social learning theory and cognitive developmental theory may account for two different aspects of the formation of gender role and gender identity. Early sex-typing may stem from differential reinforcement and observational learning, as social learning theory proposes, whereas the sex-typing that occurs after the child has achieved gender constancy may be due to deliberate same-sex modeling, in accordance with cognitive developmental theory (Basow, 1986). Another suggestion, based on a comprehensive study of children between 5 and 12 years old, is that
cognitive development and social learning are associated with different aspects of the process of adopting gender roles (Serbin et al., 1993). According to this research, cognitive development is most strongly associated with cognitive aspects of gender-typing, such as knowledge of stereotypes and flexibility in applying them; social learning is most strongly linked to affective aspects of gender-typing such as preferences for gender-appropriate activities, occupations, and peers.

2.1.7.3 Gender Schema Theory

Lips (2001) noted that although some support exists for the premises of both social learning and cognitive developmental theories, neither one seems capable of explaining fully the development and maintenance of gender roles and gender identity. New theoretical approaches that incorporate new research findings and integrate and extend these two representative theories are required. Several such approaches have been proposed, but gender schema theory (Bem, 1981, 1985; Martin & Halverson, 1981) has had the most impact till today.

Gender schema theory proposes that the phenomenon of sex typing derives largely from gender-schematic processing, from a generalized readiness on the part of the child to process information on the basis of the sex-linked associations that constitute the gender schema. As children learn the contents of their society’s gender schema, they learn which attributes are to be linked with their own sex, and hence, with themselves (Bem, 1981). Like cognitive developmental theory, gender schema theory proposes that sex typing is mediated by the child’s own cognitive processing. However, gender schema theory further proposes that gender-schematic processing is itself derived from the sex-differentiated practices of the social community. Thus, like social
learning theory, gender schema theory assumes that sex typing is a learned phenomenon and, hence, that it is neither inevitable nor unmodifiable.

A schema is a cognitive structure, a network of associations that organizes and guides an individual’s perceptions. A schema functions as an anticipatory structure, a readiness to search for and to assimilate incoming information in schema-relevant terms. Schematic information processing is thus highly selective and enables the individual to impose structure and meaning onto a vast array of incoming stimuli. More specifically, schematic information processing entails a readiness to sort attributes and behaviors into masculine and feminine categories on the basis of some particular dimension despite the existence of other dimensions that could serve equally well in this regard (Bem 1981).

Bem (1981) considers important to note that gender schema theory is a theory of process, not content. Because sex-typed individuals are seen as processing information and regulating their behavior according to whatever definitions of femininity and masculinity their culture happens to provide, the process of dividing the world into feminine and masculine categories – is central to the theory. Accordingly, sex-typed individuals are seen to differ from other individuals not primarily in the degree of femininity or masculinity they possess, but in the extent to which their self-concepts and behaviors are organized on the basis of gender rather than on the basis of some other dimension.

2.1.7.4 Structural Approaches to Gender

While structural perspectives have been applied to gender in the past (Kanter, 1977; Epstein, 1988), there has been a fundamental flaw in these applications. Generic
structural theories applied to gender presume that if women and men were to experience identical structural conditions and role expectations, empirically observable gender differences would disappear. But, as Risman (2004) claimed, it ignores not only internalized gender at the individual level but the cultural interactional expectations that remain attached to women and men because of their gender category. As she states, a structural perspective on gender is accurate only if we realize that gender itself is a structure deeply embedded in society (Risman, 2004: 432).

Giddens’s (1984) structural theory adds considerably more depth to this analysis of gender as a social structure with his emphasis on the recursive relationship between social structure and individuals. That is, social structure shapes individuals, but simultaneously, individuals shape the social structure. Giddens embraced the transformative power of human action. He insisted that any structural theory must be concerned with reflexivity and actors’ interpretations of their own lives. Social structures not only act on people; people act on social structures. Indeed, as Risman (2004) noted, social structures are created not by mysterious forces but by human action. When people act on structure, they do so for their own reasons. As a result, she suggests that we must be concerned with why actors choose their acts. Giddens (1984) insisted that concern with meaning must go beyond the verbal justification easily available from actors because so much of social life is routine and so taken for granted that actors will not articulate, or even consider, why they act.

Risman (2004) tried to bring women and men back into a structural theory where gender is the structure under analysis and to identify when behaviour is habit and when we do gender as consciously, with intent, rebellion, or even with irony. As Risman (2004: 433) states, gender is deeply embedded as a basis for stratification not just in our personalities, our cultural rules, or institutions but in all these, and in complicated ways.
The gender structure differentiates opportunities and constraints based on sex category and thus has consequences on three dimensions: (i) On an individual level, for the development of gendered selves; (ii) during interaction as men and women face different cultural expectations even when they fill the identical structural positions; and (iii) in institutional domains where explicit regulations regarding resource distribution and material goods are gender specific.

The gender structure theory has several advantages. This schema advances our understanding of gender in several ways. First, this theoretical model imposes some order on the research findings that have developed to explain gender inequality. Risman (2004) believed that thinking of each research question as one piece of jigsaw puzzle, being able to identify how one set of findings coordinates with others even when the dependent variables or contexts of interest are distinct, furthers our ability to build a cumulative science. A second contribution of this approach is that it leaves behind the modernist warfare version of science, where theories are competing, trying to best explain gender inequality, and as a more postmodern science, attempts to find complicated and integrative theories (Collins, 1998). Thus, the conceptualization of gender as a social structure is Risman’s contribution to complicating, but enriching social theory about gender. A third benefit to this multidimensional structural model is that it allows us to seriously investigate the direction and strength of causal relationships between gendered phenomena on each dimension. We can try to identify the site where change occurs and at which level of analysis the abilities of women and men seem able to effectively reject habitualized gender routines. Finally, perhaps the most important feature of this conceptual schema, as Risman (2004) notes, is its dynamism. No one dimension determines the other. Change is fluid and reverberates throughout the structure dynamically. Changes in individual identities and moral accountability may
change interactional expectations, but the opposite is possible as well (Spade & Valentine, 2011).

2.1.8 Approaches to Gender Differences in Interaction

There are three main theoretical approaches within language and gender studies: dominance theory, difference theory and diversity theory (Cameron, 2005). The dominance theory emerged first, growing out of the feminist movement, with women trying to raise consciousness to the unfairness inherent in the social treatment of individuals based on their sex (Freeman & McElhinny, 1996). This approach emphasized how growing up in a patriarchal society essentially predisposed females as subordinates and males as the dominant group, and set out to explore how this unequal social arrangement was both reflected in and reinforced by language (Cameron, 2005). In pursuit of the linguistic manifestation of female inferiority, a distinctively feminine speech style has been identified, characterized by the frequent use of question-tags, question intonation in statements, weaker expletives, hedges and trivial topics, among other things (Lakoff, 1990). These features were considered responsible for making women’s speech “powerless” and mirror their conformity to a social hierarchy dominated by men (ibid.).

Difference theory, on the other hand, broke away from concentrating on male’s domination over women, and ascribed gender differences in speech to the distinct socialization patterns of girls and boys (Cameron, 2005). It has been observed that girls and boys prefer to spend their time with same-sex children from a very early age (Eckert & Mc Connell-Ginet, 2003). This same-sex preference observed in playgroup and friendship formation brings about two distinct subcultures of males and females,
each of which develops its own group norms and practices (Tannen, 2001). Girls’ groups are built on cooperation, whereas boys’ groups are greater in size and display a hierarchical organization, and these differences manifest in language use as well (ibid.). This is the reason why sociolinguists taking the difference approach concluded that “male-female conversation is cross-cultural communication” (ibid, p. 42). As such, problems and differences in interaction can mostly be explained by the mismatch between how men and women grow up to use language (Tannen, 1996). The difference approach therefore rejects the idea that everything women say reflects their lack of power and confidence (Cameron, 2005).

The third theoretical approach within the study of language and gender is diversity theory, which radically differs from the previous two in several ways. Firstly, it questions the distinction of sex and gender, claiming that similarly to gender, sex is a social construct as well (Cameron, 2005). Secondly, it problematizes the practice of handling men and women as two distinct but internally uniform groups (ibid.). Consequently, the emphasis is put on revealing the many types of existing gender identities and sexualities. This means that instead of the traditional focus on men and women in general, diversity theory shows “more interest in non-mainstream” and “queer” gender identities” (ibid, p. 484).

Our study will adopt the difference theory approach because our research has taken place in classrooms. Within the classroom students have equal rights and opportunities, therefore gender differences cannot be interpreted as reflections of a hierarchy that positions male students as dominating over females. Also, the dual categorization of students as male and female is usually the most that is done in the area of learner differences (Chavez, 2001). This ignores the diversity theory’s claim that considering gender as a binary category is problematic. Therefore, we will use the
category of gender as distinguishing two groups, male and female, whose linguistic
behaviour displays systematic differences that are worth investigating.

2.1.9 The Contribution of Community of Practice (CofP) Approach to Language and Gender Research

Community of Practice (CofP) has become an important notion for gender and language study: as a ‘site’ which is meaningful for its members, it is also an ‘epistemological site’ which is fruitful and theoretically coherent for researchers. Thus, the purpose of this subsection is to examine the utility of Eckert and McConnell-Ginet’s concept of “community of practice” for an analysis of the language used by Greek girls and boys in EFL classrooms, which in this study is taken as a research setting.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) argued that our linguistic practices arise out of the kinds of community of practice with which we are involved. Therefore, in order to get a greater insight into the differential linguistic behaviour of the girls and boys involved in classroom interaction it is important to examine and understand such local practices and activities.

The new framework, the community of practice, emerges from practice theory, an approach that has currency in such disciplines as sociology, anthropology, and education. The connections of the community of practice to these recent developments in other fields allow sociolinguists to offer more fully theorized social explanations than were possible with the previous model.

In general, a term is introduced into one’s field provided it serves some obviously useful purpose. The term ‘community of practice’ (CofP), which has recently
entered into the sociolinguistic lexicon, bears a strong similarity to the existing term ‘speech community’ – a concept that has proved to be a productive and useful tool for research into the orderly heterogeneity of language in its social setting. As identified by Bucholtz (1999: 204), its main advantage is that it overcomes many of the faults that sociolinguists have found with the speech community, and it therefore has wide applicability to the field’s central questions. The theory’s broad range of use is especially evident in language and gender studies – because, unlike the speech community, the community of practice was introduced into sociolinguistics specifically to address issues of gender. Thus, Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) illustrate how the CofP in some way takes us farther toward understanding the constraints that underlie natural language variation.

According to Freed (1999: 257), “the value of the communities of practice framework for language and gender research is that it encourages investigators to focus on the local practices and concrete activities in which groups of people are mutually engaged, and it thereby helps researchers avoid generalizations about social categories such as sex, class, and gender”.

Moreover, Bucholtz (1999) in her analysis of linguistic practices associated with an unexamined social identity, the nerd, considered the community of practice as an ethnographic, activity-based approach, and of special value to researchers in the field of language and gender because of its compatibility with current theories of identity. An extension of the community of practice allows identities to be explained as the result of positive and negative identity practices rather than as fixed social categories, as in the speech-community model.
Furthermore, the CofP is viewed by some sociolinguists as a tool for the
description of language variation that bears a strong resemblance to fundamental
principles of social identity theory. The distinction between intergroup and interpersonal
identities has been the basis for social psychological research for more than two
decades. Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) suggest that it is necessary to demonstrate how
the notion of the CofP provides something more than social identity theory does, and
how it can be of direct help in understanding human behaviour, and particularly
linguistic behaviour.

Although the notions of speech community and of social network have both
been very useful in sociolinguistic inquiry, neither directs attention to what people are
doing as they engage with one another. According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet
(1999: 190), “it is what people are doing which gives their interactions real taste, and
which constructs language and gender”. Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999: 175) observe
that quality of contact matters in a CofP. What also matters is the detailed character of
the contact: how it fits in the plans and projects of community members. Thus, it is the
practice component of the CofP that makes it such a useful construct for language and
gender analysts.

Gender identity is formed, produced and reproduced – as well as resisted and
contested – through women’s and men’s participation in multiple Communities of
Practice (CofP), as they define themselves in relation to other women and men. In
particular, we become gendered through our engagement with gendered practices in our
CofPs, and also through our differential gendered participation in them (see Holmes &
Meyerhoff, 1999). One example of this would be a group of language learners who are
learning gendered practices in the classroom (Sunderland, 2000), such as those around
‘disruptive boys’ and ‘neat girls’.
Gendered linguistic practices emerge as people engage in social practices that construct them as girls or boys, women or men. Adequate generalizations about gendered language use and explanations of such generalizations require understanding the place of particular linguistic practices in the life of what Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) call a Community of Practice: a group whose joint engagement in some activity or enterprise is sufficiently intensive to give rise over time to a repertoire of shared practices.

Wenger (1998) uses the idea of CofP to critique traditional models of learning. These, he argues, deprive learners to interact naturally in contexts; they require learners to assimilate material that the teachers have selected in an artificial environment, the classroom. Wenger suggests, instead, that learning is a natural and inevitable aspect of life, and a fundamentally social process. He regards the concept of CofP as a means of examining one natural method of learning which, in many respects, resembles an apprenticeship (p. 174).

In fact, throughout his life every individual participates in different communities of practice and his forms of participation may greatly differ in each of them. As claimed by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999: 188), “individuals negotiate identity – a place in the world – by negotiating their participation in multiple communities of practice”. Gender emerges, in large measure, from differentiation in the kinds of CofP in which males and females tend to participate, and from the differentiated forms of participation that males and females tend to develop in mixed-gender communities of practice, like schools which in this study are taken as research settings. Thus women are more likely to be members of secretarial pools, elementary-school staffs, and book clubs; men are more likely to be members of physics faculties, firefighting teams, and sport clubs. Both
males and females participate in different organizations but the terms of their participation tend to be highly differentiated.

Gender also emerges in relations among communities of practice. Such communities may overlap, some may subsume others, and quite separate communities of practice may function separately, but in quite direct relation to one another. For instance, a school and a family constitute separate communities of practice that get involved in education; however, they are jointly included in a more comprehensive CofP in which one of the recognized functions of the family is support and guidance for the home-task performance that is one of the chief functions of the school. The accumulation of such gendered pairings – not just of individuals, but of communities of practice (such as doctors and nurses, or bosses and secretaries, and in our study teachers and pupils) – is part of the institutionalization of gender.

According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999: 189), “individuals construct identities through the resolution of their various forms of participation in various communities of practice”. Participants come to each CofP with a history and a trajectory, a multitude of social and linguistic expectations from other sources, and a set of abilities. The extent and ways in which these are transformed depends on the nature of their engagement in the new CofP. As they state, adults continue to construct and reconstruct themselves and others in many important ways as they participate in communities of practice throughout life.

In saying that language and gender are constructed in a CofP, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999) assume that those constructions take place within whatever constraints biology and social structures impose on community members. Bergvall (1996) discusses the multifaceted character of gender, which has biological and socio-
structural dimensions, as well as the performative ones. However, as Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999: 190) state, “the bottom line is that forging sociolinguistic and gender identities is mainly accomplished as people engage directly with others in common ongoing projects – jointly developing shared ways of doing and thinking about things, shared ways of understanding”.

The CofP is one way of focusing on what members do: the practice or activities that indicate that they belong to the group and the extent to which they belong. The practice or activities typically involve many aspects of behaviour, including global or specific aspects of language structure, discourse, and interaction patterns. The obvious appeal of this approach, as stated by Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999: 175), is that it offers the sociolinguist a framework of definitions within which to examine the ways in which becoming a member of a CofP interacts with the process of gaining control of the discourse appropriate to it.

2.1.9.1 Eckert and McConnell - Ginet’s Notion of CofP

The term ‘community of practice’ was introduced to language and gender research by Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (1992). Following Lave and Wenger (1991), they defined a CofP as follows:

An aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor. As a social construct, a CofP is different from the traditional community, primarily because it is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages (p. 464).
According to Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999: 174), the above definition suggests that the concept of a CofP is a dynamic, rich, and complex one. The focus there is on the notion of ‘practice’ that allows to understand why the concept offers something different to researchers than the traditional term ‘community’ – or, in the context of sociolinguistic research, more than concepts like ‘speech community’ and ‘social network’.

Eckert’s ethnographic/sociolinguistic work (1989, 1999) in preadolescent and adolescent communities of practice illustrates ways in which gender and other aspects of identity are co-constructed.

The development of shared practices emerges as the participants make meaning of their joint enterprise, and of themselves in relation to this enterprise. Individuals make sense of themselves and others through their forms of participation in and contributions to the community. The community as a whole constructs a joint sense of itself through the relation between its practices and those of other communities. Thus, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999: 186) conclude that a CofP is not isolated and inward-looking, but shapes its participants’ relations both among themselves and with the rest of the world.

2.1.9.2 Gender Construction in CofP

Much recent work in feminist theory generally, and in language and gender studies more specifically, has attempted to challenge universalizing and essentialist descriptions of women and men – descriptions that are more accurately characterized as contextually, historically, or culturally specific. For example, the assumptions informing early research in feminist linguistics (in the 1970s and 1980s) took ‘difference’ between men’s and women’s linguistic behavior as axiomatic, and as the starting point for
empirical investigations. By contrast, the idea that women and men do not constitute internally homogeneous groups is one that pervades much contemporary feminist scholarship. Indeed, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet’s notion (1992) of “community of practice” represents one attempt to theorize the relationship between gender and language in terms of local communities and social practices. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) advocate a consideration of gender within the communities where speakers participate, suggesting that instead of detaching gender from social practice, the focus should be on gender in its full complexity: how gender is constructed in social practice and how this construction intertwines with that of other components of identity and difference and of language. In their view, this requires studying how people negotiate meaning in and among the specific communities of practice to which they belong (p. 472).

The connection between linguistic behaviour and social practices is perhaps the most significant aspect of Eckert and McConnell-Ginet’s work, and it leaves open the possibility of intra-group variation and dynamism in our understanding of the relationship between language and gender. Rather than adopting a notion of community based on location or population, a community of practice “focuses on a community defined by social engagement... A community of practice is an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in some common endeavour” (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992: 464). For these authors, like Ochs (1992), language indirectly indexes gender: The relationship is mediated by the social activities and practices – i.e. the communities of practice – in which individuals participate. According to Cameron (1996, 1997), the framework of Eckert and McConnell-Ginet reverses the traditionally posited relationship between social practices and social identity. The quantitative sociolinguistics paradigm has generally focused on establishing correlations between
linguistic variables and social factors such as age, race, ethnicity and sex, assuming that these aspects of social identity exist prior to and determine linguistic behaviour (and other social behavior). But Cameron (1997: 45) points out that their identities are possibly produced in practices that they are engaged in, and not the other way around. People’s patterns of linguistic behavior arise, in Eckert and McConnell-Ginet’s view, from their habitual engagement in certain practices and their membership of the relevant communities. If women and men differ on that level, their language use will tend to differ; this is not a direct relationship, but one mediated by the crucial variable of practice.

In other words, perhaps it is not gender per se that interacts with linguistic practices, but rather the complex set of “gendered” social practices, i.e. communities of practice, in which individuals participate. In Eckert and McConnell-Ginet’s words (1992: 95), “gender is produced (and often reproduced) in differential membership in communities of practice”. Individuals produce themselves as “gendered” by habitually engaging in the social practices of a community – i.e. in different communities of practice – that are practically and/or symbolically associated with a community’s notions of masculinities or femininities. Just as women’s or men’s involvements in ‘gendered’ communities of practice vary, so women’s and men’s relation to normative constructions of masculinities and femininities vary.

In a discussion of an experimental setting that produced similar linguistic behavior, i.e. a cooperative speech style, in both female and male subjects – same-sex friends in casual conversation, Freed (1996) provides a more concrete description of the way in which gender is produced through involvement in certain social practices or activities, arguing that first, participating in the same practice produced in women and men the same kind of talk; second, outside of this experimental setting, it is possible
that women and men would be less likely to find themselves in such similar settings, given the sex- and gender-differentiated society in which we live. Thus, language and gender studies conducted in natural settings may often find differences, not similarities, in women’s and men’s speech simply because women and men are frequently engaged in different activities (see Goodwin 1990) and not because of any differences in women and men themselves (p. 67).

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999), like Freed, posit an indirect relationship between gender and language, a relationship ‘mediated by the crucial variable of practice’ (Cameron 1997: 45). By locating gender construction in the myriad communities of practice in which individuals participate over a lifetime, the ‘community of practice’ framework allows for more local accounts of the relationship between language and gender, and a shift away from overarching generalizations about women, men, and “gendered” speech styles (p. 189).

2.1.9.3 Contrasting CofP with Other Models and Theoretical Frameworks

Having outlined the properties and origin of the CofP, it is essential at this point to distinguish the CofP more precisely from other sociolinguistic and social psychological frameworks, like the social identity theory, the speech community, and the social networks.

Social Identity Theory

The notion of social identity was first articulated by Tajfel (1978), and it has subsequently been tested in numerous experimental and qualitative studies in the field
of social psychology. As Tajfel (1978: 44) proposed it, social identity theory holds that individuals’ social behavior is a joint function of (a) their affiliation to a particular group identity that is salient at that moment in the interaction, and (b) their interpretation of the relationship of one’s ingroup to salient outgroups. In Tajfel’s theory, an individual’s social – or intergroup – categorizations are cognitive tools, the function of which is to help an individual make sense of and facilitate social action (Tajfel & Turner 1986: 15). Tajfel (1978) saw interpersonal and intergroup identities as a continuum, although other ways of modelling the relationship between them have subsequently been proposed (p. 43). Giles and Coupland (1991) suggest that personal and social identities are independent of each other. Meyerhoff and Niedzielski (1994) represent them as interdependent, but they characterize the dependence in a non-scalar fashion.

According to Abrams (1996: 147), these identities are taken to be highly abstract representations which must be constructed through social processes and over time. Tajfel (1986) suggested that the primary process by which a positive social identity is established is through comparison with other groups. Naturally, many social behaviors are the basis for this process of comparison, and language is just one of the ways in which an individual develops a strong social identity. Social identity theory is a key principle behind communicative accommodation theory (Giles et al. 1987), and to this extent it has become a dimension regularly employed in the investigation and interpretation of language variation.
The Speech Community

The notion of the speech community is a fundamental one in linguistics. It is the unspoken basis of most linguistics research, and its relevance has been articulated with the greatest precision for the study of language variation and change. But despite its significance to the study of language, there is no single, agreed definition of the speech community (see Santa & Parodi, 1998).

Historically, Bloomfield is considered as the ‘father’ of the speech community idea, starting from his concept of utterance (act of speech) and the assumptions that within communities, utterances are ‘partly alike’. The concept has been expanded by various authors (Gumperz, 1971; Labov, 1972), usually in the field of sociolinguistics.

Labov (1972: 121) defined the speech community as a group of speakers who participate in a shared set of norms, where “these norms are observed in overt evaluative behavior, and by the uniformity of abstract patterns of variation”. Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) believed that in this way, the notion of a speech community is compatible with inter-individual variation. For any linguistic variable, it may be the case that no individual’s performance realizes the range of possible variants, but rather that the heterogeneity of all individuals’ linguistic behaviour shows consistent effects across an ordered set of domains. When it can be shown that this kind of orderliness is unlikely to result from chance, then it can be inferred that the speakers share underlying evaluations of the social or stylistic significance of the possible variants (p. 178).

Gumperz (1971) provided a more interactional definition of the speech community, focusing on the frequency and quality of interactions among members, where the quality of interaction is defined partly in terms of contrasts with others. Preston (1989) takes this qualitative viewpoint even further; in some of his research, the
boundaries of speech communities are described according to whether speakers share
the same beliefs about their own language and the language of outgroups.

Even though the above definitions of the speech community are somewhat
diverse, there is a common thread in them: the sense that a speech community is a way
of being. One’s membership in a speech community depends on social or behavioural
properties that one possesses (Holmes & Meyerhoff 1999: 178).

In sociolinguistics, social theory is rooted in the concept of the speech
community. As a language-based unit of social analysis, the speech community has
allowed sociolinguists to demonstrate that many linguistic phenomena previously
relegated to the realm of free variation are in fact socially structured. Thus, Labov
(1966) showed that the linguistic heterogeneity of New York City can be quantitatively
analyzed as the patterning of a single speech community, despite differences in New
Yorkers’ language use based on sociological variables such as age, social class, and
gender.

Nonetheless, as stated by Bucholtz (1999), because the concept of speech
community is indigenous to sociolinguistics, it is not connected to any larger social
theory. This theoretical isolation, along with the fact that the speech community defines
the social world in strictly (socio)linguistic terms, has meant that sociolinguistic theory
has largely stood apart from theoretical advances in related disciplines (p. 203).
Meanwhile, within sociolinguistics, the concept of the speech community has been
hotly contested and continually revised as researchers have uncovered the limitations of
previous definitions.

The speech community presents special difficulties for researchers in the
sociolinguistic subfield of language and gender. The disciplinary autonomy of theory
based on the speech community is unproblematic for traditional sociolinguistic research, which uses social information to account for linguistic phenomena such as sound change. But when sociolinguists reverse the direction of analysis – asking instead how linguistic data can illuminate the social world, as language and gender researchers seek to do – then connections to social theory beyond linguistics become imperative (Bucholtz 1999: 204).

The theory of the community of practice, which emerged from education (Lave 1988, Lave & Wenger 1991, Wenger 1998), was not applied to gender until it was imported into linguistics by Eckert and McConnel-Ginet (1992) in a highly influential survey article. As an alternative to the speech community – a central analytic tool of sociolinguistics – the community of practice requires language and gender scholars to rethink traditional notions of community, identity, and gender. However, Eckert and McConnel-Ginet do not offer an explicit critique of the speech community; although that concept has been widely debated (see Hudson 1980, Williams 1992), its particular limitations for language and gender research have not been systematically addressed. Bucholtz (1999: 207) suggests six ways in which the speech community has been an inadequate model for work on language and gender:

- Its tendency to take language as central.
- Its emphasis on consensus as the organizing principle of community.
- Its preference for studying central members of the community over those at the margins.
- Its focus on the group at the expense of individuals.
- Its view of identity as a set of static categories.
- Its valorization of researchers’ interpretations over participants’ own understandings of their practices.
Social Networks

An analysis of language in use employing the CofP framework also has features in common with social network analysis (Bortoni-Ricardo 1985, Milroy 1987, Lippi-Green 1989, Kerswill 1994). But again, the two frameworks can usefully be distinguished. Both include some distinction between core membership and peripheral membership. The ideas of measuring an individual’s ties within a network, and of the density of a network as a whole, are similar to the idea that membership in a CofP is acquired as the result of a process of learning.

By contrast, a CofP offers a different perspective from a social network on the study of language in society: A CofP requires regular and mutually defining interaction. In a social network, by contrast, weak ties exist even among people who have limited or infrequent contact. In short, a social network and a CofP can be differentiated by the nature of the contact that defines them. A social network requires quantity of interaction; a CofP requires quality of interaction (Holmes & Meyerhoff 1999: 179-180).

Social Constructionist Approaches

Recent research on the relationship between language and gender has been dominated by approaches that examine the ways in which gender is socially constructed in interaction, rather than existing as a fixed social category to which individuals are assigned at birth (Crawford 1995, Hall & Bucholtz 1995, Bergvall et al. 1996, Bucholtz et al. 1996). The concept of CofP is clearly much more compatible with this kind of social-constructionist approach than are other less dynamic or activity-focused concepts. Thus, the CofP has been welcomed in language and gender research as a
corrective to unsatisfactory essentialist approaches to the analysis of gender. In Cameron’s words (1992), it encourages a different focus: “not gender differences but the difference gender makes” (p. 13). Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992: 466) point out that, rather than emphasizing gender differences that result from differing patterns of early socialization, gender researchers can more fruitfully focus on “people’s active engagement in the reproduction of or resistance to gender arrangements in their communities” (p. 466). Instead of abstracting gender from social practice, they note the need to focus on ‘gender in its full complexity: how gender is constructed in social practice, and how this construction intertwines with that of other components of identity and difference, and of language’ (p. 472). The concept of CofP, they suggest, offers a fruitful way forward. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999) pursue these points further, illustrating ways in which the concept has proved useful in their own research. Similarly, Bergvall (1996) examines the broader implications of the CofP for theory and methodology in language and gender research.

Thus, according to Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999: 182), the CofP offers a fruitful concept to those interested in exploring the relationship between language and society. With its criterial characteristics, it provides an ideal framework for exploring the process by which individuals acquire membership in a community whose goals they share; it provides a means of studying the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence, as individuals locate themselves in relation to other community members; and, for similar reasons, it provides a framework for examining language change. The specification of constitutive features permits comparison among different communities of practice along a range of diverse dimensions. Thus, while the CofP shares some characteristics with the concepts of speech community, social identity, and social network, it also offers different and enriching perspectives.
2.1.10 Concluding Remarks

This subchapter outlined investigations carried out in the field of gender and language. To begin with, a distinction between sex and gender was provided given a range of definitions and different interpretations of them. Following this, a recent conceptualization of gender as a social structure, defined by Risman (2004), and as an institution, as viewed by Lorber (1994) and extended later by Martin (2003), was given. Moreover, gender identity – a very important concept in gender and language studies, and the three components of it, which are social/behavioral, cognitive and affective, were introduced. The description of the concept of gender dynamics – doing gender (West & Zimmerman 1987), which remains salient in most gender studies research, was also presented. In addition, gender and language was described as a field of study. It was followed by a discussion of gender and language in classroom, which is an important educational setting for the construction and enactment of gender. The main modern theoretical approaches to gender identification (Social Learning Theory, Cognitive Developmental Theory, Gender Schema Theory and Structural Theory), as well as the three main theoretical approaches within language and gender studies (Dominance Theory, Difference Theory and Diversity Theory) were thoroughly presented, followed by a close examination of a new framework, the community of practice (CofP) approach, and its contribution to language and gender research. The next subchapter, EFL Classroom Research (CR), will describe the field of study and provide a brief review of empirical study carried out in the area of classroom research.
2.2 EFL Classroom Research (CR)

The purpose of this subchapter is first of all to define the field of EFL and provide a brief review of studies carried out in the area of classroom research. At this point, we turn to the setting of classroom research – the classroom, and the social context of the classroom, which as Canada and Pringle (1995) suggest, may influence the extent to which male and female students interact with teachers. Moreover, some of the key ideas about classroom research and interaction that takes place in classroom setting are briefly summarized.

Discussion of empirical research on gender differences in classroom interaction is provided here, giving instances of language use and classroom behavior that have been most frequently investigated in previous empirical research. And finally, we give additional factors that may shape teacher-student interactions in the classroom, such as student’s social as well as academic behavior in classroom in the form of turn-taking, classroom participation, taking and holding the floor. The issues of who gets teacher’s attention as well as who gets teacher approval or disapproval are addressed in this subchapter.

2.2.1 The Language Classroom

Van Lier (1988: 47) defines ‘language classroom’ the way it is used in classroom research tradition, as ‘the gathering, for a given period of time, of two or more people (one of whom generally assumes the role of instructor) for the purposes of language learning’. In this way Lier tries to detach the concept of the classroom from any particular institutional setting and to foreground the teacher-learner relationship as its
essential feature. The breadth of this definition, as Allwright and Bailey (1991) suggest, allows us to consider group work and tutorial meetings, with at least two participants, the one being the learner and the other the instructor, as well as larger, more traditional educational contexts.

As Gaies (1980) pointed out, the classroom is the crucible – the place where both the participants of classroom interaction (teachers and learners) come together and language learning happens. It happens, when it happens, as a result of the reactions among the elements that go into the crucible – the teachers and the learners. They do not, however, as Allwright and Bailey (1991) state, go in ‘empty – handed’. The learners enter the language classrooms already equipped with life experience and that of learning, along with their own reasons for being there, and their own particular needs that they hope to see satisfied. And the teacher, the way the learners do, brings the same experience, and yet another kind of experience, that of teaching. Here Allwright and Bailey (1991: 18) put emphasis on the importance of reactions to each other as learner to learner as well as teacher to learner when classroom learning takes place, arguing that ‘react’ is not just a matter of their initial reactions to each other, it is more a matter of their constant interaction – the fact that every time they come together they somehow have to get along, and in a way which actually helps the learners to learn.

Allwright and Bailey (1991: 19) proposed that any kind of interaction, including classroom interaction, has to be managed as it goes along. Even more important for teachers, though, and for language teachers in particular, is the fact that it has to be managed by every participant of classroom interaction, not just by the teacher, explaining that interaction is something people do together, collectively. In a classroom of course it is usually considered normal for the teacher to ‘run the show’ – to make many of the managerial decisions about who should talk, to whom, on what topic, in
what language, and so on, nevertheless, everything should depend on the learners’ co-operation. By co-operating with each other the learners make a significant contribution to the management of the interaction that takes place in the classroom and these contributions are crucial to the success of the interaction, and to the success of the lesson itself as a social event in the lives of both teachers and learners.

In search of more adequate knowledge about teaching and learning, researchers have been looking into the classroom to better understand what is going on (see Dunkin & Biddle, 1974; Long, 1980; Allwright, 1983, 1987; Gaies, 1983, for a review in second language classrooms). Most research in classroom interaction confirms that the basic pattern of interaction involves a solicit – a question, command, or request requiring students to give answers or respond (Gall, 1970; Dunkin & Biddle, 1974; Barnes, 1980; Klinzing-Eurich & Klinzing, 1981, 1988; Shapiro-Skrobe, 1982; Buckheister, 1984).

Nunan (1996) in his study on classroom interaction demonstrated through the discourse of the classroom that to understand what is going on in language classroom, the voices of the teachers as well as of the learners must be heard. Classroom research, therefore, as he stated, must become a collaborative enterprise between researcher, teacher, and learner. Nunan (1996: 45) concludes that language classrooms represent cultures with their own norms of interaction, in which the notion of the ‘lesson’ may not be salient to the participants on the inside of the action. His study reinforces Freeman’s (1996: 89) claim that to tell the story one needs to know the story, and Katz’s (1996: 58) notion of classrooms as socially constructed entities.

As Jule (2004) noted, one of the themes running through the related work of Walkerdine (1990) is that all classrooms are sites of struggle – and often passive and
silent struggles on the part of the many girls. These struggles to participate are results of the particular power relations within the classroom, power which may be revealed in speech and silence. For example, the classrooms in Walkerdine’s (1990) research revealed offensive and, at times, aggressive discourse on the part of male students to their female teachers and female classmates. Other studies, too, have found maleness as a major indicator of power and legitimacy as demonstrated through speech practices. Jule (2004: 1) stated that the language learning classroom is a context worth exploring for evidence of speech and silence. Moreover, as she notes, it can provide possible explanations to the issue of the reason and the means classroom habits are created by certain consistent behaviors.

*Intersubjectivity in Language Classrooms*

Lacan (1968: 68) identifies ‘intersubjectivity’ as a collection of individual subjectivities or perceptions of reality. As a theory, intersubjectivity sees human subjectivity not as a private ‘inner world’, separate from an objective outer world, but as social relationships intersecting with individual ‘inner worlds’ or ‘self-hoods’. Jule (2004) goes as far to support that relationships create participation; relationships create identity; therefore, participation creates identity. As such, relationships and one’s participation within them are fundamental in the theory of intersubjectivity and the understanding of one’s identity as embedded in a group. With this theoretical approach, according to Jule, classroom relationships are seen as critical in that they construct one’s sense of self-relationships that create the individual identity. And the relationships which surround language students in their ESL classrooms can therefore partly construct participation through speech opportunities as well as through silence. For her, what is important here
is who is speaking and who is being silent (or silenced) because this reveals participation and, therefore, belonging (p. 11).

Crossley (1996: 82) attempted to define intersubjectivity and to understand why or how people ‘feel’ that they belong to a particular group. He ultimately defines intersubjectivity as:

A situation in which space and time… are shared, where each person speaks for themselves and where the intentions, thoughts and feelings of the one unfold before the other, calling forth responses from that other; …where people can be in their unique individuality for each other, where they see and are seen in the flesh and can correct misconceptions which may arise about themselves.

Jule (2004) considered intersubjectivity as a possible useful theory in understanding the role and significance of a classroom community because of the role of the group in the construction of personal identity. Personal behavior is seen as formed by relationships built through mutual and emotional recognition. She cited Lacan who believed that recognition was central to belonging because the relationships, embedded in any given community (such as family communities, ethnic communities, and classroom communities) are based on shared recognition of roles, behaviors, values. For Lacan, language was seen as the powerful intersubjective structure necessary for the shaping of identity and participation, because language practices could be understood and recognized by participants in a particular community. Shared cultures and language practices, then, could create community boundaries of both inclusion and exclusion and important points of reference because of features that are recognized and understood by present participants (Lacan, 1968). As Jule (2004: 13) put it, with such a theory, language practices, such as a hybrid use of English or particularly gendered speech
tendencies, are significant indicators of participation and belonging and ultimately create the shared inner worlds of community participants.

2.2.2 Classroom Research (CR)

There has been a slow but steady increase in classroom studies which aim to understand what goes on in classrooms and the way anthropologists aim to understand unknown cultures. Most of these studies describe maths, reading and other lessons in classrooms where the language of instruction is the learners’ native language, or in bilingual classrooms. Such studies describe how teachers respond to learners’ errors, how interaction occurs in classrooms, the type of linguistic input provided in classroom settings, the feelings of teachers and learners at various points during or after lessons, how learners take turns to speak, how questions are asked and answered, how certain learners participate more or receive more attention than others, and so on. A common characteristic is that considerable attention is paid to the social context of the issues that are described, and this is one of the main differences between such research and the more common studies which use coding, tabulation, and experimentation, and often compare behavior with performance on tests.

Allwright (1991) defined classroom-centered research as research centered on the classroom, as distinct from, for example, research that concentrates on the inputs to the classroom (the syllabus, the teaching materials, etc.) or on the outputs from the classroom (learner test scores). He stated that it does not pursue to ignore or try to devalue the importance of such inputs and outputs. Instead classroom research simply tries to investigate what actually happens inside the classroom. It is in fact research which treats classroom interaction as virtually the one object worthy of investigation. In
his study, Allwright takes ‘classroom-centered research’ or simply ‘classroom research’ as a cover term for a whole range of research studies on classroom language learning and teaching.

Despite van Lier’s (1988: 2) claim that CR, as context-based analysis, cannot have as its primary aim the immediate generalizability of findings, the first concern must be to analyze the data as they are, rather than to compare them to other data to see how similar they are.

Hymes (1981: 11) said that ‘‘educational research has tended to define problems in terms of variables common to all schools’’. Thus, many researchers have chosen topics for research that can be readily generalized to larger populations. In their studies, they have made efforts to show how some feature in their sample compares with that same feature in the relevant population as a whole, and thus focusing on the common rather than the unique, the general rather than the particular.

In L2 classroom research the central data derive from things that go on in the classroom. This seems self-evident, as van Lier (1988) notes, yet much research goes by the name of CR which gets its data from other sources, such as simulated conversations, tests, interviews and so on, data which do not actually provide any information about classroom dynamics, though they may inform much about learners, teachers and learning. Thus, in order to restrict the scope of operations, he explains that CR requires that the researcher spend most of the time during the data-gathering phase(s) of the project inside actual, regular, ongoing classrooms that have not been specially set up for the purpose of research.

Despite the fact that classroom data may have much in common with other kinds of data, they also have their own set of unique characteristics that may influence
research both in terms of what is investigated and how the process of investigation is carried out. Van Lier (1988) has listed some salient characteristics:

1. In a classroom, actions occur in a context. What is said and done is influenced by what happened before, and influences what happens next. This can be described in purely interactive terms by saying, for example, that an elicitation (e.g. a question, or a prompt) calls forth a response, the response in turn calls forth an evaluation, and so on. At a deeper level, however, we can also say that every action illustrates both interpretation (of what went before) and intention (to comply, to influence future actions, and many other things, most of them hard to get at). This, he states, offers two layers of analysis, but there is much more.

2. Some instances of classroom interaction occur because they have been planned to occur that way, others because circumstances at the moment demand action or reaction. Often the teacher’s actions are result of prior planning, and the learners may be aware or unaware of the nature of the plan.

3. When things are done along similar lines a number of times, they turn into routines in which all participants know what is likely to happen next. This leads to activities which are similar to rituals in which everyone knows what to do next, and the only surprise is when unexpected things happen (p. 9).

Classroom research has acknowledged its place in L2 research. As the popularity of CR increases there is a need to periodically assess, and reassess its contributions, its methods and its relationships to other aspects of L2 research.

At the broadest level of orientation, research may be labeled as linguistic (e.g. morpheme studies, error analysis), psycholinguistic (research into interpretive strategies, cognitive processes, learning styles, etc.), sociolinguistic (interactional
analysis, ethnography of communication), sociological (e.g. home-community relations), or pedagogical (evaluation of teaching methods, teacher training, etc.).

The orientations mentioned may use a variety of methodological approaches and tools. Many researchers advocate the use of triangulation, that is, the inspection of different kinds of data, different methods, and a variety of research tools.

As van Lier (1988: 12) puts it, CR is itself a hybrid activity and may fit on different occasions into any of the orientations mentioned. Its defining characteristic, as he has suggested, is that it focuses on the classroom as a source of data. In terms of method it can be argued that it cannot be restricted to a specific set of procedures, though perhaps some are more appropriate than others, given the setting.

Van Lier (1988) argues that data which derive from the interaction in the classroom consist mostly of verbal and non-verbal behaviors and can be treated in a variety of ways. In the past behaviors were examined in linguistic terms, for instance, for the number and variety of errors manifested, the number of complete or error-free T-units produced, the occurrence of certain grammatical morphemes, and so on. Behaviors have also been studied in social terms, to assess the climate of the classroom, the relations between teachers and learners, social networks between groups of learners, etc. Other focuses of interest have been cognitive demands on learners, aspects of discipline and management, experimental applications of certain methodologies, and much else. Broadly speaking, efforts to characterize classroom work have fallen into two categories: anecdotal description based on field notes and coding based on predetermined checklists of categories. Both of them have received criticism: the first because of its potentially selective and subjective, possibly even fictional treatment of activities, the second for its mechanical tabulation of superficially identifiable features,
leading to mostly trivial findings. Van Lier (1988) believes that criticisms of these approaches are well-founded and must be taken seriously since each one, in isolation, cannot provide an adequate description and understanding of what goes on in some specific classroom or set of classrooms. However, as he notes, as methods used in combination, they cannot be very useful or even essential.

2.2.3 Classroom Interaction

Over the past sixty years a great deal of research interest has focused upon social interaction in classrooms. Perhaps not surprisingly, the area has become something of a point of convergence for the social science disciplines, with representation from sociology, psychology and linguistics, as well as from the field of education more generally. This has resulted in what now amounts to a considerable body of research, which, at its best, gives a rich source of information as to what, precisely, happens in classrooms.

As several authors have stressed, classroom interaction is characterized by an institutional asymmetry in the teacher-student relationship (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Cazden, 1985; Swann, 1992; Tsolakidou, 1995) or, as Cameron, et. al (1988) put it, it is an unequal encounter. The teacher role is endowed with certain rights and obligations over the students, including the management of the interaction, evaluation of students’ behavior (both on the content and relationship levels), application of measures against ‘deviant’ behavior, and most importantly, the right to define ‘deviance’ and decide when it occurs. This asymmetry in institutional and interactional power is manifest in several characteristics of the teacher-student interaction.
2.2.3.1 Historical Roots

Until the late 1960s very few researchers had dealt with studies of the school classroom. In Britain there was a concentration on the underachievement of pupils in the lower socio-economic groupings. In America the principal concern was the poor performance of black pupils in relation to their white counterparts.

But on both sides of the Atlantic, attention was focused not on the school directly, but on what went into them, and what came out of them, after x number of years’ compulsory schooling. As observers, Delamont and Hamilton (1976), Hammersley and Woods (1990), and for an American point of view, Mehan (1979), have adopted ‘input-output’ model as the predominant approach, and the school being as a sort of unopened ‘black box’ between the two.

During the 1960s, this emphasis began to shift. As Delamont and Hamilton (1976) have noted, student disturbances during this period extended to a profound dissatisfaction with the content and modes of working of academic disciplines as well as with existing economic and social arrangements. Within the social sciences this resulted in changes in methodology (Delamont & Hamilton, 1976).

There is an emphasis on the need to study language and interaction. Through interaction with, first, parents and family, then the wider community, children learn the shared meanings of our culture, and over the course of time, they become thinking, self-conscious human beings. As Edwards and Westgate (1987: 12) put it:

It is largely through talk that we develop our concepts of self, as members of various social ‘worlds’ which can be brought into focus and in which we can locate ourselves and recognize the values, rights, and obligations which permeate them. As we listen and as we talk, we learn what it is necessary to know, do and say in that area of social
life or that setting, and can display the competence necessary to be accepted as a member.

As stated by French (1990: 40), the classroom is a forum for this gradual process of socialization, with children learning through interaction with both peers and members of staff. It is well established that during the pre-school years, parents and other significant adults respond differently to boys and girls (Block 1985; Hodgeon 1985; Grabbrucker 1988). Thus, by the time they reach the age of compulsory schooling, most children have a good idea of gender identity and the forms of behavior which adults and other children find appropriate. French (1990) argues that if the language of the classroom is to be studied, the survey data, questionnaires and coding sheets traditionally associated with the social sciences are clearly inadequate to the task: one cannot take up a serious study of communication in the classroom merely by asking teachers or pupils what they said or did, or by coding their utterances into pre-set categories. She finds necessary to carry out detailed observation and to record data, using modern audio and/or video recording equipment, both to capture and to reproduce for analysis the complexities of classroom communication. As Mehan (1984: 181) warns, we must “[look] at the window of language and not just through it”.

Thus, because of both theoretical principles, and the practical concerns of finding a research method adequate to the task in hand, educationists from various social science disciplines began to use a range of observational techniques which had hitherto been associated mainly with anthropology.

Wintergerst (1994) claims that as the classroom is no longer an impenetrable ‘black box’ (Gage, 1963) of mystery as far as research is concerned; but more like ‘goldfish bowl’ (Dunkin & Biddle, 1974) for researchers in content classrooms, so too
this idea has spread to the second-language classroom. In her view, one approach to classroom research is the use of observation instruments. The abundance of over 200 instruments in content classrooms (see Rosenshine & Furst, 1973; Dunkin & Biddle, 1974) has also surfaced in second-language classrooms; Long (1980) listed more than twenty such systems for coding teacher and student behavior and Chaudron (1988) highlighted these and others.

Communication in classrooms is a complex process. Cazden (1986) has cautioned that it can no longer be assumed that language used by teachers and students is the same across all content and contexts. The classroom environment consists of shifting demands within and across lessons which are orchestrated by teachers as part of their day-to-day activities (p. 217). Wells (1981) argued that learning to communicate is a collaborative affair. In the classroom this means that students and teacher must work together to achieve their respective goals. Mehan (1979) has noted that one consequence of the teacher’s search for answers to known information questions is that it is not the student who answers the teacher’s questions but the teacher and student together create the student’s answer. Cuban (1984) has asked how teachers can improve what they are doing in the classroom. He then established five categories which capture dominant instructional patterns and include classroom organization, group instruction, student movement, classroom activities, and classroom talk (p. 286). Classroom talk, one of these instructional patterns, has merited additional research attention and will be studied in more detail and subjected to data analysis in Chapter V.

Cazden (1986) describes classroom lessons as classroom speech events, with specialized rules and expectations concerning the appropriateness of teachers’ and students’ communicative behaviors. The underlying structure of classroom language has been characterized as following a pattern of acts: an initiation act (teacher), a response
act (student), and an evaluation act (teacher), commonly referred to as Initiation-Reply-Evaluation, (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Mehan, 1979). The IRE sequence represents the most basic interactional sequence of classroom lessons. That is, the teacher initiates a question, a student responds, and the teacher provides an evaluation. These sequences are easily recognizable in classroom discourse. The IRE sequence exists within three broader phases that make up the overall structure of classroom lessons (Mehan, 1979). These include an opening phase, which serves to orient the students to the content to be taught, as well as provide procedural information about how they will be expected to participate in the lesson; an instructional phase, which contains topically related sets, or instructional activities that focus on specific aspects of the content being taught; and, finally, the closing phase, which provides both informative and procedural information about what students will be expected to do with what they have learned.

2.2.3.2 Teacher Talk

It has long been argued that teacher attitudes toward gender within education have historical, structural, and ideological roots and that systematic attitudes toward gender are revealed in ‘teacher talk’ (Thornborrow, 2002). Such studies indicate that gender discrimination in classrooms exists largely at a covert level (Clarricoates, 1978; Lobban, 1978; Delamont, 1980; Adelman, 1981; French & French, 1984; Thompson, 1989). Thompson (1989) believed the conversion is because teachers seem to ‘know what teaching is’ not from teacher training programs, but from their own previous classroom experiences as students; thus they largely perpetuate accepted attitudes from their past (p. 69). The majority of primary teachers in particular do not regard gender as a matter
that is relevant to them. Rather, primary teachers feel that they treat all children the same – as individuals.

But Thornborrow’s (2002) recent research highlights the ways that teachers control classroom participation through their teacher talk. She sees teacher talk as creating and maintaining asymmetrical power relationships. Teacher-led classroom talk as a pedagogical approach is often organized around IRE exchanges, in which the teacher controls the students by controlling the dynamics of classroom discourse: ‘the teacher takes turns at will, allocates turns to others, determines topics, interrupts and reallocates turns judged to be irrelevant to these topics, and provides a running commentary on what is being said and meant’ (p. 176).

The teacher’s role in classroom discourse seems certainly of prime significance to language learning. Teachers are generally characterized as controlling most of what is said and done in classrooms. In second language classrooms, the teacher’s status may be even more elevated, in that the teacher is the only native, or near-native, speaker of the language and therefore is seen as an invaluable source for second language students.

Beyond their status, teachers’ control over the patterns of classroom communication is generally maintained through the ways in which they use language. In fact, teachers’ control of the patterns of communication determines, to a large extent, how, when, where, and with whom language is to be used in the classroom. This will also depend on how students interpret and respond to what teachers say and do.

Mahony (1985) focused on and analyzed the disproportionate amount of time allocated in favor of boys. Stanworth (1981: 18) did too, saying:
Studies which have involved protracted observation of a variety of classrooms have shown, almost invariably, that boys receive a disproportionate share of teachers’ time and attention. High achieving boys are in some studies a particularly favored group, claiming more of their teachers’ energies than either similarly performing girls, or than less successful pupils of either sex. On the other hand, although girls are criticized at least as often as boys for academic mistakes, boys are far more often reprimanded for misconduct and, in these criticisms account for a large share of the extra attention directed to boys.

It has been well argued by both Stanworth (1981) and Mahony (1985) that the implicit message to students is that extra time given to male students may suggest that boys are simply more interesting to the teacher:

… By more frequently criticizing their male pupils, teachers may unwittingly reinforce the idea that the ‘naughtiness’ of boys is more interesting, more deserving, than the ‘niceness’ of girls. (Stanworth, p.19)

In Johnson’s (1995) study of teachers’ control of the patterns of classroom communication, teachers’ language is viewed within the contexts in which it is used, and as contributing to the overall dynamics of classroom communication. In her view, teacher’s control of the patterns of communication represents only one component of the framework for understanding communication in second language classrooms. However, as she mentions, it is probably the most important one, since it may be one of the only components of the framework that teachers themselves actually have the freedom and ability to change as they see fit (p. 17).
One possible difference in the classroom experience of boys and girls which has received attention and has become an issue of gender politics, of problem behavior, and of academic and social competence is that girls may be disadvantaged in the classroom by receiving less attention from the teacher than is given to boys. In the early work in this area, Brophy and Good (1970) observed that boys have more interactions with the teacher than girls and appear to be generally more salient in the teacher’s perceptual field. Some fairly extreme claims about this gender imbalance have been made, especially by writers approaching the issue from a feminist perspective. Perhaps the best-known work in this tradition is that of Spender who writes of boys receiving “…so much more attention from teacher than do girls…” (Spender, 1982: 54). Spender also claims that gender imbalances are so routinized and expected in classrooms that even when teachers are trying to equalize attention, girls get only just over a third of the teacher’s time (Spender 1982). However, no details are given on the basis of these statements.

Similarly, Stanworth (1981), reporting on a study of pupil perceptions of classroom interactions, shows pupils reporting boys as twice as likely to seek teacher attention and four times as likely to offer contributions to discussion. Busweel (1981: 196) writes of lessons in which female pupils took no part at all and that there were “…many more classes [in which] girls received only minimal attention compared with boys”.

Some of these assertions come from studies of classrooms using a qualitative observational methodology. Other studies of classrooms using such an approach do not report such differences. Pollard (1985), in an extensive observational study of primary
schools, made little use of gender as an explanatory category. King (1978) and Hartley (1985) both focus on gender differences in their studies of primary classrooms but do not report differences in levels of teacher interaction.

What Croll and Moses (1990: 194) suggest is that the obvious way to establish whether boys get more attention than girls in the primary classroom is to observe in a substantial sample of classrooms and to count or time in a systematic fashion the number of teacher interactions which are directed to boys and girls and see if they differ.

A large number of studies using systematic observation have been conducted in school classrooms, most of them in the United States, but also in British classrooms. Although the issue of differential attention to boys and girls has not usually been the main focus of these studies, many of them provide data on such differences. Kelly (1986) has published a meta-analysis of 81 research studies, which provide quantitative data on the relevant amount of teacher interaction received by boys and girls in classrooms. In addition to data on overall differences in teacher interactions with boys and girls, Kelly also retrieves information about different aspects of the interactions from many of the studies.

The analysis of overall differences in the amount of teacher interaction with boys and girls derived from the meta-analysis has shown that girls are indeed under-represented in teacher-pupil interactions and this under-representation, according to Kelly (1986: 6) is not particularly large, but it is consistent. Girls received 44% of all classroom interactions, and the percentage was similar whether these were teacher-initiated or pupil-initiated interactions, and boys received 56%. The type of interactions in which girls were least well represented were those involving criticism by the teacher.
Girls received only 35% of the total criticism, and only 32% of criticisms directed at behavior. However, as Croll and Moses (1990: 195) argue, the under-representation of girls cannot be accounted for simply by the boys being more heavily criticized: girls received 44% of all questions, 44% of the total number of response opportunities, and 48% of praise. The analysis also shows that the underrepresentation of girls in classroom interactions does not arise from an unwillingness to participate as girls were more likely than boys to volunteer or put their hands up (52%). They were, however, less likely than boys to call out answers (41%).

Moreover, as Croll and Moses (1990: 197) assert, a consideration of Kelly’s meta-analysis shows that there is a consistent tendency for girls, on average, to receive slightly less individual teacher attention than boys, although this is not invariably so in either individual classrooms or in all studies.

2.2.3.4 Student-Student Interaction in the Classroom

As Lindow et al. (1985: 7) put it, the research on peer interaction, although not as extensive as that on teacher-student interaction, reinforces the point that outcomes depend on more than the contact between an individual teacher and a particular student. Students interact with peers, sometimes because the classroom is structured to foster interaction, other times because students regard the contact as crucial for understanding and completing the assigned tasks.

Much of the research on peer interaction proceeds from the assumption that gender inequalities and sex-role stereotypes are likely to persist in the absence of substantial cross-sex interaction. Given the long-term significance of cross-sex interaction, Lindow et. al (1985) find it not surprising that studies of peer interaction
center especially on the extent of sex-segregation and the conditions under which it might be discouraged.

Thus far, much attention has focused on understanding classroom communication by looking at the interaction that occurs between teachers and students. However, by doing so, another important dimension of classroom interaction has been ignored, that is, the interaction that occurs between students themselves, and the impact that student-student interaction has on the patterns of communication, classroom learning, and opportunities for second language acquisition.

Attention to the nature and impact of student-student interaction on classroom learning has been virtually ignored in much of the classroom-based educational research. According to K. Johnson (1995: 5), Johnson (1981) faults much of this research as being ‘adult centrism,’ which implies that real learning occurs only between teachers and students and that student-student interaction represents off-task behavior, discourages achievement, and leads to classroom disruptions. On the contrary, Johnson (1981) argues, student-student interaction may actually be more important for educational success than teacher-student interaction. In fact, he claims, constructive student-student interactions influence students’ educational aspirations and achievement, develop social competencies, and encourage taking on the perspectives of others. Johnson is not alone in his assessment of the value of classroom student-student interaction. Slavin (1980), Sharan (1980), and Webb (1982) each provide in-depth reviews of research that overwhelmingly conclude that cooperative learning tasks in small groups enhance students’ academic achievement, self-esteem, relationships among students of different ethnic backgrounds, and positive attitudes toward school.
2.2.4 Gender Differentiation in the Classroom

Gender differences in the classroom deserve attention because potentially they influence the academic and the social lives of students. The stability and persistence of gender differences – in reading and mathematics performance, in entry into technical fields – have given rise to a concern about sex equity in the classroom. It may be that the differences in attainment found between males and females are rooted in gender-based contrasts in interactional experiences in classrooms.

A voluminous literature covers the general subject of male-female differences, and a sizable body of research exists as well on patterns of interaction in classrooms. Studies that compare the classroom interaction of boys and girls are relatively scarce, but a few of the studies report clear-cut gender-related differences. Students interact with the classroom teacher and with one another. But as the literature shows, there is less research on student-student or peer interaction than on teacher-student interaction. The phrase teacher-student interaction covers a range of behaviors.

There are many variables that influence interaction processes. These variables include environmental factors, such as classroom organization, activity structure, and teacher-to-student ration; teacher attributes such as gender, length of experience, and attitudes toward sex-role stereotypes; and student variables such as gender, race, ability, grade level, and perceptions of student and teacher characteristics. All these factors interact with each other and with the difficulty and content of the subject matter to affect both students’ and teachers’ behaviors. In our research we focus on a diversity of variables that shape interaction in the classroom, considering gender as the independent variable.
The focus of attention of different studies is an exploration of the differences between the educational experiences of boys and girls in their primary schools. The questions posed here relate to whether girls and boys are treated differently from one another and whether they have different educational experiences in the early years of schooling.

The last three decades or so have seen a notable increase in the amount of research attention directed at the issue of gender differentiation within the school. As Croll and Moses (1990: 190) point out, it is clear that within society generally one’s gender has a critical impact upon one’s life chances. They find it natural to assume that school reflects and is, at least, partially responsible for these differences. Furthermore, they argue that studies picking out gender differences may be influenced by the different levels of special educational needs and disruptive behavior found in boys and girls.

Croll and Moses (1990: 192) state that gender differentiation is a prominent feature of all kinds of societies and it is not surprising that differentiation between boys and girls should be a feature of schools. They believe that schools cannot exist in a vacuum and by the time they come to school, and then alongside their school experience, children have learnt and continue to learn a great deal about the world from their parents, their peers, books, comics, television and other sources. When they come to school at the age of five or six the child will have a clear image of her/himself as a boy or girl.

Studies, such as those of King (1978), have documented the routine pattern of gender differentiation in a variety of school routines and activities. Teachers also automatically used gender as an organizing category within the classrooms in his study.
Boys’ and girls’ names were listed separately on the register, coats were hanged up separately, record cards were in different colors for boys and for girls and so on. King (1978) notes that a significant feature of these practices was that they were ‘taken-for-granted’ and not regarded as in any way problematic by the teachers who did not think that needed explaining, still less justifying.

However, gender differentiation is not always a feature of descriptions of classrooms. As Delamont (1980) points out, the British observational studies of classrooms conducted before that of King made no reference at all to gender. Later studies have not generally seen gender as central although studies such as those of Hartley (1985) consider gender differences. Pollard (1985) considers gender as an issue but concludes that other differentiating characteristics of children are more relevant for his analysis of the social experience of schooling. King (1978), one of the researchers to put most emphasis on gender differentiation, also stresses that this is only one of the differentiating factors in the classroom and not the most important of these.

Croll and Moses (1990) note that what emerges from these studies is that primary classrooms are, in a commonsense fashion, heavily gender differentiated. In their view, primary classes are made up of little boys and little girls rather than little children and reference to this and the use of it for organization, control and class management is a routine feature of teaching in the primary school. They find such differentiation as the most obvious single feature of primary classrooms and the lack of reference to it in many discussions of teaching is an indication of its ‘taken-for-granted’ nature.

Even though some case studies have documented ‘silencing’ of girls (Fredericksen, 2001; Leander, 2002), there is no basis for claiming that girls as a group
are marginalized in classrooms. Kelly (1986) estimated, for example, that the difference in participation in percentage was 44% - 56% in favor of boys. Several researchers have argued that the difference in boys’ and girls’ participation in the classroom results from the school institutionalizing forms of interaction that are normally preferred by boys (Corson, 1993; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). Tannen (1991), in studies of the classroom in higher education, points out that drawing attention to oneself in the classroom is more suited to the male student’s style than the female. The classroom is thought to reflect the wider society and to be an arena for replicating gender differences (Tannen, 1991).

2.2.4.1 Turn Taking and Class Participation

The notion that boys and girls respond and interact differently in the classroom has been well researched for a good number of years. Feminist linguists (Lakoff, 1975; Spender, 1980; Cameron 1997; Mills, 1997) foregrounded gender differences in language use, demonstrating how the vocabulary and idioms of English were constructed in gendered ways. Furthermore, they argued that in social interaction, women tend to defer to men and to avoid confrontation or challenging conversational situations. Their work prompted investigations of talk in the classroom and many studies since have noted that boys dominate classroom talk and teacher time.

Despite the many studies on classroom interactions, few have provided a clear account of turn-taking strategies, and yet turn-taking is a basic form of organization for conversation (Oreström, 1983; Roger, Bull, & Smith, 1988; Bailey, Plunkett & Scarpa, 1999; Schegloff, 2000; Bortfeld, Leon, Bloom, Schober, & Brennan, 2001). Turn-taking maintains a mutual attention among parties involved in a conversation, defines their relationship (Wiemann & Knapp, 1999) and the pertinence boundaries related to
interaction (Kendon, 1992). According to Schegloff (1987: 208), turn-allocation techniques prepare to some extent what seems to be ‘a primordial place of sociality: direct interaction between individuals’.

Some turn-taking aspects gain particular importance within the school context characterized by asymmetrical interactive roles and the typical sequence teacher’s initiation, student’s response, teacher’s feedback (IRF). Classroom interaction is an interaction where ‘the participants do not accomplish the equality of communicative rights and obligations, but differentiate for unequal access to the power of managing the interaction’ (Orletti, 1981: 12). The classroom therefore represents an asymmetrical interaction where the teacher not only attributes speaking turns but also controls thematic organization, opposite to the way equal conversation is led (Candela, 1999; Gómez Alemany & Mauri Majós, 2000). The typical sequence in the three phases of class interaction (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975), allowed to identify a different teachers’ and students’ role. In most didactic sequence, the teacher starts with a question, that can be addressed to a particular child or to anyone who is willing to respond; a student responds and the teacher takes turn again, making an evaluation of the student’s participation and/or allocating the next turn (Fasulo & Pontecorvo, 1999). This relatively regular sequence in all classroom interactions (Wells, 1993) affects the turn-taking strategies, pause and silence values and conversational pace of this particular context (McHoul, 1978).

Swann and Graddol (1988) maintained that gender inequalities favouring boys operated in the classroom through teacher-mediated prejudices. Their study involved the analysis of two sequences of talk, between small groups of primary aged students (one group of 10-11 year-olds, the other 9-10 year-olds) interacting with two different teachers who, incidentally, were described as having different teaching styles. Swann
and Graddol (1988) were particularly interested in how individual students engaged in classroom talk, how turns at speaking were allocated, and how students were selected or how they put themselves forward to speak. They were also interested in the roles the various participants played, including the teacher, the talkative students as well as the quieter ones. Swann and Graddol (1988: 63) argued that despite the differences in class management style of the two teachers and student background that existed between the two groups, in primary classrooms boys talked more than girls, took more turns than girls and had more interchanges with the teacher than girls. They claimed furthermore, that ‘girls seem to have learnt to expect a lower participation rate than their male peers, and boys seem to have learned that their fair share is a larger one’, concluding that ‘classroom talk forms an important arena for the reproduction of gender inequalities in interactional power’.

Myhill (2002) argued that data detailing positive classroom interactions do not support the belief that boys dominate classroom talk. Rejecting Swann and Graddol’s (1988) contention that girls have learnt to expect a lower participation level in classroom interactions, Myhill (2002: 347) asserted that the findings from her study identify differential participation rates which are ‘only partially attributable to gender’ and that the underachievers, both boys and girls alike, are the ‘reluctant participators’ in the classroom. She included data for the less positive interactions from all years involved in the study, that is Years 1 to 10. Interestingly, while there were too few instances of positive classroom interactions in Years 9 and 10 for them to be included in that analysis, there were ample data for these years when it came to negative classroom interactions. Some gender differences were apparent in the types of less positive behavior recorded during whole class teaching. The data relating to ‘call outs’ (both task-related and task unrelated) showed that this behavior was characteristic of boys
which confirms the findings at the primary level of Wheldall and Merrett (1988) and of Houghton et al. (1988) at the secondary level.

Myhill (2002) concluded that while it appears that boys dominate calling outs, it is the high-achievers who dominate positive classroom interactions while the underachievers are responsible for the more negative interactions. This somewhat explains the relatively poorer academic performance of boys than girls. As Myhill (2002: 341) expressed it, “… if boys are dominating the patterns of interaction in the classroom, then their examination results would suggest that, academically at least, this brings them no advantage”.

Swann (1992: 68) claims that although many studies suggest that in a classroom, boys are the ones who dominate mixed-sex talk and girls who give away power, it is usually the teacher who, often unconsciously, supports discrimination based on gender. Even though much evidence shows that boys take up more verbal space than girls, it is not as straightforward as it sounds; the context in which the pupils are at a given point, for example, how the classroom is organized, what kind of activities take place or what kind of attitudes the teacher has, affects the actual situation as well. In addition, Graddol and Swann (1989) point out that it is important to realize that the amount of talk also depends on different factors, for example personality, emotional state, social identity, the roles speakers play and the conversational goals they have.

Sunderland (1998: 51) makes an interesting point that many studies position girls as ‘victims’ and that the boys’ dominant behavior is ‘detrimental to girls’ academic progress and development of self-esteem’. She also continues to claim that when gender bias is considered from the point of view of student-teacher discourse in other classrooms than the language classroom, studies have not found any evidence of male
dominance and that, in fact, in some classes it was the girls who initiated more interactions with the teacher than boys did.

A survey on people’s attitudes towards female and male speech conducted by Kramarae (1989) showed that gossip and talking a lot were very often characterized as female speech. This is inconsistent with the fact that while girls are often stereotyped as the ‘overtalkative’ sex, it is still boys who dominate classroom talk. Moreover, Graddol and Swann (1989) point out that the majority of classroom interaction studies show that boys talk more than girls. In order to explain this inconsistency as to why girls and women are seen and stereotyped as talkative, Spender (1989: 73) argued that “a double standard is in operation in attitudes to talk”. She claims that a female who is portrayed as being talkative is often one who talks as much as a man and when “females are seen to talk about half as much as males, they are judged as dominating talk”.

Sargeant (1993) experimented with single-sex groupings to investigate how this affected girls’ oral contributions and found that girls adopted masculine traits such as competitiveness, interruption and domination in order to achieve what they felt was success in argument. Elsewhere, Davies (1998: 78) contends that these masculine traits of domination and interruption “are the embryonic form of the powerful speech practised by the mainly male leaders in politics, business and the professions”. She argues that boys’ dominance in interaction in the classroom equips them for later confidence in the public arena. This concern is echoed by Bousted (1989), who found that in her own classroom it was the boys who were ‘confident and articulate’ and who dominated by interruption and greater willingness to contribute. She sees girls as listeners and suggests that classroom patterns reproduce and maintain ‘the public/private distinction of men’s and women’s lives’. 
There is evidence to suggest that apparent dominance of boys in classroom talk disadvantages girls in many ways: it lowers their expectations (Swann & Graddol, 1988), affects their attitudes to learning, and provides a negative experience in terms of woman’s role within discussions in later life (Howe, 1997). As Bakeman and Gottman (1997: 47) point out, such gender differentiated roles are not entirely established in pre-school children, but “schools are clearly providing opportunities for the patterns to be practiced and consolidated”.

A comprehensive study of classroom interaction by Howe (1997) looked not only at talk, but also at non-verbal interactions. She found that boys contribute more prominently both physically and verbally during classroom interactions. Whilst girls request help from others more than boys, boys were evaluated more by the teacher, both negatively and positively.

Some researchers question the use of the word ‘dominate’ with its connotations of power, control and general maleness (Myhill, 2002), arguing that the situation can be described or explained in other ways (e.g. that girls choose to remain silent, not seeking acknowledgment, or that boys are more articulate than girls) and that, although boys tend to be more apparent in spaces in primary schools, girls are still able to exercise power over them (Swain, 2005). Myhill has also criticized the analysis of boys and girls as homogeneous groups, when there will always be some boys who do not participate as much as their peers.

According to Myhill (2002: 341), the ‘truth’ that boys dominate classroom interactions can be recast with a variety of very different implications:

- boys are more willing to participate in class discussion;
- boys need more support than girls in the classroom;
• boys are more articulate than girls;
• girls are more independent workers than boys;
• girls can think intelligently without needing public acknowledgement;
• girls are reluctant to share their ideas in a public arena.

Equally, each of these statements could be prefaced by the word ‘some’, since research tends to treat boys and girls as separate and homogeneous groups. Even in a classroom full of noisy, articulate boys there will be those boys who are more reserved and less confident in contributing to whole class interactions. Indeed, Hammersley (1990) critiqued some of the previous research for being rather simplistic in its interpretations. He questioned the meaning of equal attention in the classroom and whether the number of interactions was as important as the type of interactions. His questions are highly pertinent to the study of Myhill (2002). Interactions through talk and non-verbal interactions are central to the process of learning and there is a danger of looking at classroom interactions in terms of what Millard (1997) calls ‘binary oppositions’, whereby all the focus is upon differences between girls and boys.

A number of studies have examined the extent of boys’ and girls’ participation in the classroom as well as the more specific qualities of this participation. A recurrent finding is that girls participate to a lesser extent than boys (Kelly, 1988; Swann, 1992; Bailey, 1993; Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Tannen et al., 1997; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2000). The majority of studies have been carried out in the US or England. In a more recent study, Aukrust (2008) has examined girls’ and boys’ conversational participation in the modern Norwegian classroom. In his study boys participated more across four grade levels (first, third, sixth and ninth). A greater proportion of the girls’ utterances was initiated by the teacher allocating turns. The boys had more overlapping utterances with the teacher and contributed more comments that were not invited by the teacher.
The results of Aukrust’s study agreed with several international studies that have found that boys in relative terms participate more in whole class conversations than girls (Berk & Lewis, 1979; Good & Brophy, 1987; Kelly, 1988; Croll & Moses, 1990; Pavlidou, 2003). Pellegrini and Blatchford (2000: 198) conclude, for example, in their exploration of the field that, “the evidence from studies that have used systematic observation methods and numerical analysis shows a clear tendency for girls to receive slightly less interaction than boys”.

In the 70s and the 80s, a number of international studies reported that boys interacted more with the teachers than girls (Berk & Lewis, 1979; Good & Brophy, 1987; Kelly, 1988). In addition, later studies have concluded that girls receive less attention than boys, participate in less complex and challenging interactions with teachers and receive less constructive responses (Swann, 1992; Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2000). Although some studies conclude that there are no differences to be found between boys’ and girls’ participation (Merritt & Wheldall, 1992), most conclude that boys participate somewhat more than girls.

As far as the Greek study is concerned, Greek classroom discourse studies showed that girls get fewer chances to make contributions to classroom discussions (Altani, 1992; Archakis, 1992; Pavlidou, 1999). Nevertheless, Greek girls have not been found to be necessarily more polite than boys when addressing their teachers, but exhibited a tendency to comply to a lesser extent with the teachers and to challenge the teacher’s position in their relationship more by making, together with the boys, minimal politeness investments (Pavlidou, 2001). Furthermore, ten-year old girls in mixed-sex groups in primary school exhibited disengagement from traditional female roles of passivity and presented themselves as equally assertive as their male peers, by initiating shifts to play and teasing activity in cross-sex teasing discourse (Lytra, 2007). These
tendencies in female discourse in Greece, which seem rather contradictory, are nevertheless compatible with Hirschon’s (2001) suggestion that the Greeks, both men and women, tend to exhibit a notable tendency to contest hierarchy as they place great value on freedom and personal autonomy, a tendency that seems to apply to both boys and girls, at least in the school context.

In a study of Greek school students, Pavlidou (2003) examined patterns of participation in classroom interaction. More specifically, she discussed one type of verbal initiative on the students’ part – the non-compliance, which she defined as, ‘any sort of opposition coming from the students and being directed towards what the teacher is saying or doing. Such opposition can be in the form of a disagreement or argument, or even conflict and dispute’ (p. 3). Taking as the basic unit the students’ turns, her findings show that girls participate less in class than boys and take fewer verbal initiatives in their interaction with the teacher, thus girls are characterized as more ‘passive’ than boys in class. With respect to non-compliance, girls are being more noticeably non-compliant than boys – as compared against their overall behavior.

Like boys, girls who are more skilled, i.e. exhibit skills, issue directives and metastatements, receive questions and generally use a motivated directive style (Goodwin, 2001, 2006). Studies in a Chinese context (Kyratzis & Guo, 1996) show that in gender-mixed groups hierarchy and domination is possible for girls as well as boys. These results are compatible with Goodwin’s findings concerning the conversational practices of working-class African-American children (Goodwin, 1980), which showed that girls are competent in conflict and competition and do not provide mitigations more than boys.
In the research that has utilized observable data to document turn taking in classrooms, the terms ‘high input generators’ and ‘low input generators’ are sometimes used. These notions originally came from a study by Seliger (1977), in which he documented the participation patterns of these two different types of adult learners in a single ESL classroom in New York City. He tried to relate their participation behavior to their achievement in English. Seliger described high input generators (HIGs) as learners who, by initiating and sustaining conversations through taking turns, caused other people to use language with them, to provide them with language samples. In other words, their communication strategies presumably generated high levels of input. In contrast, another type of learner seemed to participate minimally – to speak only when called upon and to be generally passive in classroom interaction. These people Seliger called low input generators (LIGs) because they did not actively use language to get more exposure to the target language. In his study of learners’ participation patterns and their progress in mastering English, Seliger found that the HIGs did, in fact outperform the LIGs in English achievement. They also reported having more out-of-class contact with native speakers of English. From these patterns, Seliger (1983: 257) concluded that ‘learners who initiate interaction are better able to turn input into intake’.

Here, as Allwright (1991: 130) has noted, Seliger does not claim a linear, causal relationship, thus it does not mean that these learners initiate more interaction because they are proficient, or that they are more proficient because they initiate more interaction.

Other researchers have also used ideas of Seliger, but tried to improve upon his original design. Day (1984) replicated Seliger’s study with a larger population of mostly Asian students in Honolulu. In his own study, Day (1984) found that there was no
observable relationship between the frequency with which learners participated in class and their achievement on in English achievement test.

In another naturalistic study of classroom participation patterns, Sato (1982) used a quantitative analysis to examine her own learners’ turn-getting behavior. She was curious about the familiar stereotype of Asian learners as being more passive and quiet than other ESL learners. Using videotapes and making observations, she determined that her Asian learners did indeed take fewer turns than the others. Furthermore, the Asians took fewer self-selected turns and teachers allocated fewer turns to them.

In an investigation provided by Sato’s work, Moss and Corneli (1983) tried to replicate her investigation of ethnicity and turn-taking in an EFL classroom. They felt learners’ knowledge would influence the extent to which they might respond to general solicits in class. So, with the cooperation of the teacher, they planned an experiment in which the learners sometimes had the opportunity to bid for turns following a general solicit and then respond verbally. In this way, the researchers hoped to determine whether learners’ volunteering or bidding behavior was related to their ability to answer the teacher’s question.

Moss and Corneli (1983) assumed any one of the following four conditions might arise:

- Learners might know the answer (or think they did) and bid for verbal turns.
- Learners might not know the answer (or think they did not know it) and still bid for turns.
- Learners might know the answer (or think they did) but choose not to bid for turns.
Learners might not know the answer (or think they did not know it) and therefore not bid for turns.

In fact, in their data analysis, they found that three of these four situations emerged: only situation 2 did not occur. However, they point out, that this was a pilot study with a very small sample. With a larger number of learners, all four patterns might easily arise.

In summary, most studies find that boys participate more than girls. Some studies conclude that the differences are first and foremost in the quantity of girls’ and boys’ participation. Other studies have reported differences in the quality of girls’ and boys’ interaction in the classroom. These quantitative differences are partly connected with the various strategies teachers use when they address girls and boys, but they are also connected to girls’ and boys’ own strategies (Younger et al., 1999).

2.2.4.2 Holding the Floor

The concept of floor has been developed in a number of important works on discourse and conversation analysis over the past 20 years or so. Edelsky (1981) was possibly the first to turn the spotlight on the term ‘floor’ instead of using it in a taken-for-granted, colloquial way. Her notion of what she calls a ‘collaboratively developed floor’ (F2), which is characterized by more than one person speaking at a time, contrasts with the one-person-at-a-time floor (F1) proposed by Sacks et al. (1974). Jones and Thornborrow (2004) have attempted to develop the notion expressed by Edelsky (1981: 89) that ‘all present have an effect on interaction, whether speaking or not’, and furthermore, that all present are involved in whatever activity is ongoing. They claim that rather than being seen as ‘who is speaking’ or even ‘who is trying to speak at this moment,’ the floor becomes a flexible organization of participation in the discursive aspects of the
activity. This is oriented to by those present in the setting and by parties to the activity, who do not just have an ‘effect on interaction’, but are allowed to have an effect.

Phillips (1972) identified four ‘participant structures’ as constituting a framework for teacher-controlled interaction. These structures correspond to the sense in which we want to define a floor as a set of possible rights to speak for a certain activity. For example, in one such participant structure, the teacher may address all the pupils, or one in the presence (and with the assumed attention) of the rest; for their part, a single pupil may address the teacher, and some or all pupils can respond in unison.

Mehan (1982) uses the term ‘floor’ to mean, in effect, speaking. He talks of pupils ‘getting’ and ‘holding’ the floor, as if occupying some physical (as well as temporal) space in order to be able to talk while others remain silent. The pupil has to locate an appropriate juncture to ‘get the floor’, which Mehan (1982) argues is not after every turn, but after every ‘Initiation-Reply-Evaluation’ sequence. So, to ‘hold the floor’ involves having what you say attended to by others, and here a concern is to build the notion of listenership into our account.

Floors work also in some classroom activities. For instance, when taking register (calling the roll) the floor organization is that of teacher and the first pupil on the list, for one adjacency pair, then teacher and the next pupil, and so on. The rest of the class are to attend and stay silent. A change of floors may occur when the activity is interrupted. At the knock on the door, the teacher and the pupil from another class establish a new floor between themselves to deal with the interruption, while the class remains silent. The taking of the register is suspended while this interruption is dealt with. Many classroom activities can be said to have a ‘whole-class floor’. This is characterized by the teacher’s addressing the class as one collective listener. She acts as moderator of the
talk, in which pupils have to be selected to speak, and then, when they do, they must speak to and through the teacher (Philips, 1972). Sometimes the teacher addresses just one pupil, but as an individual, not as a representative of the class, as in the case of reprimand.

2.2.4.3 Attention

In recent years there has been considerable interest in the idea that teachers respond differently to boys and girls in their classes. Various investigations have been undertaken to examine how the teachers in the primary school interact within their classrooms with boys and girls, and the results of these investigations are rather ambiguous, some showing boys receiving more interaction than girls from the teachers and others showing no difference.

In a large scale British study which involved nearly 2000 pupils in 50 schools, Mortimore et al. (1988: 167), noted amongst their findings that the teachers communicated more, both verbally and non-verbally at an individual level, with the boys rather than the girls, the main differences being in the ‘greater use of criticism and neutral remarks to individual boys about their behavior’. So far as work was concerned, the boys were given more supervision, particularly as feedback than the girls, whilst the girls received more praise than the boys. The differences found were not related to the gender of the teachers. Similarly, Howe (1997), who produced a report on gender differences in classroom interaction, commissioned by the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department, quoted a number of studies finding more negative comments being directed at boys than girls and little evidence that was related to the gender of the teachers.
In the early work in this area, Brophy and Good (1970: 372) argued that boys tend to attract more attention from teachers and ‘appear to be generally more salient in the teacher’s perceptual field’. Brophy (1970), in a critique of studies concerned with the interactions of male and female teachers with male and female students, observed that gender-related issues in education have actually been debated throughout the century. He claimed that from early in the century until about 1970, criticism with how students were differently treated was focused on the disadvantage experienced by boys, especially at the primary school level (Brophy, 1970). The powerful effect of student behavior in producing differential teacher responding to boys and girls was elucidated by Brophy (1970) in his exploration and analysis of the effects of teacher gender on classroom interactions with boys and girls. Finding no interaction between the sex of the teacher and the sex of the student, Brophy (1970) argued that teachers do not respond to students’ sex per se, but do respond to their behavior. The reality that boys and girls behave differently is at the core of teaching responses. In 1985 Brophy criticized the primary school studies, summarized in the work of Brophy and Good (1974: 132), and concluded that

… male versus female differences in classroom experience are due almost entirely to gender-role related differences in the behavior of the students themselves and not to any general tendency of either sex to treat boys and girls differently.

Apart from these large scale investigations, there are a number of smaller scale studies that report boys communicating more with the teacher than girls. For example, French and French (1984), after their observation of primary school lessons, came to the conclusions similar to Brophy and Good (1970), claiming that in mixed-sex classes it was well established that male pupils got more attention from teachers than female pupils. In support of this claim, they cited their British study of a selected fourth year
junior class (29 students aged 10 to 11 years) whereby they analyzed interaction turns during a teacher-class discussion led by a male teacher. They found that of a total of 188 interaction turns during the lesson 50 were attributable to boys whereas only 16 were attributable to girls. They made the point that, given the fact that girls were in the majority in the class (16:13), ‘the proportions of the imbalance become even more apparent’ (French & French, 1984: 127). Significantly, they found that it was not the boys generally who monopolized the ‘interactional space’ (p. 128), but a small subset of four boys who dominated the classroom interaction in this particular class. Similarly, Swann and Graddol (1988) reached a similar conclusion based on an analysis of two sequences of classroom interaction.

In contrast, Duffy et al. (2002: 123) argued that apart from the gender of the student, gender of teacher and ‘gender’ of classroom subject can also influence the way teachers allocate their attention to boys and girls. They pointed out that although boys tend to have more interactions with teachers, ‘this tendency was not the result of male students having initiated more direct verbal interactions with teachers’.

Dart and Clarke (1988) highlighted the importance of subjecting classroom interaction data to adequate analysis. Their study of 24 science lessons in a metropolitan secondary school in Australia compared the participation of boys and girls. Their analysis, involving the verbal interactions of three teachers and 113 students in four classes, differentiated teacher to student interactions as being organizational, behavioral or task-related. Student to student interactions were classified as either a response or an initiation. Dart and Clarke (1988) found that whilst boys had a greater number of interactions with teachers than girls, the latter were responsible for initiating more interactions, a finding, as they pointed out, that had it been taken on its own, would ‘join the many others were results have been reported simply as numbers or percentages
of interactions, and add to the literature supporting sex bias in science classrooms’ (p. 46). Further analysis of the results in Dart and Clarke’s (1988) study, however, showed that girls actually initiated more interactions with the teacher than boys and the largest type of interaction difference between boys and girls occurred in the ‘behavioral’ category. They use these findings to suggest that conclusions from earlier interaction analyses, an observation also made by Croll (1985) a few years earlier, have so far been equivocal or even contradictory. Moreover, Dart and Clarke (1988) asserted that the most useful information to be collected from their study was that an analysis of the means on the various dimensions of interaction for boys and girls showed that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups. Expressed illustratively and powerfully by the authors, boys were involved in 15.02 interactions while girls were involved in 12.96, a difference of 2.06 interactions over six lessons.

Croll (1985: 220) considered that although a number of studies had shown that in mixed-sex classrooms boys take a larger part in discussion and receive more teacher attention, the extent of ‘this male predominance’ varied considerably in different studies. As part of another project, Croll (1985) systematically observed 34 second-year junior classes in 20 British schools with a view to exploring teacher-student interactions of boys and girls. The context for the broader study was a comparison of the classroom activities and interactions of children with special educational needs with those of other children in the same classrooms. As part of the larger study Croll was carrying out (Croll & Moses, 1985), it was established that teachers giving more attention to boys than to girls was a function of ‘a higher proportion of boys having learning and behavioral difficulties together with a small number of other boys receiving very high levels of teacher attention’ (p. 220).
Croll’s (1985) study remains an important one in the classroom interaction research literature as it detailed a significant data set, collected systematically and subjected to detailed analysis. While coming to similar conclusions as previous research undertaken in the field, it was able to offer explanations beyond polemic for some of the imbalances in classroom interaction.

Providing further detailed data of classroom interactions in the US, in a large study of 63 elementary classrooms in 10 schools, Irvine (1986) explored the effects of student race, sex and grade level on teacher-student interactions, drawing on early work of Brophy and Good (1970). In terms of sex differences, Irvine found that boys initiated more positive and negative interactions with teachers than girls did, and boys received significantly more negative feedback than girls. Boys also received more non-academic (procedural and behavioral) feedback than girls and in the upper elementary grades girls received significantly less academic feedback than male students. Irvine (1986: 17) claimed that the results from her study supported the findings of previous work ‘on the obscurity of female students and the dominance of male students in teacher-student classroom interactions’.

Irvine (1986) pointed out that the more frequent initiations made by boys (resulting in both positive and negative interactions) resulted in more contact with, and verbal feedback from, the teacher. Irvine considered that this confirmed the view of Brophy and Good (1970) that high-achieving boys assert themselves through positive initiating behaviors (such as dominating class discussions by answering without being recognized), while low-achieving boys initiate through more negative behaviors, such as misbehaving and violating rules and norms. This results in both high- and low-achieving boys demanding teacher attention, recognition and acknowledgement with the teacher responding reactively by giving a disproportionate amount of feedback to boys
(Irvine, 1986). This accords with Croll’s view (1985) that differential attention to boys is a matter of inadequate classroom management skills on the part of the teacher.

Younger et al. (1999) explored classroom interactions in eight English secondary schools using focus group interviews. In four of the eight schools the researcher also conducted direct observation of teacher-student interactions in Year 11 classes. In terms of teacher attitudes, girls were perceived as better organized and more independent learners. They had better communication skills than boys, being both more articulate and confident than their male peers. Boys, however, were perceived by teachers as being more disorganized and demotivated, as well as being more vocal, active, distractible and immature (Younger et al., 1999). The demands made on teachers by boys was a constant theme, with teachers acknowledging that ‘the noise level of the boys, their off-task activities, their poor behavior pattern and apparent limited attention span, inevitably attracted more attention’ (p. 329). These demands were expressed in terms of classroom management issues rather than being related to the actual teaching and learning context.

Moreover, the study of Younger et al. (1999) even revealed that more classroom interactions are initiated by girls nowadays: 70% questions and requests in classroom are from girls. However, in their study the idea that boys receive more attention from teachers remained unchallenged.

Beaman et al. (2006) have suggested that boys represent more of a management challenge than girls. In their recent study, Swinson and Knight (2007) have found that teachers give more attention, especially disapproval, to those pupils who had previously been designated as presenting challenging behavior.
By the late 1980s, a meta-analysis of more than 80 studies on gender differences in teacher-student interactions was carried out by Kelly (1988). The results from different studies are examined statistically to see whether the variations between them could have arisen by chance, or whether they vary systematically with other factors. The conclusion reached was that girls receive less of the teacher’s attention in class, and that this is true across a wide range of different conditions. Boys get more of all kinds of classroom interaction with teachers across different countries, across different social classes and ethnic groups and across different subject areas in the curriculum. The discrepancy is most marked for behavioral criticism, but this does not explain the overall imbalance. Boys also get more instructional contacts, more high-level questions, more academic criticism and slightly more praise than girls. Girls are just as likely as boys to volunteer to answer questions in class, but boys are much more likely to call out the answers. Furthermore, Kelly (1988: 21) goes on to claim that “the discrepancies are just as large in teacher-initiated interactions as in pupil-initiated interactions, which suggests that teachers are unaware of the way in which males dominate in class, or are unsuccessful in controlling this domination”.

Croll and Moses (1990) conducted a meta-analysis based on studies of classroom interaction in England and came to a conclusion similar to Kelly’s. Spender (1982: 57) claimed that girls typically received about only one-third of teacher attention and argued that boys considered having two-thirds of the teacher’s time as a ‘fair deal’. Moreover, she claimed, ‘if this ratio is altered so they [the boys] receive less than two-thirds… they feel they are being discriminated against’. According to Spender, after studying numerous transcripts, those teachers who thought they had spent more time with the girls, had in fact spent the minimum of 58 per cent with the boys and a teacher who had spent 34 per cent of her time with the girls had reported that ‘the boys […]
were complaining about me talking to the girls all the time’. According to Sunderland (1992), one problem that can rise from this is that male dominance can become natural in the EFL classroom (p. 88). Sunderland (1992: 89) suggests that in addition to boys getting more speaking practice and feedback, the teacher can also treat girls and boys differently by ‘varying the level of difficulty of questions by gender, and employing double standards’. When group work is concerned, however, Cook-Gumperz and Kyratzis (2001: 110) noticed in their study that girls in a mixed sex group played a larger organizational part and that when ‘verbal sparring’ occurred, it was most likely to happen between girls as a way to compete over control of the group’s activities. These findings show an opposite view to the more commonly discovered pattern of gender separation, where in situations such as open conversation, boys have been the dominating force.

Eccles and Blumenfeld (1985) also found that a greater part of the teacher’s talk was directed towards the boys. However they found no significant difference in the relative distribution of the different kinds of address to boys and girls; the difference was in effect only that teachers talked more to the boys. Others have observed differences in the quality of the teacher’s interactions with girls and boys. It has been reported that boys get more questions directed to them (Barba & Cardinale, 1991; Pearson & West, 1991; Grima & Smith, 1993; Younger, Warrington & Williams, 1999; Tsouroufli, 2002) and receive more verbal encouragement and criticism, as well as non-verbal encouragement (Simpson & Erickson, 1983). Grayson (2001) found that teachers gave a shorter response time to girls, asked them less complex questions and gave them fewer follow up questions. Similarly, Duffy et al. (2001) and Tsouroufli (2002) found that teachers had a tendency to interact more with male pupils. This did not result from
male pupils initiating more direct verbal contact with the teachers but from the teachers themselves allowing male pupils to speak and initiating contact with them.

According to Sunderland (2000: 159), there seems to exist an ongoing pattern of male dominance in classroom interaction, where in a classroom situation boys are given more negative and positive attention than girls. She makes a distinction between the quality and quantity of attention given to male students, as ‘kind of attention that is likely to be what counts’. In other words, Sunderland (1994: 137) claimed that gender affects the proceedings in a classroom, for example, in how much and what kind of attention the teacher gives to boys and girls in the classroom. She also stated that the studies done on teacher attention showed that teachers give more attention to boys than girls, although this kind of behavior is not necessarily favouring students ‘but responding to them actively’.

Not all researchers held the view that large and discriminatory differences in the distribution of teacher attention to boys and girls existed. Galton et al. (1999) reporting on a large scale British study, the ORACLE project, produced very different results. Some previous research (Clarricoates, 1980; Spender, 1982) suggested that boys dominated discussion and received disproportionate amounts of teachers’ time and attention. Meanwhile, Galton et al. (1996, 1999) underlined the fact in a previous phase of ORACLE project (reported by Galton, Simon, & Croll, 1980) that there was little difference between boys and girls in receipt of teacher attention. Furthermore, Galton et al. (1999) in their study reported that

…there has been a shift towards girls receiving a greater proportion of teacher’s attention overall as a result of an increase in whole class based interactions, but that with this exception, the data show that, just as boys and girls received almost identical
proportions of teacher’s time in the ORACLE 1976 classroom, so too did they in ORACLE 1999 study. (p. 97)

Independently, Croll (1985), based on observations in 34 classrooms, found that boys received slightly more teacher attention than girls and noted that this difference was accounted for by a few boys receiving very high levels of individual attention.

Merrett and Wheldall’s (1992) findings at the primary level, that very few differences existed in the way teachers distributed their attention to boys and girls, are similar to Dart and Clarke’s (1988) findings (also indicating the absence of statistically significant differences in how teachers distributed their attention to boys and girls). They too are similar to the ORACLE 1976 findings (Galton et al., 1996), as well as approximating to Croll’s (1985) findings in which he found the difference in attention directed to girls and boys to be much less dramatic than sometimes claimed.

2.2.4.4 Approval/Disapproval

Teacher praise is an effective tool that can be a powerful motivator for students, because it allows the teacher to selectively encourage different aspects of student production or output. For example, the teacher may use praise to boost the student’s performance, effort, accuracy, or speed on an assignment. Or the teacher may instead single out the student’s work product and use praise to underscore how closely the actual product matches a goal set by the student. Surprisingly, research suggests that praise is underused in both general- and special-education classrooms (Brophy, 1981; Hawkins & Heflin, 2011; Kern, 2007).
The power of praise in changing student behavior is that it both indicates teacher approval and informs the student about how the praised academic performance or behavior conforms to teacher expectations (Burnett, 2001). As with any potential classroom reinforcer, praise has the ability to improve student academic or behavioral performance - but only if the student finds it reinforcing (Akin-Little et al., 2004).

Prevalent view in the literature so far holds that boys compared to girls receive more attention, praise and critical feedback from their teachers (Sadker et al., 1991). An ethnographic study, conducted by Delamond (1983), came to the conclusion that the gender of the child is the key factor that determines and reinforces teachers’ perceptions when they evaluate their students in Mathematics. In the same direction, research conducted in Greece (Chionidou, 1996) has revealed that in Mathematics classes, teachers tend to address more questions to boys rather than girls; thus boys get more opportunities to give answers and, inevitably, stand to receive more praise and positive comments than girls.

Large-scale observation studies have been completed which examined teachers’ ‘natural rates’ of approval and disapproval (praise and reprimands) in primary and secondary schools (Merrett & Wheldall, 1987; Wheldall et al., 1989). These studies, employing the Observing Pupils and Teachers In Classrooms (OPTIC) schedule, showed that teachers in both primary and secondary schools used slightly more praise statements overall than disapproving comments. In response to pupils’ academic behavior teachers used many more praise statements than disapproving comments whereas in response to pupils’ classroom social behavior they used reprimands far more than praise (Merrett & Wheldall, 1986).
Hammersley (1990) raised the question of the difficulties involved in identifying types of attention observed, like ‘praise’ and ‘blame’. He argued that it is the type of teacher attention, rather than amount, which is a much more significant factor likely to affect the differential achievement of students in the classroom (Hammersley, 1990: 140), a matter with which neither French and French (1984) nor Swann and Graddol (1988) concerned themselves.

Boys have also been found to receive more negative attention in the form of reprimands and to request less help from the teacher, while girls received more positive attention supporting learning (Younger et al. 1999). Given Younger et al.’s (1999) study findings, it is not surprising that the observational aspect of their study confirmed that boys were involved in more classroom interactions than girls, and as a result boys were reprimanded more than girls with boys receiving 70% of the reprimands in the comprehensive school. While the overall rate of reprimand in the selective schools was lower than in the comprehensive schools, boys received 90% of all reprimands given. Again, reminiscent of Swann and Graddol (1988), teachers directed questions to boys (62% of questions were directed to boys) and boys responded to questions which teachers directed to the whole class. Younger et al. (1999: 339) concluded that while these characteristics show ‘domination’ by boys in the classroom, the reality is that boys receive more negative attention than girls. They also suggested that the tolerance level of teachers is lower to boys’ misbehavior than to that of girls and that much of the teacher attention directed to boys is focused on management rather than teaching and learning. For example, Younger et al. (1999) suggested that the direction of more attention and more direct questioning to boys is an attempt by teachers to ‘retain male involvement and class control’. They also stated that, ‘regardless of the subject, girls interacted more inquisitively, with the subject matter being taught, participated more in
the enquiry process, and showed more interest and intellectual curiosity” (p. 338). Moreover, they commented that perhaps the greatest challenge in raising boys’ achievement levels is “to support teachers, and to raise the awareness of trainee teachers in devising ways of working more effectively with boys” (Younger et al., 1999: 339).

Meyer and Thompson (1988) (as quoted in Sunderland, 1994: 138) found in their study that boys actually got the blame more often than girls. In addition, they claim that boys have a tendency to talk more to the teacher rather than girls. Sunderland (1994: 148) also shows how “variously, boys get more blame, approval, disapproval and instructions than girls, and that girls who call out are reprimanded more than boys who call out”. Webster (1982) (as quoted in Sunderland, 1998: 53) also found that teenaged boys received more teacher solicits and that the difference was mostly due to the fact that boys received more disciplinary solicits than girls.

Jones and Dinda (2004) in the USA completed a meta-analysis of 32 studies in classrooms across the age range, which examined patterns of sex differences in teacher-initiated teacher-student interactions. This study examined whether teacher-initiated interactions with students such as praising or blaming, vary as a function of student sex. Their results suggest that the teachers interact more with the male pupils than the female pupils and have more negative interactions with the males than the females, but not more positive interactions. Moreover, they go on to claim that in teacher-student interactions, male and female students are treated differently, but sex may be only one of many factors that define this differential treatment.

Merrett and Wheldall (1992), who had previously investigated teachers’ approval and disapproval in a number of studies, e.g. Merrett and Wheldall (1987),
Wheldall, Houghton, and Merrett (1989), reported on a study into teacher response, in particular praise and reprimand, given to male and female pupils. Unlike previously mentioned studies, conducted by other researchers, they included a measure of pupil on-task behavior in their investigation and examined teachers’ positive and negative responses to both pupils’ academic behavior and pupils’ social behavior. Their results, from observations taken in 32 primary school classes and 38 secondary school classes, showed a different pattern of response in the two school levels. In the primary sample, ‘there were virtually no differences between teachers’ responses to boys and girls’ (74), whilst mean on-task behavior was marginally higher for the girls than the boys, 74.6% as opposed to 72.4%. In the secondary sample, the boys received significantly more positive responses than the girls for their academic behavior, but not for their social behavior and significantly more negative responses for both academic and social behavior. Levels of on-task behavior in the secondary sample were almost identical. In their discussion, Merrett and Wheldall (1992) express some surprise at the primary school results noting that teachers tend to report boys being more troublesome than girls.

In a later investigation, Davies (2008) observed 10 primary school teachers, focusing on teacher positive and negative interactions towards the pupils, which comprised both verbal and non-verbal teacher behavior. The results, unlike those of Merrett and Wheldall (1992), showed large differences, 61% of the teachers’ interactions being with boys and 29% with girls.

In a recent article, reviewing studies into some of the various investigations into teachers’ attention given to boys and girls in the classroom, Beaman et al. (2006: 446) point to the need for “a more fine-grained analysis of behavioral interactions between teachers and their students in the classroom than some of the more global measures of
teacher attention”, citing the work of Merrett and Wheldall (1992) as an example of such work.

As Swinson and Harrop (2009) have noted, apart from the investigation by Merrett and Wheldall (1992), there seems to have been no systematic examination of the behavior of boys and girls in the classroom. They undertook an investigation from a similar perspective to that of Merrett and Wheldall (1992) but extending the categories of observation. Two extra categories of observation, ‘teacher’s questions’ and ‘directions/redirections’ were employed since they represent important interactive aspects of teachers’ verbal communications with their pupils, and because like approval and disapproval, they are relatively low inference behaviors as evidenced by the findings of earlier research when these categories were found to be readily observable, i.e. yielding acceptable levels of observer agreement (Harrop & Swinson, 2003; Swinson & Harrop, 2005). Moreover, Altermatt et al. (1998) found in three of six classrooms observed of pupils aged 10-14 years in the USA, that boys were called on significantly more often to answer questions than girls.

The results of the study carried out by Swinson and Harrop (2009) on specific categories of teacher verbal behavior add support to the view that teachers give more attention to the boys than to the girls. Unlike the findings of Merrett and Wheldall (1992), but like those of Davies (2008), they show considerable differences in the teachers’ verbal behavior towards the two groups. Unlike the findings of Jones and Dinda (2004), boys were seen to receive more approval as well as more disapproval than girls. In terms of approval and disapproval, the data show the teachers directing significantly more approval for academic behavior and more disapproval for social behavior to the boys than to the girls. That teachers were not directing significantly more approval to social behavior and more disapproval to academic behavior is seen by
Harrop and Swinson (2000) as a statistical artifact occasioned by the low levels of verbal behavior in these two categories, a feature of teacher verbal behavior that is well known.

The findings of the study carried out by Ke Chen (1994) on the current situation of some gender issues in primary (key stage one) education, particularly the attention allocation of primary teacher and the different concentrations periods of pupils in mixed-sex classrooms, revealed that there was no statistically significant gender imbalance in term of attention allocation from the teacher in the classroom; however girls tend to receive more positive responses from the teacher than boys do. Moreover, boys tend to be more active in the early period of class while, in contrast, girls are getting more attention from their teacher in the later period of class.

The results of various pieces of research outlined above suggest a range of possibilities, with at one end the majority of studies showing teachers giving considerably more attention to the boys than to the girls and at the other end, some studies showing teachers giving equal amounts of attention to each group. The only agreement is that girls do not receive more attention than boys.

2.2.5 Concluding Remarks

In this subchapter the field of EFL was presented and defined along with previous studies carried out in the area of classroom research. Following this, research centered on the classroom was identified, and its defining characteristics were given. And finally, gender differences in classroom interaction from previous empirical research were highlighted with a particular focus on teacher-student and student-student interactions in
the classroom. The next chapter on research methodology will outline the research methods and design of the study, research questions and hypotheses posed, research settings and participants, instruments used during the study as well as data collection procedures.
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter III provides a description of the methodology and procedures that were used to gather the data needed to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. It contains seven sections. The first section explains the research design and discusses the selection of research methods. The second section presents the research questions and hypotheses. The research setting and participants are given in the third and fourth sections. The fifth section describes the instruments utilized in the study. The sixth section addresses the data collection procedures followed by statistical data analysis in the seventh section. Finally, concluding remarks of the chapter are given in section eight.

This study is designed to investigate whether the gender of the learner affects the learner’s language use and behavior during EFL classroom interaction in primary schools in Greece, and in particular in the city of Thessaloniki. We are interested in exploring possible explanations for teachers’ behavior by looking not only at their ideas about gender but also at their engagement with students based on their gender.

3.1 Research Methods and Design of the Study

After reviewing the relevant literature and developing a research agenda, we decided that a mixed method research would be the most appropriate model to use for our research, as the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a
better understanding of research problems than either approach alone would. Furthermore, a mixed method design “provides strengths that offset the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative data” (Creswell & Clark, 2007: 9). Finally, we chose a mixed method design because of practicality, as we can understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives of the people involved using both numbers and words.

The qualitative approach was considered appropriate for this study in the particular EFL classroom setting as it takes place in a natural setting where human behavior and events occur. Moreover, a qualitative method was chosen for this study because the researcher sought to gain the personal perspective, values, and beliefs of the teachers who currently teach EFL in mixed-sex classrooms, rather than test a hypothesis or evaluate an outcome. In this study, a quantitative component, Cross-Tabulation, Chi-Square Test for Independence (using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 19.0) as well as Cluster Analysis (CA), provided the contextual framework for the quantitative component. In the first phase of the study, collection of qualitative and quantitative data was carried out through observations by the researcher herself during EFL classroom interaction utilizing observation forms. In the second phase of the study, qualitative and quantitative data were collected through the method of written and online questionnaires. The aim was to gather more detail-rich information, to crosscheck the results of both and report the main findings from the observations and questionnaires used.
3.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

The main hypothesis of the study was the following: In EFL classroom interaction, the language use and behaviour of Greek 5th grade primary school learners are influenced by their gender.

Although gender has been quite widely investigated in other contexts, there are still very few studies of gendered interaction in the foreign language classroom in Greece. Thus, the purpose of this study is to fill a gap in the research of gender differences in the foreign language classroom in the Greek school context since interaction, when considered from the point of view of gender in the EFL classroom, can be extremely fascinating and useful because potential gender differences influence the academic and social lives of students (e.g. Sunderland, 1992, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2006; Swann, 1992; Lindroos, 1995; Goddard & Patterson, 2000).

Based on the purpose of the study, the following questions were used to guide the research:

Research question 1: Are there any gender differences as far as class turn taking and interruptions are concerned?

Research question 2: Are there any gender differences in receiving praise and positive comments?

Research question 3: Are there any gender differences in getting blame and reprimand from the teacher?

Research question 4: Are there any gender differences with regard to student dominance in EFL classroom interaction?
Research question 5: Are there any gender differences with respect to demanding and getting more teacher attention?

Research question 6: Are there any gender differences regarding class participation during EFL classroom interaction?
3.3 Setting

3.3.1 The Greek EFL Context

Major changes have recently been introduced in Greece, aiming at providing more hours and enhanced opportunities for foreign language learning within state schools and at facilitating the achievement of the European objective for multilingualism. In line with European developments in ELL (early language learning) and EU policy recommendations, the Greek Ministry of Education introduced English as a Foreign Language in the first and second grades of public all day primary schools in 2010. The programme, which has come to be known with the Greek acronym ‘PEAP’, was developed within the context of a funded project entitled ‘New Foreign Language Education Policy in Schools: English for young learners’ and was implemented experimentally in about 1,000 primary schools throughout Greece (Dendrinos, et al., 2013).

In addition, a new curriculum for foreign language teaching in schools, the Integrated Foreign Languages Curriculum, was developed in 2011 within the framework of the new National Curriculum. More precisely, the new Curriculum adopts a generic approach to language learning and the use of foreign languages for communication and is intended to apply to all languages that may, at some time, be included in the school curriculum (either as compulsory or as optional). This in itself constitutes a major advancement, since until recently languages were treated in the Greek school curriculum as separate, clearly defined subjects and curricula for each foreign language were developed adopting different aims and promoting different approaches to language learning (Dendrinos, et al., 2013).
At the fifth grade, a second foreign language, either French or German, is added to the curriculum - the selection being dependent on a variety of factors, including teacher availability and parents’ choice of a language that they wanted their children to learn. Italian and Spanish were added to the existing second foreign language options offered in the first form of lower secondary school, so that Greek learners can choose to study any two of all the languages offered in their school, as English is no longer compulsory.

English language instruction in Greece is also provided by foreign language institutes. This is a thriving private sector which provides intensive foreign language tuition and targets students of all ages, but most commonly learners of eight years old and above. Such courses are not compulsory, are mostly exam-oriented and train learners so as to be able to sit for specialized exams which will allow them, if successful, to obtain a language certificate (Mattheoudakis & Alexiou, 2009). Generally speaking, foreign languages are very important for the present generation of Greek parents – the Greek language being one of the least widely spoken languages outside of Greece – and this finding has been confirmed by European surveys (Eurostat, 2010, European Commission, 2006) and surveys carried out in Greece (e.g. Androulakis, 2008).

The fact is that state schools provide fewer contact hours and fewer intensive courses than private language institutes. According to the data provided by the National Statistical Service (2009), there are currently more than 1,000,000 students at private English language institutes in Greece. Thus, nowadays, private language institutes constitute the main body of foreign language learning, and, according to the data by the Ministry of Education (2009), their number reaches 7138 all over Greece (Τζέκου, 2012).
The Greek EFL context is unique in Europe and actually mirrors Greek parents’ and learners’ keen interest in foreign language education. According to a study published by the Eurydice network for the year 2006-2007, 90% of Greeks strongly believed in the necessity of mastering at least one foreign language which will allow them to communicate with speakers of other languages inside or outside the borders of their country. More recent data in 2012 (European Commission, Eurobarometer) prove the value of language proficiency for the Greeks, since 92% of the Greeks consider that each European citizen should be able to communicate in a foreign language besides the native language, and the same percentage considers English as a key asset for the labor market.

3.3.2 Primary Schools

The six years of primary school (Dimotiko Scholeio – ages six to twelve) form the first part of the nine years of compulsory attendance. Pupils, who have turned six years old by the 31st of December of the enrolment year, are entitled to enroll in the first grade of primary school, but since 1999 all day schools have also been introduced (Xochellis & Kesidou, 2007). Attendance in primary education is free including the provision of books and supplementary educational material to every pupil. Primary education curricula and timetables have been drawn up by the Pedagogic Institute. Since 2011, the Pedagogic Institute has been replaced by the Educational Policy Institute (EPI), which is responsible for expressing opinion or recommendations on issues related to primary education programs, school textbooks and other teaching instruments. They are implemented in all primary education schools country-wide (Dendrinos, et al., 2013).
In order to conduct the present research, two private Greek primary schools in the suburbs of Thessaloniki were chosen as research settings. The study was conducted in the school year 2008-2009. The choice and access to the research settings depended mainly on whether the headmasters of the schools allowed us to access their schools. The school headmasters introduced the researcher to the teacher participants whose classes the researcher was allowed to attend and gave her permission to conduct research in their schools. Subsequently, a regular week schedule was set up for classroom observations for a period of about one academic semester. English as a foreign language was taught four times a week in private primary schools at the time of observations.

3.4 Participants

In order to achieve more generalisable results, it was considered necessary to carry out the study in as many schools as possible. An adequate range of sampling was, consequently, needed which could provide enough data to allow us to draw evidential conclusions. A sample of 81 students and 70 teachers was selected, aiming at collecting enough data to reach generalizable conclusions. According to Cohen et al. (2000), a sample size of 30 is considered to be the minimum number of cases required in order to obtain statistical data, while according to Dörnyei (2003), 50 participants are needed in order to get statistical significance.

Students from four different classes participated in the study, all of them fifth graders. The particular age was chosen as students at that age have already been exposed to EFL for at least three years and thus have attained quite a good level of English. All children attending Greek schools are assumed to be Greek by birth and
native speakers of Greek. However, due to an influx of immigrants of various ethnic minorities in Greece – particularly, Russian, Bulgarian and Albanian, several children in both schools were of various ethnic backgrounds. This has actually been the reality in most Greek state schools during the last twenty years.

Pupils’ age in the fifth grade ranges from 10 to 11 years. More specifically in our sample, 60 % of all pupils were 11, and 40 % 10 years old. The number of students attending the classes observed varied across the observations due to various reasons.

Initially, for this study we intended to include both male and female English language teachers. It was expected that teachers of different gender would treat differently their male and female students in class and that students would react differently to their male and female teachers. But because of shortage of male teachers teaching English in primary schools in Thessaloniki, we had to confine our study to female English language teachers only. It should be noted that we are aware that this may be a limitation of our study because we will not have access to comparable results, regarding differences between male and female teachers’ attitude to male and female students.

Thus, four female teachers participated in the observations of this study, two teachers at Mandoulides Primary School and two teachers at Aristotelio College. All hold a university degree in English Studies from a Greek university. All participants are Greek who teach English as a foreign language. Teachers’ age ranged between 30 to 45 years. In both schools – A and B - the researcher observed the lessons of two English language teachers respectively (T1 and T2 in School A, T3 and T4 in School B). Out of the four teachers T3 was the most experienced one having almost 25 years of experience, the last 12 years at School B. The teacher profile is available in Appendix
C. All the participants were informed about the purpose of the researcher’s presence in the classroom (though not the exact research area of our study) and all of them agreed to be observed. They were told that mainly teacher-student interaction patterns would be observed during their classes, but not specifically gender differences in these patterns of interaction.

Participant information was kept anonymous in order to respect the personal beliefs of the participants as well as to ensure confidentiality of the data (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

Giving the pupils a voice was also at the core of the research design, both because of a philosophical commitment to valuing children’s perspectives and because ‘pupils are observant and have a rich but often untapped understanding of processes and events’ (Ruddock & Flutter, 2000: 82). However, given the fact that my respondents were of young age, still being at the process of cognitive and psychological development, they could not participate in oral interviews and volunteer material useful for our research or fill in questionnaires. Apart from the language background, age and gender, no other information on pupil participants is available. The student profile is given in Appendix D.

Since the study was conducted towards the end of the school year 2008-2009, almost all classes were preparing for some kind of end-of-year exams, which probably affected not only the context of the lessons, but also students’ motivation as well. In particular, learners’ motivation was positively affected as they were highly interested to attaining good marks.
3.5 Instrumentation

The instruments that were used to collect and analyze the data needed to address the research questions and test the hypotheses that are presented in this section.

True to the mixed methods approach, the research included qualitative and quantitative data collection. The qualitative research instruments included an observation form (Appendix A), a questionnaire (Appendix B), a teacher profile (Appendix C), and a student profile (Appendix D) for identifying gender differences in classroom performance during EFL interaction. The quantitative data were based on questionnaires and observations.

3.5.1 Classroom Observation Reports

The data of our research came from observations of naturally occurring classroom interactions during which notes were made on observation forms. Altogether forty one (41) lessons have been observed, all of which were used in our research. The data were collected between February and May 2009. Time and place of observations were arranged with the teachers, and after examining several observational schedules that have been used by researchers to study teacher-student interaction in classroom, our own observational schedule was developed with three possible answers (male, female and no difference) focusing on the issues under examination. The observation schedule, which can be found in Appendix A, contains information on the number of the students,
the gender composition of the class, duration of the lesson, the activity that took place during the lessons, teaching material and organization.

Before piloting the observation report, we intended to focus on teachers’ verbal and non-verbal communication with the students; however, during piloting, these two aspects of communication turned out to be such complex processes that it was found more appropriate to focus exclusively on verbal communication.

The purpose of the observation was to collect data concerning (a) pupils’ gendered and linguistic aspects of behavior; and (b) patterns of teacher-student interaction. The former include turn-taking and interruptions, inclination to dominate classroom interaction time, oral and participatory activities. The latter include teacher-initiated feedback (giving praise/positive comments, reprimand and criticism), distribution of teacher attention and talk among the students as well as selection of students in class participation.

Four classes were observed, i.e. altogether 41 lessons. Two classes in each school taught by different teachers were chosen so as not to collect data based on only one teaching context. Thus, we have an insight to four different settings where EFL teaching took place. The coursebook the teachers used in their class was *Here We Go 1*.

All selected interactions, both those between teacher and students and those among students, took place via voluntary contribution. The reason for analyzing talk contributed voluntarily is that this study is focused on gender differences resulting from students’ own linguistic and gender behavior and not from teacher bias (for example, calling on male students more frequently).
3.5.2 Questionnaires

Apart from classroom observation, the other research instrument for data collection was a questionnaire that was distributed (a) to those teachers whose EFL classes were observed, and (b) to teachers of English in private language schools (frontisteria).

The questionnaire was selected as a useful research instrument because, even though it is time-consuming and labour-intensive in design and analysis, it exhibits several advantages. Firstly, the responses are collected in a standardized way, so questionnaires are more objective, certainly more so than interviews (Milne, 1999). Secondly, information can be collected from a large sample. Moreover, they are simple to administer, they should be simple and quick for the respondent to complete and they are usually straightforward to analyze. Furthermore, data entry and tabulation for nearly all surveys can be easily done by using software packages.

The questionnaire template designed for this study is given in Appendix B. The questionnaire was designed to elicit data in relation to the extent, pattern, nature of gender differences in language use and behavior in classroom and classroom interaction, in general. To this aim, the questionnaire was divided into two parts: Part I elicited demographics information, and Part II provided information on gender and linguistic behavior of students. The questionnaire was administered in English, as it is the language of instruction in the EFL classes used as research settings. It consists of 23 items of which 10 are Yes/No questions items (Item 8 regarding classroom monopoliser in class, item 11 on gender differences in non-verbal behaviour in class, item 13 on selection of students for class participation, item 16 on attitudes of male and female students toward FL learning activities, item 17 on different treatment of students toward the teacher, item 18 on change of attitude towards male/female students, item 19
on gender discrimination from the students, item 20 on specific sitting arrangement for male and female students, item 21 on ideas on gendered behaviour and item 22 on management problems of the students). 12 items are multiple choice questions with four choices (male, female, both and no answer). These are item 1 on turn-taking in class, item 2 on interruptions, item 3 in initiating interactions with the teacher, item 4 on gender stereotypes, item 5 on instructional exchanges, item 6 on getting blame/disapproval from the teacher, item 7 on dominating classroom interaction time, item 9 on giving power to talk, item 10 on demanding and getting teacher attention, item 12 on giving praise/positive comments, item 14 on receiving teacher attention and item 15 verbal superiority in FL acquisition. All questionnaire items aim to elicit respondents’ opinion and attitudes to main gender issues. Only one open-ended item was employed – item 23 which aimed to elicit comments and remarks related to gender issues in EFL class.

A pilot questionnaire was given to 20 teachers in different private language schools in May 2008, which is the year previous to the main research. The collected feedback from the administration of this pilot questionnaire was used to formulate the final questionnaire. Changes made in the questionnaire include minor revisions and changes of some open-ended questions which were re-written as Yes/No or multiple choice questions in order to facilitate respondents to answer them.

Moreover, a teacher profile was created aiming to provide characteristic features of each teacher with reference to educational settings, in our context – primary school (see Appendix C). It was expected that this profile would serve as a supplement to the questionnaire material completed by the teachers in both schools. The profile has 13 points. They are as follows: 1. given name; 2. school; 3. position/title; 4. age; 5. gender; 6. specialization; 7. institute/university attended; 8. education in Gender Studies.
received; 9. actual years of employment in primary/secondary education; 10. classes usually taught; 11. level of English usually taught; 12 years of experience as English language teacher.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The study was held by the researcher herself in the following two phases:

   Phase 1 - Prior to this investigation, a pilot study was conducted in two fifth grade classes at the 3rd Experimental Primary School in Evosmos, Thessaloniki. This included questionnaires administered to teachers and live observations conducted in four classes chosen as research settings. The aim of the pilot study was to check the effectiveness of questionnaire items and observation report items, receive feedback from teachers and thus, design the final version.

   Several issues emerged during the pilot study. The results of the pilot study suggested a need for designing and creating a student profile with demographic details, including students’ nationality and years of learning English as a foreign language. Moreover, the pilot study revealed that the data of the original questionnaires and observation reports did not provide enough information about the ongoing classroom interactions. The teachers at the school where the pilot study was conducted did not feel comfortable with the open-ended questions addressed in the questionnaires and did not elaborate on the issues in their own words. Upon further review, it was determined that Questions 1-22 would best be answered through a close-ended process, rather than an open-ended one. Only the last question of the questionnaire was kept open-ended.
Phase 2 - Following the pilot study, we contacted the headmasters of the two schools that were taken as research settings for gaining permission to conduct the study. Having been granted such permission, the researcher visited the schools, administered the questionnaires to the teachers and carried out live observations.

The data collected consists of forty one (41) observed EFL lessons which were observed between February and May 2009. Each class was observed twice a week, and the observation schedule for each lesson lasted forty-five minutes; there were thirty hours of observed EFL lessons. The data were numbered chronologically as they were collected.

Questionnaires were first distributed to the four teachers whose classes the researcher attended. Afterwards, in order to obtain more data and a bigger sample of respondents, a notice was posted online on TOWER (Thessaloniki Organisation for Women’s Employment and Resources) bulletin board for other teachers of English from private language schools and foreign language centres requesting their participation through an online questionnaire. Seventy (70) English language teachers volunteered to participate in our study and filled in the questionnaire.

3.7 Statistical Data Analysis

Once the data collection and tabulations were completed, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS – 19.0) software was used to analyze the data and to answer the research questions. This program is useful for both descriptive and cluster analysis necessary to meet the goals of this research study.
Descriptive statistics were used to summarize characteristics of the defined demographic groups specifically looking at distribution in terms of frequency, percentages, and mean values. Next, cross-tabulation and Chi-Square Test for Independence were used to assess and explore relationships between the dependent and independent variables. In addition, Cluster Analysis (CA) is carried out in order to organize data into meaningful groups or clusters.

### 3.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter outlined the methodology and context of this study. The research design and research methods illustrated how we planned to conduct the study using mixed-methods approach. Research questions and hypotheses were stated followed by the selection of the setting and participants, instrumentation, data collection procedures, as well as statistical data analysis. The next chapter will present a detailed description of all qualitative and quantitative results from the two phases of the study along with a discussion of whether the hypotheses and research questions of the study have been verified or not.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH: PRESENTATION AND EXPLANATION

This chapter presents the findings and statistical results for investigating the research questions and testing the specific hypotheses. The presentation of results is given as follows: the description of the sample appears first; second comes the description of the findings concerning the items in observation reports; and then appear the findings regarding the questionnaire items. Furthermore, statistical hypotheses are tested by means of Cross-tabulation and Chi-Square Test of Independence. In addition, Cluster Analysis (CA) is carried out in order to organize data into meaningful groups.

The following research questions were explored:

Research question 1: Are there any gender differences as far as class turn taking and interruptions are concerned?

Research question 2: Are there any gender differences in receiving praise and positive comments?

Research question 3: Are there any gender differences in getting blame and reprimand from the teacher?

Research question 4: Are there any gender differences with regard to student dominance in EFL classroom interaction?

Research question 5: Are there any gender differences with respect to demanding and getting more teacher attention?
Research question 6: Are there any gender differences regarding class participation during EFL classroom interaction?

4.1 Description of the Sample

In this section, the participants’ profiles are outlined and the statistical results concerning the investigation of all the five research questions are analyzed.

4.1.1 Student Profile

Eighty one (N=81) fifth graders of the two private primary schools were observed in the present study. The age of the subjects ranged between 10 and 11 years old. As for gender, fifty two (N=52, 64.2%) students of the sample were male and twenty nine (N=29, 35.8%) were female.

Demographic data were collected using a student profile form (Appendix D) in order to identify some basic characteristics of the students. With regard to residential characteristics, forty (40) students (49.4%) of the student participants come from the urban areas of Thessaloniki, and forty one (41) students (50.6%) come from the suburban areas of Thessaloniki.

Out of the eighty one (81) students participating in our sample only four (4) had a mother tongue other than Greek, namely two (2) students had Russian as a mother tongue, one (1) student had Turkish, and one (1) student had English.

Data in Table 1, which provides information on the number of years of studying English as a foreign language in Greece, indicate that 30.9% of the students started at the age of 6 and 69.1% at the age of 5.
Table 1

*Length of EFL studies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Studying English as a Foreign Language</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>69.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.1.2 Teacher Profile

The study sample included four (4) state school teachers whose classes the researcher attended for observations and sixty six (66) English language teachers from private language schools in Greece who volunteered to participate in the study and filled the electronic form of the questionnaire. Therefore, the total number of respondents to the teacher questionnaire was seventy (70). All the teachers are female and of Greek origin.

As shown in Table 2, the average age of the teachers is 38.5, the minimum age is 23 and the maximum 58. With regard to the years of employment in primary education, it is observed that on average teachers have been teaching English for 11.7 years in primary education, the minimum number of teaching experience in primary education being 2, and the maximum 35. From Table 2 we can see that the respondents have considerable classroom experience as English language teachers. The average number of EFL teaching experience, regardless of educational level, is 14.6.
Table 2
Teacher Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Actual Years of Employment in Primary Education</th>
<th>Years of Experience as English Language Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Std. Deviation</strong></td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum</strong></td>
<td>58</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 EFL Classroom Interactions Traced in Classroom Observations

In this section, the results collected from the analysis of observation reports (Appendix A) are presented. Table 3 and Table 4 present the results based on observations of the students’ gendered discourse behavior and linguistic behavior during EFL classroom interaction. More specifically, the percentages given in the tables show the cases in which one or the other variable was relevant during the observed lesson.

Table 3 shows the findings for variables displayed in the following categories: (a) turn taking, (b) engagement in interaction, (c) domination in oral and participatory activities, (d) verbal superiority, (e) newly presented linguistic forms.

With regard to taking turns, it was found that in most of the observed classes (20 classes which comprise 48.8% of whole class observations), male students dominated more than female students did. On the contrary, only in 5 observations (12.2% of the sample) did females turn out to take more turns than males.
As far as engagement in interaction is concerned, in 21 out of 41 observations, male students showed greater participation in interaction during class than female students. In 15 observations (36.6% of the sample) female students were more engaged in interaction.

As apparent from Table 3, regarding oral and participatory activities in the prevailing number of observed classes (61% of the sample) male students dominated female students. As opposed to that, in 23 observed classes (56.1% of the sample) female students outperformed male students in their verbal superiority and in producing correct language forms in the foreign language. And finally, in 19 observations (46.3% of the sample) male students showed better skills in building up on newly presented language forms than female students, whereas in 12 observed classes (29.3%) no gender related differences were detected.

Table 3

*Classroom Interaction Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Interaction Variables</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male N %</td>
<td>Female N %</td>
<td>No difference N %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turn-taking (requests, disagreement)</td>
<td>20 48.8</td>
<td>5 12.2</td>
<td>16 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interactional engagement</td>
<td>21 51.2</td>
<td>15 36.6</td>
<td>5 12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dominating oral and participatory activities</td>
<td>25 61</td>
<td>8 19.5</td>
<td>8 19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verbal superiority, producing correct language forms in</td>
<td>13 31.7</td>
<td>23 56.1</td>
<td>5 12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foreign language acquisition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>building up on newly presented linguistic forms</td>
<td>19 46.3</td>
<td>10 24.4</td>
<td>12 29.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 illustrates the findings for variables that are related to the behavioral aspects of male and female students. Considering teacher interruption by students, in most observations (75.6% of the sample) teachers were interrupted more by their male students, and only in 5 observed lessons (12.2% of the sample) were they interrupted by female students.

As far as classroom domination is concerned, in 63.4% of the observations, classes were dominated by male students, and only in a small sample of observations (12.2%) were girls found more dominant in class. In terms of instructional exchanges, in most observations (48.8% of the sample) female students required more instructions regarding the completion of various tasks, whereas in 14 observations (34.1% of the sample) no gender related differences were found. Also, in the prevailing number of observations (65.9% of the sample) male students behaved improperly and were blamed by their teachers. On the contrary, female students received more praise and positive comments from their teachers in 21 observed cases (51.2% of the sample).

With regard to raising hands and call outs, male students in 21 observations (51.2% of the sample) expressed more willingness to volunteer than their female classmates. As far as academic exchanges are concerned, the results of observations reveal that in most cases no gender differences were found. The same can be observed about the cases in which students approached the teacher individually in order to ask a question. Here, in 68.3% of observations no such gender related differences could be detected.

The findings in Table 4 show that in 48.8% of observed cases it was the male students who demanded teacher attention and not the female ones. Furthermore, in 53.7% of observations male students dominated the females in cases of competition and
individualization, and only in 7.3% of observations did female students dominate. As findings in Table 4 display, in most of the observations (61% of the sample) teacher attention was distributed equally between male and female students.

Table 4

*Behavioral Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioral Variables</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>No difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interrupting the teacher</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>class dominance</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>receiving instructional exchanges</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>getting blame/disapproval</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>getting praise/approval</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>willingness to volunteer (raising hands, call outs)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-academic exchanges</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approaching the teacher individually and asking questions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demanding and getting teacher attention</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>competition and individualization</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distribution of teacher attention</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Teachers’ Beliefs and Attitudes Traced in the Questionnaires

In this section, the results collected from the analysis of the teachers’ answers to the various items of the questionnaire are discussed. Besides demographic information on teacher profile (Table 2), the questionnaire was designed to capture data in relation to the extent, pattern, nature of gender differences in language use and behavior in
classroom and classroom interaction in general from the teachers’ point of view. It consisted of 22 items and particularly, 10 Yes/No questions and 12 multiple choice questions. The four options in these multiple questions were (a) male, (b) female, (3) both, and (4) neither, which were easy to answer and aimed to determine participants’ opinion and attitudes to main gender issues. The themes identified in the questionnaires were related to student gender and linguistic behavior. The teachers who volunteered to fill in the questionnaire forms were seventy (70).

As apparent from the data in Table 5, most of the teachers (47.1% of the sample) reported that their male students’ participation in the form of request, disagreement, etc. during EFL classroom interaction outweighed that of females’. And only 25.7% of the sample reported that these were mostly female students. This is possibly the case because of the larger number of male students in their classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Neither</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 6 indicate significant differences between male and female students in interrupting their teachers in class. According to 47.1% of the teacher sample, male students interrupted them more frequently during classroom interaction than female ones. Here, only a small number of respondents (17.1%) reported that mostly female students interrupted them more often in class as compared to their male peers. Similarly,
such findings may also be due to the fact that male students comprise the majority of student population in the particular classes.

Table 6

*Interruption in class*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Both</th>
<th></th>
<th>Neither</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>% 47.1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>% 17.1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>% 15.7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As apparent from the results presented in Table 7, when it comes to interacting with the teacher and sharing ideas and opinions in front of the whole group, there are no differences between male and female students during class according to 31 teachers (44.3% of the sample).

Table 7

*Initiating interactions with the teacher in class*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Both</th>
<th></th>
<th>Neither</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>% 18.6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>% 22.9</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>% 44.3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As data in Table 8 show, there are no important differences in teachers’ responses with regard to whether male or female students produce gender stereotypes in class.
Table 8

*Gender stereotypes in class*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Neither</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As evident from data in Table 9, a prevailing number of teacher respondents (42.9% of the sample) reported that they have an equal number of instructional exchanges with their male and female students, and a slightly smaller number of teachers (37.1%) stated that they give more instructions to their male rather than to their female students. It should be noted that this is twice as many teachers as those who claim that they give more instructions to females. The picture is rather different for the female students as only 18.6% of the sample reported that their instructional exchanges are mostly directed at their female students.

Table 9

*Instructional exchanges in class*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Neither</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings in Table 10 indicate that 32.9% of the teachers feel that they blame and give disapproval mostly to their male students, whereas only 10% of the teachers blame their female students more than their male ones. Meanwhile, 41.4% of the teachers report that they do not blame neither male nor female students during class.
Table 10

*Getting blame, disapproval in class*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Neither</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 indicates that most teachers (44.3% of the sample) believe that male students dominate in class participation. Whereas only 27.1% of respondents state that classroom interaction is dominated by female students, and according to 28.6% of the teachers, both male and female students participate equally in class interaction.

Table 11

*Dominating the classroom interaction time*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Neither</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As apparent from Table 12, according to most teachers (71.4% of the sample), there are no monopolizers in class.

Table 12

*Class monopoliser*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data in Table 13 reveal that according to a significant number of teacher respondents (65.7% of the sample), both male and female students are given equal power and space to talk and to participate in class.

Table 13

*Giving power, space to talk in class*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Neither</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings in Table 14 show that 38.6% of the teachers believe that male and female students equally demand and get teacher attention. And only 21.4% of the respondents claim that mostly female students demand and get more teacher attention, whereas 25.7% of respondents believe that male students demand and get more teacher attention.

Table 14

*Demanding and getting teacher attention*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Neither</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be observed from Table 15 that in terms of nonverbal behavior, 31 teachers (44.3% of the sample) found gender differences in their students’ nonverbal behavior,
whereas a slightly larger number of teachers (55.7%) did not report any gender-differentiated nonverbal behavior from their students.

Table 15

*Nonverbal behavior in class*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>55.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 16 indicate that a considerable number of the teachers in our sample (67.1%) believe that they give an equal amount of praise and positive comments to their male and female students in order to encourage and reward them during EFL classroom interaction. According to a very small percentage of respondents (12.9%), praise and positive comments are given mostly to male students, whereas 20% of the respondents believe that female students are given more praise and are encouraged more than their male peers.

Table 16

*Giving praise/positive comments as teacher-initiated feedback*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Neither</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-
The data in Table 17, regarding the selection of students for class participation, show that 59 teachers (84.3% of the sample) state that in teacher-student interactions that occur over the course of the foreign language class, their choice of the student for class participation in general, and in specific language acquisition tasks in particular, is not intentionally gender-specified. And only a very small sample of teacher respondents (15.7% of the sample) report that they select students for class participation based on their gender.

Table 17
*Selection of students for class participation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>84.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data in Table 18 show that most of the teachers (60% of the sample) feel that they do not pay any gender differentiated attention to their male and female students, but instead, their attention is almost equally distributed in class, whereas 22.9% of respondents claim that they give attention to male students, and 17.1% to their female students.
Table 18

*Teacher attention in class*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th></th>
<th>Both</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings in Table 19 indicate that according to most teachers (54.3% of the sample), as far as learners’ language learning skills are concerned the two genders are relatively good at learning English.

Table 19

*Learning English as a foreign language*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Both</th>
<th></th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20 regarding male and female students’ attitudes toward language learning activities (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), 39 teachers (55.7% of the sample) answered negatively, and 31 teachers (44.3% of the sample) stated that male and female students do exhibit different attitudes.
Table 20

*Attitudes toward foreign language learning activities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>55.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As far as question # 21 is concerned, most teachers (70% of the sample) reported that they have not been gender discriminated in their class because of the fact that they are female.

Table 21

*Being female teacher in class*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As data in Table 22 show, 45 teachers (64.3% of the sample) were found to have changed their attitude towards male and female students over the years. This can be attributed to the fact that during their teaching experience they acquired gender awareness for any classroom event happening during EFL interaction.
Table 22

*Change of attitude towards male/female students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings in Table 23 show that there are no important differences in the responses of the teachers regarding gender discrimination from their students. More specifically, 31 teachers (44.3% of the sample) responded positively, and 39 teachers (55.7% of the sample) negatively regarding the issue of gender discrimination.

Table 23

*Gender discrimination in class*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>55.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As apparent from Table 24, a considerable number of teachers (61.4% of the sample) do not pick seats for their male and female students in their class when the students work in pairs or in groups. The students can choose themselves where they would like to seat.
Table 24

*Seating arrangement in class*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>61.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 25 we observe that 51 teachers (72.9% of the sample) out of 71 who answered this question, have no definite idea on gendered behavior of their students, neither have they received any kind of gender education.

Table 25

*Gendered behavior in class*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data in Table 26 indicate that most teachers (88.6% of the sample) reported that they have not experienced any class management problems in class because of the fact that they are female.
Table 26

*Class management problems*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>88.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Testing of Statistical Hypotheses

Cross-tabulation, which is employed in this study, gives us a basic picture of how two variables interrelate and helps us search for patterns of interaction as regards to gender. Obviously, if certain cells contain disproportionately large (or small) number of cases, then this suggests that there might be a pattern of interaction.

Following cross-tabulation, the Chi-Square Test of Independence is conducted in order to determine if the association described by cross-tabulation is a significant one. For our study, we have chosen significance levels equal to 0.05, which afterward are compared to the P-value (probability value). The null hypothesis is rejected when the P-value is less than the significance level.

4.4.1 Demanding and Getting Teacher Attention

When we test the association between ‘demanding teacher attention’ and ‘getting teacher attention’ with regard to gender, we examine the null hypothesis that there are
no statistically significant gender differences between them. This implies that if the student demands teacher attention, he/she does not necessarily get it and this does not depend on student’s gender.

Ho: Variable A (demand) and Variable B (get) are independent with respect to gender.

Table 27.

Test Results for Associations between gender of students and variables 'demanding teacher attention' and 'getting teacher attention'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>No difference</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>demand</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No difference</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In our data we do not have any missing cases, and therefore we consider all 41 observations. Based on the column percentages in Table 27, we identify cells on the male row and the female row as the ones producing the significant result because they show the largest differences. Thus, in our data we have 48.8% on the male row and 22% on the female row.
\[ \chi^2 = 5.918a, \text{ df} = 4, p > 0.05 \]

The probability of the chi-square test statistic (chi-square = 5.918) is \( p = 0.205 \), which is greater than the alpha level of significance of 0.05. In this case, if considering \( p > 0.05 \), the results obtained do not give enough evidence to reject the hypothesis. Therefore, the null hypothesis that gender differences in ‘demanding teacher attention’ are independent of gender differences in ‘getting teacher attention’ is accepted.

### 4.4.2 Demanding Attention and Getting Involved in Interaction

Here we are interested in the relationship between ‘demanding teacher attention’ and ‘getting more academically involved in interaction’, and want to see if this differs according to gender. The null hypothesis states that there are no statistically significant gender differences between them. This signifies that, although the students demanded teacher attention, they were not involved in interaction that took place in class.

Ho: Variable A (demand) and Variable B (involved) are independent with respect to gender.
As shown in the contingency Table 29, there are 20 (48.8%) students for that category who are male and 9 (22%) students who are female.

\[ \chi^2 = 4.139a, \text{ df } = 4, p > 0.05 \]
Therefore, we can say that the two variables under study (‘demand’ and ‘involved’) with respect to gender are not associated and we can accept the null hypothesis.

Referring to Table 30, we see that the probability of the chi-square test statistic (chi-square = 4.139) is $p = 0.388$, greater than the alpha level of significance of 0.05. So, there is no statistical significance that indicates a relationship between the above mentioned variables. And the null hypothesis that gender differences in ‘demanding teacher attention’ are independent of gender differences in ‘getting involved in interaction’ is not rejected.

### 4.4.3 Getting Approval and Disapproval

The null hypothesis states that there are no statistically significant gender differences between ‘getting teacher approval’ and ‘getting teacher disapproval’, that the two variables are independent and not related.

Ho: Variable A (approval) and Variable B (disapproval) are independent with respect to gender.
From Table 31 we can see that there are 13 (31.7%) students for that category who are male and 21 (51.2%) students who are female.

\[ \chi^2 = 9.818a, \text{ df } = 4, \ p < 0.05 \]

In this case, the P value (0.044) is less than the significance level 0.05. The results obtained from Chi-Square Test of Independence displayed in Table 32 present almost
enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Based on data results, it is possible to conclude that there is a relationship between the variables “approval” and “disapproval” with regard to gender.

A Chi-Square Test of Independence of the relationship between “approval” and “disapproval” finds a statistically significant relationship between the variables (0.044).

4.4.4 Getting Turns in Interaction and Producing New Language Forms

A Pearson Chi-Square Test of Independence was computed to test the association between ‘getting turns in interaction’ and ‘producing new language forms’ with regard to gender, but yielded no significant difference between these variables. This implies that in cases when the students (male and female) get turns in interactions, they do not necessarily produce new language forms.

Ho: Variable A (turns) and Variable B (language forms) are independent with respect to gender.
From Table 33 we can see that there are 20 (48.8%) students for that category who are male and 5 (12.2%) students who are female.

\[ \chi^2 = 6.614a, \text{ df } = 4, p > 0.05 \]

Here the Chi-Square Test analysis indicated no statistically significant differences between the variables under study. The probability of the chi-square test statistic (chi-
square = 6.614) is \( p = 0.158 \), greater than the alpha level of significance of 0.05. The null hypothesis that gender differences in ‘getting turns in interaction’ are independent of gender differences in “producing new language forms” is not rejected.

4.4.5 Dominating Oral and Participatory Activities and Class Participation

In this subsection we are interested in the relationship between ‘dominating in interaction’ and ‘class participation’, and want to see if this differs according to gender. The null hypothesis states that there are no statistically significant gender differences between them. In other words, both male and female students may have participation in class, but dominating in oral and participatory activities is not gender differentiated.

\[ H_0: \text{Variable A (domination) and Variable B (participation) are independent with respect to gender.} \]

Table 35.

*Test Results for Associations between gender of students and variables ‘dominating in class activities’ and ‘dominating in participation’*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dominate</th>
<th>participation</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>No difference</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>63.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No difference</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From Table 35 we can see that there are 26 (63.4%) students for that category who are male and 4 (9.8%) students who are female. The data presented in Table 35 did not exhibit a significant difference between the two variables.

\[ \chi^2 = 1.369a, \text{ df } = 4, p > 0.05 \]

The probability of the Chi-Square Test of statistic (\(\chi^2 = 1.369\)) is \(p = 0.850\) which is greater than the alpha level of significance of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis that gender differences of ‘dominating in class activities’ are independent of gender differences in ‘class participation’ is not rejected.

### 4.4.6 Volunteering in Interaction and Building up New Language Forms

When we test the association between ‘volunteering in class interaction’ and ‘building up new language forms’ with regard to gender, we examine the null hypothesis that there are no statistically significant gender differences between them. By this we mean that if students volunteer in interaction, they do not necessarily build up new language forms.
Ho: Variable A (volunteer) and Variable B (language forms) are independent with respect to gender.

From Table 37 we can see that there are 21 (51.2\%) students for that category who are male and 11 (26.8\%) students who are female.

Table 38.

Chi-Square Test results for variables ‘volunteering in interaction’ and ‘building up new language forms’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>1.448</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>1.332</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 5 cells (55.6\%) have expected count less than 5.
\[ \chi^2 = 1.448, \text{ df} = 4, p > 0.05 \]

‘Volunteering’ and ‘building new language forms’ did not exhibit any significance among male and female students. Thus, we can state that there is no relationship between ‘volunteer’ and ‘language forms’ with regard to gender, and accordingly, we can accept the null hypothesis.

The probability of the chi-square test statistic (chi-square = 1.448) is \( p = 0.836 \), greater than the alpha level of significance of 0.05. The null hypothesis that gender differences in ‘demanding teacher attention’ are independent of gender differences in “getting teacher attention” is not rejected.

### 4.4.7 Cluster Analysis (CA)

In order to identify any conglomeration of the variables under study and/or any common behavior regarding gender, multivariate analysis performed on the clusters as groups is employed. Each cluster thus describes, in terms of data collected, the class to which its members belong. Items in each class are similar in some ways to each other and dissimilar to those in other clusters.

In our study, a cluster analysis was run on 41 observations, each responding to items on gendered and linguistic behavior of male and female students in class during foreign language interaction.

Circles in Figure 1 represent the aggregation of the variables having statistically the same percentage of participation. Results show that the cluster analysis produced 6 clusters which are presented one by one below.
Cluster 1: The first cluster is predominant and characterized by male students being more dominant in classroom interaction, preferring competition, demanding more teacher attention, being more academically involved in interaction and dominating oral and participatory activities.

Cluster 2: The second cluster is essentially high in male students showing 45% participation which concerns interruption in class, willingness to volunteer in language...
interaction, getting disapproval from the teacher and building up on newly presented language forms. Female students in class also share these common behaviors but only with 20% participation.

Cluster 3: The third cluster which indicates that turn-taking in class interaction is almost equally shared by male and female students.

Cluster 4: The fourth cluster is dominated by female students and concerns production of correct language forms during class interaction, getting more approval from the teacher than the male students, as well as getting more instructions on specific language tasks.

Cluster 5: As far as non academic exchanges in class interaction are concerned, the fifth cluster is dominated by male students and no differences in such behavior are observed by teachers.

Cluster 6: The sixth cluster produces no differences in behavior of male and female students and includes variables such as getting more attention from the teacher, producing gender stereotypes, approaching the teacher individually and asking questions, agreeing with the teacher, participating in language activities as well as exhibiting non verbal behavior in class.

4.5 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter the results of the data analysis were presented. More specifically, the participants’ profiles (both teachers’ and students’) were outlined and the statistical results found during observations of the students’ gendered discourse behavior and linguistic behavior during EFL classroom interaction were presented. Following this,
the results collected from the analysis of the teachers’ responses to the questionnaire items were examined. Moreover, statistical hypotheses were tested by means of Cross-tabulation and Chi-Square Test for Independence, and Cluster Analysis (CA) was carried out in order to organize data into meaningful groups or clusters. An attempt will be made in Chapter V to further comment on and interpret the findings examined here in relation to the research questions and previous studies.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Discussion of Results

In this chapter the findings of our survey are discussed alongside our observations in terms of the research questions and hypotheses that were put forth in Chapter III.

The findings of the study are presented in five subsections in order to establish the different patterns of teacher-student interaction according to the gender of the student. This division also facilitates the analysis and allows us to address the research questions of this study.

The focus of the first subsection (5.1.1) is to examine male and female students’ behavior in order to see whether the teacher actually favoured males over females and if the teacher, probably unconsciously, allowed the male students to dominate the interaction. In subsection 5.1.2, the focus is on interaction between the teacher and both male and female students in terms of positive and negative feedback. It is supposed that even though the teacher’s feedback pattern to both male and female students might be similar in terms of the IRF, other aspects of the teacher-student interaction, e.g. praise and reprimand, given by the teacher, may be differentiated depending on the gender of the student. Subsection 5.1.3 examines if any male dominance can be found from the data, which has been so many times discovered in previous studies of gender bias in the classroom. In the fourth subsection (5.1.4), the distribution of teacher attention in classroom interaction is discussed in terms of the gender of the student. The purpose of this subsection is to show some of the patterns of attention the teachers in our study
provide both to male and female students and to analyze other gender-specific interactional and pedagogic behavior between the teacher and her student. The final subsection (5.1.5) examines whether teacher’s selection of students for class participation is influenced by the gender of the student. In addition to class participation, what is even more significant, in terms of differential teacher treatment, are differences in teacher’s attitude towards students according to their gender, when it comes to instructional exchanges during classroom interaction.

5.1.1 Turn Taking and Interruptions

Whenever we talk about interaction in the classroom, it is mandatory to raise patterns of turn taking as a central issue in classroom interaction and an important constituent of the teaching-learning process. It is also the most frequently observed phenomenon as far as EFL classroom interaction is concerned.

Thus, the aim at this point is to focus on a particular aspect of social interaction in a specific context: turn-taking and interruption in classrooms of primary school, having in mind the gender variable.

Before discussing turn taking and interruption, it is relevant to look at their definitions. The turn is understood as a time-bound process: it is the time that matters and determines the structure of the turn (Van Lier, 1988). In this study, a ‘turn’ is defined as a short utterance or an extended utterance by a person as long as that person speaks and before another one comes in and starts speaking. Interruptions are generally seen as violations of the unwritten norm of ‘not starting to talk when someone else is already speaking’ (LaFrance, 1992: 497), however, it is important to note that
Research Question 1: Are there any gender differences as far as class turn taking and interruption are concerned?

Research question 1 asked whether turn taking and interruptions are gender differentiated in the behavior of male and female students in interaction which takes place in foreign language classroom. To address this question, the teachers were required to provide answers to the first question of the questionnaire, i.e., who takes more turns (in the form of requests, disagreement, etc.) in their class. Related to this is the second question of the questionnaire, which asks the respondents who interrupts them more often in class.

The data on turn taking, as well as interrupting the teacher during classroom interaction, show that in both cases the observation findings revealed statistically significant gender differences for these variables. This is in accordance with the findings of much of the research published internationally. As Holmes (1995) notes, men tend to dominate interactions; they interrupt more often and are more likely to disagree with the speaker. In addition to this, men tend to control the interaction in both topic introduction and topic development. Likewise, Brooks (1982) found a tendency for male college students to interrupt more than female college students in some context.

However, it is not only the frequency, but the function of interruptions which also deserves attention. According to James and Clarke (1993: 232), the basic function
of interruption is to prevent the current speaker from being able to finish his or her utterance and to allow the next speaker to take the floor. In our data we have both instances of cooperative and intrusive interruptions. Most of the cooperative interruptions were instances of mistimed (either early or late) answers to the teacher’s questions. The following excerpts illustrate a mistimed answer:

**Excerpt 1**

T: Now, exercise 3 please. It is about answering questions.

F1: (reading) How did Paula feel about what happened?

T: So how did Paula feel? How? She

F2: //She was angry.

F1: Yes, she was angry.

T: Σωστά! (Correct)

M: Κυρία, εγώ εγράφα she felt angry. (Miss, I wrote she felt angry)

T: Σωστό και αυτό! The same! (That is also correct!)

**Excerpt 2**

M1: (reading) The criminal which was arrested had robbed a bank.

T: The criminal

M2: //Όχι which, who πρέπει να ναι. (It is not which, it should be who.)

T: Τι είναι criminal? (What does criminal mean?)

M1: εγκληματίας (criminal)

T: So …

M1: The criminal who was arrested had robbed a bank.
Excerpt 3

T: Look, there is a difference between travel and trip. What does travel mean?

M1: //ταξιδεύω (to travel) δεν είναι;

M2: //Should we hand the copies now?

T: Wait a moment, please, George!

In these three excerpts we can see that the teacher’s question is not immediately followed by an answer, and the first answer only arrives when she already goes on to answer her own question. Consequently, the teacher is interrupted. Tannen (1983 and later works) proves that interruption can have a cooperative function, which is considered to be a way of indicating that one is interested in, enthusiastic about, and highly involved in the conversation. Here, in these excerpts, mistimed answers are categorized as cooperative interruptions, because replying to the teacher’s question signals a student’s involvement and cooperation in interacting with the teacher, regardless of whether the reply arrives early or late. In this sense, the mistimed answers are similar to what Li (2001) calls ‘assistance interruptions’, which are aimed at helping the current speaker who is in need of either a word or an idea. Of course, the kind of assistance the teacher needs is not in connection to language problems but rather to the smooth flow of the lesson for which student cooperation is essential.

Besides cooperative interruptions, there are instances when students started talking without the teacher explicitly asking or expecting them to do so, therefore these instances are categorized as intrusive interruptions. The following excerpts from our data are examples of intrusive interruptions:
**Excerpt 4**

T: So, you will have Exercise 3, 4, 7……and 8 for home

M1: //Look, Exercise 3 is on prepositions. We put *in, on, at, under*.

T: Yes, exactly.

M1: And we have to match sentences in Exercise 4 … με το νόημα (with meaning).

T: Yes, thank you.

M2: //Πρέπει να το γράψουμε κυρία; (Should we write them down?)

T: No, we are going to do it orally. Have you written them down in your copy?

M2: Τώρα, τώρα κυρία. (now, Miss)

**Excerpt 5**

T: Αυτή τη στιγμή τα παιδιά παρακολουθούν τηλεόραση. (The children are watching TV now.)

M1: The children are watching TV now.

M2: Yes, we use watching, not looking, έτσι δεν είναι κυρία; (Isn’t it so, Miss?)

T: Exactly.

T: Η Ελλάδα είναι μια όμορφη χώρα.

F: Greece is a very beautiful χώρα (country).

M1: Country, country! Είναι χώρα στα αγγλικά. (It’s country in English.)

M2: Γαλλία (France) is also beautiful.

T: country. Correct!

T: Συναντώ τους φίλους μου κάθε Σάββατο, Αβραάμ.

M3: I meet my friends every Sunday, σωστά κυρία; (correct, Miss?)

M1: //Saturday! Σαββάτο είναι Saturday στα αγγλικά. (It is Saturday in English.)
In excerpts 4 and 5, M1, M2 and M3 do not change the topic the teacher starts talking about, neither do they disagree, so their interruption qualifies as a floor – taking interruption, with the intent ‘to obtain the conversational floor’ (Murata, 1994: 389). The teacher’s positive feedback ‘yes, exactly, correct’, which acknowledges M1’s knowledge of prepositions in excerpt 4 and M1’s and M2’s knowledge of foreign words in excerpt 5, denotes that student contributions to classroom talk are highly valued, even if they are interruptive. In excerpt 5 we have a kind of interruption that is not related to opposition, instead it is primarily supportive and collaborative in nature. For example, according to James and Clarke (1993: 239), Edelsky (1981) finds that interruption is a signal of a high degree of involvement in conversation or task performance. Participants interrupt each other and talk simultaneously to develop an idea together and produce a joint answer to a question.

The overall number of interruptions displays significant gender differences. Moreover, the function of interruptions reveals that male students have mostly intrusive interruptions, whereas female students take more interruptive turns of the cooperative kind.

**Excerpt 6**

T: Natalia, please the next one.

F1: What are all these boxes? … Μηζό ιεπηό. (Just a moment.)

F2: They are Aunt Helen’s.

T: Go on, Natalia.

F1: My feet are cold. Where are my slippers?

F2: //slippers
In excerpt 6, for instance, the female student takes an interruptive turn of the cooperative type as opposed to male students who have mostly intrusive interruptions, and apply interruption as a means of assistance to her partner. This is in accordance with Holmes’ (1995) statement, that women tend to provide more supportive comments and encouraging feedback.

**Excerpt 7**

T: Για να δούμε… (pause) next word is ζωολογικός κήπος (Let’s see… next word is *zoological garden*). Τι σημαίνει ζωολογικός κήπος; (What does ζωολογικός κήπος mean?)

M1: Το ξέρω! (I know it)

T: I know that you know. Do not disturb others! Mike, how would you translate ζωολογικός κήπος?

F2: Και εγώ το ξέρω, να πώ; (I also know it, can I say?)

M1: Σταμάτα! (Stop it!)

In excerpt 7 the class has just listened to a text and now they are talking about it and the teacher is picking out example sentences and words for the students to translate. This excerpt is interesting in many ways. First of all, in terms of gender, the teacher initiates a question and when no response has been produced, one of the male students (M1) takes over in providing the answer. The teacher does not seem to be annoyed by this fact, but goes on discussing further with another male student. This kind of behavior from the teacher indicates that she notices when male students call out answers, but moves on to another male student. It also seems that the male students are coming between the teacher and the female students, because they might sense that they have more power in the classroom than the female students have. This has been proved in the
study of Coates (2004: 126) who argues that ‘it seems that men pursue a style of interaction based on power, while women pursue a style based on solidarity and support’. She also discusses that men pursue competitive behavior while women pursue cooperative behavior. Moreover, this is consistent with the dominance approach (Chapter II) whereby the female sex is seen as the subordinate group whose difference in style of speech results from male supremacy. This results in a primarily male-centered language.

**Excerpt 8**

T: Where do we watch films, Maria?

F1: Δύσκολο είναι κυρία, δεν ξέρω. (It’s difficult, Miss. I don’t know.)

M1: //circus….in circus …we watch films in circus, Miss

F1: circus

T: Sorry?

F1: circus… at the circus.

M2: //τί λές; (What are you saying?)

T: At the circus? Do we watch films at the circus, Saki?

M2: //at the cinema. I know the word.

T: Good job! Thank you, Saki.

In excerpt 8 the teacher turns to a female student to answer the specific question initiated by her. Following this, the female student responds that she does not know the answer and immediately one of the male students tries to help the female student by producing a response that is incorrect. The female student then repeats the male student’s utterance but the teacher does not hear the female student’s response and asks
her to repeat by saying sorry. The female student repeats her answer, however, it is still not the correct answer, so the teacher gives feedback by saying that the word circus is not correct. It is interesting here to note that the teacher does not correct the male student’s wrong answer but she corrects it only when the female student utters it, although she did not know it herself but she repeated it after the male student offered to help her. Before she gets to the correct answer, another male student (M2) interrupts and responds. The response is the one the teacher was looking for, so she gives positive feedback to the male student. Therefore, again a male student gets a credit for the correct answer, and as Roger and Schumacher (1983) and Roger and Nesshoever (1987) find, dominant or competitive interruptions, like the one used by M2 in excerpt 8, are used frequently when one wants to convince others.

Excerpt 9

T: Number 2. Open your homework 10.
M1: Δεν είχαμε δουλειά! (We did not have any homework)
T: (to a girl) Start reading, please!
F: (reading) Do not look back! Somebody ….(pause)
M2: //αυτή δεν το ξέρει. (she does not know it)
F1: Do not look back! Somebody is following us.
M3: //present continuous tense.

This excerpt is interesting when considering it in terms of gender bias and differential teacher treatment. Most part of teacher-student classroom interactions occur between male students and teacher. However, as this example illustrates, interactions between teacher and female students also involve some of the male students in some form of
interruptions, which the teacher allows to happen. This example confirms findings of
the previous study by Maltz and Borker (1982) who state that, as opposed to women’s
talk, men interrupt more often, they are more likely to challenge the other speaker’s
utterances and also, men sometimes provide no response to the other’s comments.

Excerpt 10

M: (reading) Don’t worry! There is a trampoline below them. Acrobats often fall
onto trampolines.
F1: Great performance, Tony! You can open your eyes now.
F2: //Τί είναι trampoline κυρία; (What is trampoline, Miss?)
F3: below θα πει πάνω η κάτω; (below means up or down?)

As for the function of interruptions in examples mentioned above, all of them (excerpts
4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9) are intrusive except for one (excerpt 10), where a vocabulary
problem occurs and the current speaker is interrupted by a suggestion in Greek about
the word she was searching for. This kind of interruption is neither clear competitive
nor clear cooperative, this is neutral, which is a term coined by Goldberg (cited in James
& Clarke, 1993: 240). As seen in excerpt 10, we have some instances of interruption, in
which the interrupters (F2, F3) do not want to take the floor on purpose and there is no
support or agreement. In a word, they are neutral cases of interruptions.

Excerpt 11

T: (giving homework on dialogue) Boys, attention! You will write in your copies,
ok?
M: Κυρία, δεν θέλω με το μολύβι! (I do not want to use a pencil!)
T: That is the policy!
M: Αλλά δεν θέλω. (But I don’t want to.)
T: Write with a pencil, I will check with a pen!
M: Δεν θέλω. (I don’t want to.)

Excerpt 12
T: Anna, please, you will be the second speaker in the dialogue.

M1: //Κυρία, μια φορά δεν μας έχετε βάλει! (Miss, you haven’t chosen us even once!)

M2: //Και εμείς, αγόρια, θέλουμε να διαβάσουμε. (We, boys, too, want to read).

T: Ok, you will read the next dialogue, ok?

In excerpts 11 and 12 male students argue against the teacher and start speaking despite the fact that the teacher has not reached a completion point in her turn and would have continued explaining the assignments to be done at home in excerpt 11. Therefore, male students’ utterances may qualify as interruptions expressing disagreement in their interruptive turns, a finding which is also noted by Holmes (1995), who suggests that men tend to interrupt more often, and when they get the floor they are more likely than a woman to challenge and disagree with the speaker. Moreover, these two excerpts illustrate patterns of one type of verbal initiative from the student’s part what Pavlidou (2003) calls ‘the non-compliance’. She defines it as ‘any sort of opposition coming from
the students and being directed towards what the teacher is saying or doing. Such opposition can be in the form of a disagreement or argument, or even conflict and dispute’ (p. 3).

Excerpt 13

T: Find the missing words and do the puzzle! Please open page 10.

F1: //I have already done it! The first word is

M1: //ένα περισσεύοντα κυρία. (one is extra, Miss)

M2: το πρώτο είναι το picture (the first one is picture)

M3: //εγώ μάλλον το τρίτο δεν το βρήκα (perhaps I haven’t found the third one)

F2: Miss, can I say the next word?

In excerpt 13, contrary to females’ cooperatively interruptive style, the male students in this example mostly use interruption in order to take the speaking floor from their female peers. The results of our study are in line with the finding in most studies, such as Tannen’s (1992) and Coates’ (2004) who argue that men often use explicit and aggressive commands and directives to get the upper hand in conversation to protect themselves psychologically from being pushed around.

Comparing teachers’ perceptions with our observations, we can see that in questionnaire responses the participants reported statistically significant gender differences for the variables turn taking and interruption, indicating that male students outnumbered female students in both cases. Similarly, findings of observations have revealed that male students dominated more in turn taking and interruptions than their female peers.
In sum, due to the imbalanced power relationship, instances when a student interrupts the teacher are rare. Still, those rare instances display a gender difference in how often and for what reason male and female students use turn taking and interruptions. In the collected data, male students interrupted the teacher more often than females. However, the significant gender difference does not lie in the frequency but rather in the functions of interruptions. The examples have shown that male students mainly interrupted their teachers and female speaking partners intrusively, whereas female students’ interruptions were mostly cooperative. In other words, male students were more willing to prove their competence and promote their knowledge even via interrupting the teacher, whereas female students were less assertive, which is not only shown by their significantly smaller number of contributions, but also by the fact that they did not use interruption to engage in interaction with the teacher.

These results confirm findings of previous studies that men interrupt women more often than women interrupt men (West & Zimmermann, 1975; Holmes, 1995). Also, women are more cooperative conversational partners, whereas men show a greater tendency to compete for the speaking floor (Tannen, 2001).

The findings of the study showed that the teacher took significant shares of turns by interrupting which could be due to the teacher’s personality. That means that the teacher interrupts to say something while the student is speaking and clarifying the message he or she is trying to convey. This may motivate students to make a meaningful conversation, which requires a great responsibility and attention for a particular classroom interaction. Thus, studying and analyzing the management of turn-taking and interruption is a further step for understanding the process of socialization.
5.1.2 Approval /Disapproval

A student’s performance at school is determined not only by his/her intellectual ability, his/her knowledge, and his/her skills in different subjects, but also by his/her motivation. In educational contexts, stimulating and motivation enhancing incentives play a great role in student’s performance. Pupils usually strive for such external incentives and make active endeavors to attain them. School marks are, for most pupils, important motivation-enhancing factors. However, other forms of evaluation are also important as motivation, not least verbal incentives in the form of praise and blame by the teacher. It is generally assumed that praise improves and blame impairs performance (Johannesson, 1967). Moreover, positive teacher attention and praise have been recognized as powerful influences on student performance in the classroom (Alber & Heyward, 2000).

Research carried out on gender differences in classroom interaction (Lakoff, 1975; Spender, 1980; Swann & Graddol, 1988; Croll & Moses, 1990; Corson, 1993; Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Cameron, 1997; Sunderland, 1998; Younger et al., 1999; Pavlidou, 2001; Myhill, 2002) shows several areas of interaction where teacher’s behavior differs according to the gender of the student. Thus, this subsection focuses on differential teacher behavior toward male and female students concerning distribution of praise and blame.

The importance of teacher response with regard to the use of contingent praise and reprimands has been thoroughly researched by behavior analysts in educational settings; they have repeatedly demonstrated that contingencies of reinforcement mediated by teachers have a powerful influence on student’s classroom behavior (Wheldall & Merrett, 1984; Merrett, 1986; Wheldall, 1987; Wheldall & Merrett, 1989;
And as Orestrom (1983: 105) argues, “feedbacks have a positive effect and show support to the current speaker to achieve consensus between the conversational participants”, in our case teacher and the students.

At this point, it is important to clarify what is meant by each topic discussed in our study. Addressing a student directly refers to a ‘universally used activation technique in teaching, mainly within the Initiation-Response-Feedback pattern’ (Ur, 1991: 228). This describes a situation when the teacher addresses a student in the form of a question, a statement or a command. Teacher disapproval is defined as ‘verbal criticism, reproach, or a statement that indicates that student’s behavior should change from being unacceptable to being acceptable by the teacher’ (White, 1975: 368).

In the present study we employ the definition of feedback offered by Ur (1991). Feedback is meant to stand for assessment, correction and comment given by the teacher to the students about their performance (Ur, 1991). Praising is considered a kind of positive feedback, since it gives students information about their performance. Offering praise means increasing student’s satisfaction and promoting the self-confidence (Dornyei, 2001).

Research Question 2: Are there any gender differences in receiving praise and positive comments?

Research Question 3: Are there any gender differences in getting blame and reprimand from the teacher?

Research question 2 asked if male and female students receive equal amount of praise and positive comments from their teacher. To address this question, we asked
participants who they give more praise/positive comments to in class (questionnaire item #12).

Research question 3 asked if male and female students get equal amount of blame/reprimand from the teacher. To address this question, we asked participants who gets more blame and/or disapproval from them (questionnaire item #6).

The questionnaire results indicated significant differences between male and female students in receiving praise and blame from their teachers. Relevant research has shown that male students are found to receive more negative attention in the form of reprimands, while female students receive more positive attention supporting learning (Younger et al., 1999; Jones & Dinda, 2004).

Similarly, the findings of this study have revealed that teachers state that they blame and reprimand more their male students, whereas female students, on the contrary, receive more positive comments and encouragement from their teachers during EFL classroom interaction. The following excerpts from our data illustrate such cases:

**Excerpt 14**

T: (to a boy) I was going to give you a grade for participation. Where is your participation? It’s going to drop down.

M: But I speak good English. Wait a second! Don’t clean the blackboard.

T: Ok, complete the sentence using Present Continuous Tense.

M: John is on the ladder. *He is holding on with his hands.*

T: Great! Good job!
Excerpt 15

T: Exercise A is to match the beginning of the sentence on the left with the correct ending on the right. Ελένη, ξεκίνα. (Eleni, begin)

G: (reading) When I grow up I really want to (pause)

F: //be a doctor. 'Ετσι δεν είναι κυρία; (Isn’t it so, Miss?)

T: Yes, exactly, very good! Manoli, take out your book, otherwise you will leave the classroom!

M: Θέλω να μείνω! (I want to stay)

T: Ok, then read the next sentence.

M: (reading) Flying in a plane (pause) makes me feel nervous.

T: You are great! Good for you!

It’s obvious in the excerpts illustrated above that in response to students’ academic behavior, when in excerpt 14 and 15 male students provide grammatically correct sentences, teachers used praise statements (‘Great’, Good job’, ‘You are great’, ‘Good for you’) and not disapproving comments, whereas in response to students’ classroom social behavior they used reprimands (‘Your participation is going to drop down!’, ‘Take out your book, otherwise you will leave the classroom!’). In excerpt 14, the teacher’s reprimand is in the form of a warning, that the student’s grade for participation is going to drop, and in excerpt 15 the teacher warns the student that if he does not behave properly in class, he will leave the classroom.

Comparing teachers’ perceptions with our observations, we can see that in questionnaire responses the participants said they believed that their treatment toward male and female students is not differentiated based on students’ gender and that they give equal amount of praise to students of both genders. Nevertheless, the observations
suggest that this is not the case. Teachers seem to be biased in favor of female students, especially in respect of encouraging them more as shown in the excerpts below. This may happen of course, because girls are more reluctant to speak, less confident, etc.

Excerpt 16

T: Κατερινάκη, γράψε το πρώτο. (Katerinaki, write the first one.)

F: Δεν μπορώ κυρία, δεν ξέρω. (I can’t, Miss. I don’t know.)

T: //Μπορείς, έλα! (You can do it, come on!) It is not difficult at all.

F: (writing on the blackboard) You are not allowed to smoke on this airplane.

T: Και υπογράμμισε γιατί όλα που υπογραμμίζουμε μπαίνουν στο τεστ. Αντε αστέρι μου! (And underline it, because everything we underline will be in the test. Come on, my star!)

F: Υπογραμμίζουμε to smoke; (We underline to smoke, don’t we?)

T: Yes, exactly! Well done! A very good job!

In the feedback in excerpt 16 the teacher does not accept the female student’s self-criticism about her skills and abilities. Instead, she encourages the student to complete the task, claiming that the task is not difficult at all and that she can do it. Such behavior is expected to boost students’ academic involvement in classroom interaction. Furthermore, in this excerpt we can observe the use of the so-called behavior-specific, contingent praise (BSP) by the teacher directed to the student’s effort as opposed to an expression of evaluation of the individual. As Burnett (2001) claims, the power of Behavior Specific Praise in changing student behavior is that it both indicates teacher approval and informs the student about how the praised academic performance or behavior conforms to teacher expectations. Moreover, Akin-Little et al. (2004)
maintain, that as with any classroom reinforcer, praise has the ability to improve academic or behavioral performance - but only if the student finds it reinforcing.

Excerpt 17

T:  Δεν το πιστεύω στα αγγλικά λέμε … (Δεν το πιστεύω in English we say…)
M1:  I can’t believe it!
T:  What do we know about believe?
M2:  it is a stative verb.
T:  What other stative verbs do you know?
M2:  like, dislike
T:  any girls who know other verbs?
F1:  understand, have, remember
F2:  // love
T:  Come on, come on, Konstantina!
F2:  need, want
T:  Good for you! Well done!

In excerpt 17 the teacher begins the piece of discourse with an initiation that is addressed to the whole class. After male students’ (M1, M2) interactions with the teacher, the teacher turns to female students to contribute to classroom discourse, by asking them to give other stative verbs they know. What is interesting to note is that female students (F1, F2) immediately produce verbs and thus get more involved in classroom interaction. But this happens only after the teacher has addressed specifically female students and encouraged them to participate.
Excerpt 18

T: Katerina, please give me the past form of the verb smell.
F: smell?
M1: Δεν είναι smelt κυρία; (Miss, isn’t it smelt?)
M2: Ναι, smelt.
T: Μια λεπτό. (Just a moment.) Έχει δικαίωμα να σκεφτεί. (She has the right to think). Έλα κοριτσάκι μου! (Come on, my girl!)
M1: Αφού το είπα. (But I said it)
T: Ok, good John! It’s obvious from your participation that you worked hard to prepare for irregular verbs.

Excerpt 19

F: (writing on the blackboard) I used to live in a small village when I was young.
T: Κλείνε κοριτσάκι μου. Μην φοβάσαι, δεν δαγκώνει! (Conjugate little girl, don’t be afraid, it can’t bite you!)
M: //Κυρία, έχω απορία. (Miss, I have a question.)
T: (ignores him)
F: I used to, you used to, he used to
T: //You see, you can do it!

Here, excerpts 18 and 19 are interesting in the way that, while praising the student, the teachers focus on specific examples of students’ efforts or accomplishments: ‘It’s obvious from your participation that you worked hard to prepare for irregular verbs.’ (excerpt 18). Again, in excerpt 19, the teacher makes every effort to encourage the female student to carry out the task at hand. Moreover, after she receives the correct answer, she gives a personal positive feedback, saying that the student is capable of
doing what she has been required, thus giving the student more confidence in her abilities. And as Burnett’s (2001) findings appear to suggest, ‘‘when praise singles out work-products, it can help students to see a direct link between the effort that they invest in a task and improved academic or behavioral performance’’ (p. 22).

The findings of this study are in line with the findings of the study carried out by Chen (2005), who reported that in spite of the fact that there was no statistically significant gender imbalance in terms of attention allocation from the teacher in the classroom, female students tend to receive more positive responses from the teacher than male students do.

**Excerpt 20**

T: Let us begin with you my lady! You know it! Let’s begin with exercise A.

F1: The passenger *asked* if he could smoke on the airplane. *Asked* here is an introductory word, Miss.

T: Exactly. Thank you my lady!

F2: //Το πρώτο δεν το είπε κυρία! (She did not say the first one, Miss!)

T: Και πώς θα ναι; (And how will it be?)

F2: Helen *asked* me which restaurant we were going to.

T: Very good! Go on to the next exercise please.

The initiation addressed to a female student in excerpt 20 begins with the statement ‘*You know it!*’, thus encouraging the female student from the beginning. Besides giving the correct answer, the student also adds more information about the sentence she just read, saying that asked in the sentence functions as an introductory word. The teacher
accepts the answer, praises the student and moves on to another female student (F2) who states that the first sentence has not been read by her classmate. The teacher takes this into consideration, and after receiving the correct answer from the student, gives her a positive response.

**Excerpt 21**

T: Apostole, this is my last warning! Stop talking! You, Aphrodite, begin, please!

F1: (reading) *To shout/shouting* is not allowed in library.

T: Now, correct the sentence putting a tick on your copies.

F1: *Shouting* is not allowed…

F2: //It’s gerund, is it?

T: Μπράβο (good for you), at the beginning of the sentence we use gerund.

**Excerpt 22**

T: (reading the task of the exercise) Write the following sentences in interrogative and negative forms. Καταλάβατε; (Understood?) Τώρα κάντε αυτή την πρόταση interrogative and negative. (Now, make this sentence interrogative and negative).

F1: (reading) He *used to study hard*. *Did he use* to study hard?

T: Ναι, όρα! (Yes, fine!) Write it on the blackboard please!

M1: Κυρία, αλλάξτε την κιμωλία. (Miss, change the chalk). Δεν φαίνεται τίποτα! (Nothing can be seen!)

M2: //Κιμωλία είναι chalk στα αγγλικά, δεν το ξέρεις; (Κιμωλία is chalk in English, don’t you know it?)

T: Οκ, τώρα. (Ok, now). Κορίτσια, κάντε τώρα *used to* go to the cinema last year. (Girls, now do used to go to the cinema last year.)

F2: Did Kate use to go to the cinema last year?
F1: use χωρίς d (use without d). In interrogative form we use without –d
T: Ναι κορίτσια, πολύ ωραία! (Yes girls, very good!)

The situation in these excerpts is the same as in excerpt 20. Here again, the female students not only call out the task given, but also grasp the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge about a structure, and thus add more information about the sentence. The teachers approve of their answers in both cases and praise them for their contribution. This form of interaction between the teacher and the student is a key element in our research since the more the teacher addresses the student, the more involved the learner is, and, according to Dornyei (2001), the more the student is required to become an active participant of an activity, the more likely he or she finds the learning situation stimulating which is one of the most important issues in successful language learning.

Excerpt 23

T: (reading) The Bedouins are people. They live in the desert. Ποιός μπορεί να το πει αυτό με μια πρόταση; (Who can say this in one sentence?)
F: Μπορώ εγώ κυρία; (May I, Miss?)
T: Για πες Νίκη την άποψή σου! (Come on, Niki, tell me your opinion!)
F: The Bedouins are people who live in the desert.
T: Good job, Niki! You did it! You used who because the Bedouins are people and not things.

As Hawkins and Heflin (2011) state, ‘praise statements that lack a specific account of student behavior are compromised as they fail to give students performance feedback to
guide their learning’’ (p. 98). For example, praise statements that we have seen in previous examples, such as ‘Good’, ‘Fine’, ‘Very good’, ‘Good for you’ are inadequate because they lack a behavioral description. However, such statements become acceptable when expanded to include a behavioral element as the one in our excerpt 23, ‘Good job, Niki! You did it! You used who because the Bedouins are people and not things’.

The excerpts given below show instances when the teacher’s attention to students is differentiated depending on the gender of the student.

Excerpt 24

T: Open homework on page 29, please. Here we go. Mike, give me the synonym to end.
M1: τέλος! (end)
T: Ναι, στα ελληνικά είναι τέλος. (Yes, in Greek it is τέλος.) Τώρα the opposite. (Now the opposite)
M2: begin
T: The synonym?
M2: start
T: Good job. You are very clever. Now life παιδιά (children). Give me the opposite.
M1: death. The opposite is death, Miss.
T: Πολύ ωραία παιδιά! (Very nice kids!) Boys are very active! Good job!

Excerpt 25

T: Αλέξη, γιατί δεν άνοιξες το βιβλίο να δεις πώς να το γράψεις; (Alexi, why didn’t you open the book to see how to write it?)

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M: Εγώ το σημείωσα κυρία. (I have marked it, Miss)
T: Oh, that is not bad at all! No problem for you. Very good!

Excerpt 26

T: *Shelley had her teeth checked by the dentist.*
M1: //κυρία, κυρία (Miss, Miss)
T: I see you are not following me. What has happened?
M2: Κυρία (Miss), he is bothering me! He steps on me!
T: Your English is very good, Mike! Good job and good English!

As it can be noticed in excerpts 24, 25 and 26, the more the teacher pays attention to male students, the more likely it is that she praises them more. Of course, it could have been the opposite, i.e., the more the teacher pays attention to them, the more she may possibly blame them; but this is not happening in this case. More frequent interactions with male students seem to correlate with higher praise. Moreover, we should admit that, in contrast to female students receiving praise and general comments in the form of encouragement from their teachers, male students in excerpts 24, 25 and 26 receive a less standard, a little bit more personalized praise (‘Good job. You are very clever!’, ‘Oh, that is not bad at all! No problem for you. Very good!’, ‘Your English is very good, Mike!’). Moreover, it may be the case that female students are encouraged proactively, while male students are praised as a response to what they say in class.

As for addressing the student directly by calling their names, the excerpts below indicate that teachers addressed male students more frequently than females as literature suggests (Sadker & Sadker, 1994).
Excerpt 27

T: Mike, now write down Acropolis is the most ancient building in Greece.
M: Δεν θέλω να το κάνω! (I don’t want to do it!)
T: Θα πάω στο γραφείο και θα σου πούνε εκεί τι να κάνεις. (You will go to the office and they will tell you what to do)
M: (coming back to class)
T: Please, δείξε μου τι έγραψες. (Please show me what you have written)
M: Τίποτα. (Nothing)
T: Θα το γράψεις στο διάλειμμα, όμως θα το γράψεις! (You will write it during the break, however, you will write it)
T: (later) Έγραψες τα καθήκοντα; (Did you note down the homework?)
M: Όχι, κυρία. (No, Miss)

Excerpt 28

T: Write Lefteri! Πού ταξιδεύεις; (Where are you? Are you daydreaming?) Πάνε και κάτσε στη θέση μου. (Go and sit in my place)
M: Να πάω να κάτσω εγώ εκεί; Γιατί να το κάνω; Δεν θέλω. (Should I go and sit there? Why should I do it? I don’t want to. )
T: Yes, you! I don’t want you to disturb your peers!
T: Maria, stand up and conjugate the verb play.
G: I play, you play, he
T: //Ελα, έλα, προχώρα! Μην με κουράζεις! (Come on, continue! Don’t make me tired!)
M: he plays, she plays, we play, you play, they play

Excerpt 29

T: Λάη, διάβασε!
The findings of our study suggest that male students are more likely than female students to be reprimanded during EFL classroom interaction, and this is in accordance with empirical evidence throughout the research literature (Wing, 1997; Younger et al., 1999; Francis, 2000; Jones & Dinda, 2004). In the excerpts illustrated above we can see instances when the teacher begins the piece of discourse with initiation that is not addressed to the whole class, but to a specific male student. The students being addressed directly by their teachers do not want to conform to classroom rules and even come out with a protest. They explicitly express their dissatisfaction with the teacher’s demand to behave well in class and do their assignments.

**Excerpt 30**

T: What is a desert? Eσύ αγόρι μου! (You, my boy!)

M1: Κυρία το ξέρω εγώ, ομώς δεν θυμάμαι! (Miss, I know what it is, but I can’t remember)

T: Σε παρακαλώ, κλείστε το στόμα σας για λίγο γιατί και οι άλλοι ξέρουν αλλά δεν κάνουν φασάρια. (Please, shut your mouth for a while because others also know it, but they don’t make noise.)

M2: Είναι έρημος. (desert)

T: How about you girls?

M1: το ήξερα! (I knew it)

T: Does any of the boys know what a race is? You, Niko?
It is interesting to notice that in excerpt 30 after one of the male students has answered the question regarding the word ‘desert’, the teacher re-initiates the question to the female students. One more feature of gendered talk is worth mentioning here; again the teacher specifically targets the female students as a group by saying ‘How about you girls?’ When no response is produced, the teacher quickly moves to another question. The second initiation is about the meaning of the word ‘race’, and now instead of referring to female students, the teacher chooses a male student to answer the question.

5.1.3 Dominance

Dominance is dealt with as a construct that emerges through the interactional choices of interlocutors who tend to make powerful assertive moves and resist compliance with the moves of others (Goodwin, 2006). The question to be asked is whether dominance is sex-linked or rather linked to one’s achieved position of power within mix-sex groups in classroom.

Research in classroom interactions shows that male students tend to dominate the classroom in whole class settings. They contribute more to discussions, attract more attention through misbehavior and tend to dominate the physical settings (e.g. using computers, doing experiments, Tinklin, et.al, 2001).

The focus of this section is to examine students’ behaviour in classroom in order to see whether teachers actually favoured males over females by allowing male students, probably unconsciously, to dominate the interaction.
Research Question 4: Are there any gender differences with regard to student dominance in EFL classroom interaction?

Research question 4 asked if student dominance in EFL classroom interaction varies based on their gender. To address this question, the participants in questionnaire item #7 were required to state who dominates the classroom interaction time, male or female students. Related to this is the questionnaire item #3, which asks the teacher participants of our study who initiates more interactions with them in class.

Our findings contradict evidence that in gender-mixed groups, girls play an active role in positioning themselves in the hierarchy and domination (Kyratzis & Guo, 1996; Farris, 2000; Cook-Gumperz & Szymanski, 2001; Goodwin, 2001, 2006), which is also confirmed by Lytra (2007), who shows that primary school girls at the age of 10 present themselves as equally assertive and competent teasers as their male peers in gender-mixed interactions (p. 210).

On the contrary, the results of the present study are compatible with the conclusions of other studies, which show that in the discourse of Greek adults as well as in classroom discourse in Greece, women are dominated by men (Altani, 1992; Pavlidou, 1999; Makri-Tsiliapakou, 2002). This cooperative behavior is also observed in the classroom setting by Archakis (1992), who found that girls interrupt the teacher less often than boys, but also that most of the girls’ interruptions are cooperative, whereas most of the boys’ intrusions are of the dominant kind. Our analysis of interactions in the EFL classroom, as in Archakis’ study (1992), yielded that girls (19.5%) participate to a lesser extent in dialogues with the teacher, but also they develop less verbal initiative in class than boys (61%).
Excerpt 31

M1: (You/mind/close) the window? Mind you closing the window?
T: Ok, διάβασε εσύ! (Ok, you read)
M1: Mind you closing the window?
T: No, there is a question mark. So… (pause)
M2: //Do you mind closing the window?
M3: Can’t we say would you mind…?
T: Yes, of course, we can. That’s right! So, there are two answers.

As seen in excerpt 31, during the oral participatory activity on making sentences by the words given, participation occurred by self-selection, the order of turns not being determined in advance. This means that students could contribute to lesson and bring up new grammatical forms as and when they wished. Moreover, it is interesting to note here that participants’ (M1, M2 and M3) self selection is approved of by the teacher who gives them more freedom to volunteer.

Excerpt 32

T: What does it mean here when it says game is over?
F: It means συνεχίζει (goes on).
M1: Στον υπολογιστή όταν λέει game is over κυρία, θα πει έχασες. (On computer when it says game is over it means you have lost, Miss.)
M2: //έχασες (you have lost).
M3: τελείωσε. (It’s over.)
T: Ναι, τελείωσε. (Yes, it’s over.)
In excerpt 32, similarly to the uneven distribution of the amount of talk between male students and the teacher, and female students and the teacher, as expressed by the number of turns they take, the frequency of interruptions initiated by the two genders respectively also shows a considerable difference between male and female students which results in classroom dominance. Most of the turns are contributed by males (M1, M2 and M3). Only once in excerpt 32 does a female student take a turn to answer the teacher’s question on the translation of the phrase *game is over*.

**Excerpt 33**

M1: What now? We haven’t got any water and I’m thirsty.

F: And I think I’m ill. I am hot and my head hurts.

M1: That’s because the sun in the desert is strong. Let’s use the blanket which is on the camel to build a tent.

T: Hold on, please. You know what *a blanket* is?

M2: *Ναι, σεντόνι* (Yes, a sheet).

F: *Όχι, κουβέρτα* (No, it’s *κουβέρτα* (blanket).)

M3: *Μήπως μαξιλάρι;* (perhaps pillow?)

M1: // *κουβέρτα* (blanket)

T: Yes, you are right. Είναι κουβέρτα. (It’s *κουβέρτα*)

F: Εγώ το είπα! (I said it!)

M1: *Ναι, και εγώ το είπα!* (Yes, I also said it!)

T: Thank you boys!

The fact that the task in excerpt 33 is to guess an unknown word from the dialogue that students are reading, and that students participated voluntarily, makes the task highly competitive. We can see there is no specific gender based distribution of turns. The
number of turns compared, it seems that the competitiveness of the task does not influence the female students’ interactional style to be more assertive, as it is only one female student who interrupts in order to provide the word meaning. Males therefore outweighed females in interrupting, thus resulting in classroom dominance.

**Excerpt 34**

T:  *Daddy is shopping and*

M1:  *and buy some new dresses.*

T:  Παιδία, ταυριάζει το νόημα; (Guys, does the meaning match?)

M2:  Ναι, ναι, κυρία. (Yes, yes, Miss)

T:  Καθόλου δεν ταυριάζει! (It doesn’t match at all!) Ο μπαμπάς να πάει να πάρει φουστανάκι; (Daddy to go and buy a dress?)

M1:  Ναι, για τη γυναίκα του. (Yes, for his wife.)

M3:  for his wife, Miss.

The task in excerpt 34 is to match the beginning of the sentence on the left with the correct ending on the right. Here the excerpt displays classroom discourse dominated exclusively by male students. The teacher does not choose a specific student for the exercise but starts reading the first part of the sentence given. M1 comes out with an incorrect answer, choosing the wrong sentence from the second column, which does not match the first sentence uttered by the teacher. Afterward, a question is addressed to students whether the two sentences match. Despite the fact that one of the male students (M1) gives a wrong answer that is rejected by the teacher, the other two male students (M2, M3) argue against the teacher, trying to convince her that the two sentences can match.
Excerpt 35

T: As we know, we use the Present Perfect Simple to describe actions that happened in the past and that

F1: //and that have some connection to the present, έτσι δεν είναι κυρία; (isn’t it so, miss?) T: Yes, of course, you are right! Μπορείς σε παρακαλώ να μας πεις λέξεις κλειδιά; (Could you please give us the keywords?)

F1: Δεν σας κατάλαβα, κυρία. (I didn’t understand you, Miss.)

F2: Time expressions Eleni! …already, just

F3: //never, ever

F4: Υπάρχει και ένα állo! (There is one more!) to since

T: Ναι, και αυτό υπάρχει. (Yes, that one too.) Thank you girls!

Excerpt 36

F1: She asked: ‘How much does it cost?’ This becomes She wanted to know how much it cost.

T: Τί έχουμε εδώ λοιπόν; (So what do we have here?)

F2: Έχουμε έξυπνα, το ίδιο έχουμε. (We have cost, it’s the same.)

F3: cost – cost – cost παραμένει (it remains the same)

F2: //the same form.

T: Yes, exactly, we have the same form. Thank you.

Examples of female dominance can be seen in excerpts 35 and 36. Regarding gender differences, female students initiate interactions with the teacher in class. The first initiation comes from the teacher when the teacher explains the use of Present Perfect Simple tense. One of the female students (F1) takes a turn and continues the teacher’s statement. The second initiation of the teacher indicates that the teacher is not satisfied
with the statement of F1, but wants her to provide the keywords used in Present Perfect Simple tense. When F1 declares that she does not understand the question, another female student (F2) responds, by paraphrasing the word keyword suggested by the teacher. In the meantime, two more female students (F3 and F4) in class call out different time expressions that the teacher has asked for. A similar kind of incident appears in excerpt 36, where right after the teacher’s initiation directed to F1, other female students (F2 and F3) call out the correct answer, to which, as in the previous excerpt, the teacher reacts by giving feedback in the form of praise. The teacher does not seem to be annoyed by the fact that one of the female students called out the answer and interrupted the interaction between her and another student.

Surprisingly, as displayed in excerpts 35 and 36, female students contribute actively while trying to express their knowledge in grammar, which results in classroom dominance. This contribution can be accounted by the fact that female students’ interruptions may possibly be related to the content/focus of interruption. Female students are better at rules/grammar than male students because they usually study more; they memorize them. And so, they feel more confident to interrupt.

**Excerpt 37**

T: Please, write the comparative and superlative form of the following adjectives (sunny, happy, funny, heavy)

F1: sunny-sunnier, happy-happier

T: Thank you. What about happy?

F2: happy-happier

T: Thank you. So what happens here?

F1: θεύγεη –γη (we drop -γη) και βάζομε –ιερ (and add –ier)
F2: we drop the –y
T: Yes, correct, we drop the – y. Now we will do it in practice.
F1: //and sunniest, happiest
F2: superlatives
T: Yes, and if it’s more than two syllables?
F2: βάζουμε (we add) more and most, dangerous - more dangerous - the most dangerous
F3: beautiful - more beautiful - the most beautiful
T: Good job, thank you.

Here, in excerpt 37, similar to the previous excerpts 35 and 36, female students contribute more to the lesson probably because same-gender partners are involved in interaction. In this excerpt, the teacher begins this piece of discourse with an initiation that is addressed to the whole class. After one of the female students gives the right answer, the teacher re-initiates the question to other students. The teacher accepts the answer with a positive feedback but also provides more examples in order to continue the discussion. According to a framework for analyzing classroom interaction called Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT) provided by Walsh (2006), this kind of behavior from the teacher is one form of scaffolding, where the pedagogical goal is to extend a learner’s contribution. Responses are produced by female students and the initiations by the teacher.

**Excerpt 38**

T: Για πέστε μου πως σχηματίζεται ο μέλλοντας; (Please, tell me how we form the future tense.)
M1: future?
T: Yes, future.
M2: Μήπως κάποιο will θέλει; (perhaps somewhere it needs will?)
F: Να πω εγώ; (Can I say?)
M1: To will το έχουμε, μετά όμως τί μπαίνει; (we have will, but what comes next?)

In excerpt 38, the teacher’s question is not immediately followed by an answer, either by male or female students in class. Instead, M1 comes up with a clarification request. He asks the teacher to clarify by repeating in English the grammatical tense the teacher has just asked for in Greek. After receiving positive feedback from the teacher, M2 enters conversation suggesting his own answer. Thus, male students (M1 and M2) dominate interaction not giving floor to the female students who also wish to participate.

Excerpt 39

T: He has …(pause) eaten his lunch.
M1: Already! He … he has …eaten his lunch.
F: //already eaten

M1: Yes, he has already eaten his lunch.
M2: //we have time expression here.
M3: Yes, like sometimes, never.
T: Oh, good! You know it!

In excerpt 39, apparent from his pause and repetition, M1 is having difficulties in expressing himself right from the beginning of his turn, but only towards the end does a female student interrupt by completing M’s turn with a brief clause and then lets him
take the floor back again. Immediately after regaining the floor, two other male students (M2 and M3) come up with additional information, thus dominating classroom discourse.

Excerpt 40

T: (dictating) so *look* becomes
M1: *looks*
M2: we add –s
T: Τώρα γράφουμε εμπορικό κέντρο. (Now we write shopping center)
M1: Cosmos κυρία! (the shopping center Cosmos, Miss)
T: (ignores M2) θαλάσσιο πάρκο (waterpark)
M3: Το βρήκα! (I have found it!) Έχω πάει εκατό φορές! (I have been there a hundred times!)

Excerpt 41

T: Now I want you to change the sentences into indirect speech by putting the verbs in colour into the correct tense. You, please, start reading.

M1: ‘I will send you a message soon’, said Ben. Πλάγιο λόγο κάνω τώρα ε, προσέξτε! (I am changing it to indirect speech, now, watch me!)
T: Yes, Niko, continue.
M1: *Ben said he would send me a message soon.*
T: Thank you Niko.
M2: *Ben told me he would send me a message soon.*
T: Yes, that is also possible.
M2: Βλέπετε; Το ξέρω! (You see, I know!)
T: Yes, you know it, thank you.
The competitive nature of interaction accounts for the girls’ silence in excerpts 40 and 41. The excerpts demonstrate male students’ greater willingness to complement their peers’ performance with further ideas, considering that they know something more, and thus dominating classroom interaction.

**Excerpt 42**

T: Exercise C. Put the adjectives in brackets in the correct order in the sentence. You, Ann, please, can you do it?

F: No.

M1: (reading) *What a table!* (antique, beautiful) *What a beautiful antique table!*

T: Hmm, correct!

M2: Πρώτα πάει opinion. (First comes opinion.)

T: Ναι, σωστό, opinion! (Yes, correct! Opinion)

M1: Και μετά τα υπόλοιπα. (And then come the rest.)

T: You are totally correct!

As mentioned above, excerpt 42 is also an example of male dominance, because it again shows how the male students call out answers, even though the question is pointed out to a female student. During the excerpt the class is going through the correct order of adjective use. As can be seen in excerpt 42, the teacher asks Ann if she can put the adjective in the correct order in the sentence. Right after she responds ‘*No*’, one of the male students produces the correct answer in which the teacher reacts to by giving feedback. The teacher does not seem to be annoyed by the fact that one of the male students called out the answer and interrupted the interaction between the teacher and one of the female students.
Excerpt 43

T: Here we should complete the sentence with the words given below.

F1: (reading) *It is dangerous to drive ...*

F2: Amazed!

T: Όχι Νατάσα. (No, Natasa.)

M2: Thirsty!

T: What is thirsty?

M2: α ναι, διψασμένος είναι. (Ah yes, thirsty is διψασμένος)

M1: Fast!

T: Yes, of course. *It is dangerous to drive fast!*

Excerpt 43 illustrates an example where the teacher uses the word No as a feedback with one of the female students without any further Initiation, which does not happen with any of the male students. But when a male student calls out again an incorrect answer, the teacher keeps the conversation going by asking the meaning of the word the student has produced.

Excerpt 44

T: In the sentence *I enjoy fishing* what is *fishing*? Ποιός θα μου πει; (Who will tell me?)

T: George, what is *fishing*? Come to the board please!

M1: Εγώ κυρία; (Me, Miss?)

T: Yes, you heard me! Come and write *I enjoy fishing*.

M1: (writing) I enjoy fishing.

T: And underline twice the verb enjoy. Now, what is *fishing* here?
M1: Ahh...

F: Ψάξεκα. (Fishing.)

T: Όχι. (No). George, I don’t want you to translate it! What is fishing grammatically?

M2: Ahh, it’s a gerund.

T: Ok, thank you.

M2: Μπορώ λα πσ θαη ην άιιν, θπξία; (Can I say the next one too, Miss?)

In excerpts 43 and 44 the differences in the teacher’s feedback to males’ and females’ responses was examined and the findings seem to indicate that there are some patterns where the student’s gender plays an important role. The teacher’s attitude towards male students’ responses and the attitudes towards the females’ responses were compared and the findings showed certain differences in the teacher's behavior, especially when the student produced an incorrect response. As the data is closely examined, it also shows clear patterns of male dominance.

At a first glance, this example looks like a normal conversation between the teacher (T) and one of the male students (M1). Nevertheless, clear sequences of IRF can easily be found, which indicates that instead of naturally occurring conversation, this is a typical pattern of males’ classroom dominance. The piece of discourse begins with the teacher’s Initiation, where the teacher first addresses the question to the whole class and then rephrases the question to one of the male students.

The piece of discourse continues between the teacher and M1, where the student responds ‘ahh’ to the teacher initiation. The teacher keeps the conversation going by re-initiating as the student has not provided the grammatical form which the teacher is expecting. After the response (ahh, it’s a gerund), feedback is given (Ok, thank you).
Thus, immediately after receiving short feedback from the teacher, M1 produces another initiation.

Excerpt 45

T: When do we use Present Simple Tense?
M1: Στη τώρα. Αυτό που γίνεται τώρα. (Now. Something that is happening now.)
T: For example, *I go to school every day*. Which tense is this?
M1: Α, θυμήθηκα. Αυτό που κάνουμε συνεχώς. (Oh, I remembered. It is something that we constantly do.)
M2: Γενικά κάνουμε. (We usually do.)
T: Niko, can you help? Which are the Present Simple keywords?
M2: *now, at this moment*
T: Hmm…
M1: //να πω και εγώ ένα; (may I say one?)
T: Yes, of course, you can.

In excerpt 45, the male student’s response to the teacher’s question is not a correct one, or the kind of response the teacher is looking for. Afterward, the teacher contributes to this concealment of failure by giving a sentence in Present Simple Tense to help the male student in the subsequent course of interaction. But the response is not correct again. Here, another male student (M2) initiates participation by himself, and the teacher takes notice of his attempt and gives him floor to participate and display his knowledge as M2’s utterance demonstrates that he realizes the correctness of the teacher’s statement. Then, M1 again volunteers to give keywords in Present Simple Tense, and the teacher gives him the opportunity to do so.
Comparing teachers’ perceptions with our observations, it is observed that in the questionnaire responses the participants reported that mostly male students dominated classroom interaction time; this is also confirmed by our observations.

To sum up, based on our data, the overall pattern is that male students benefit more from teacher-student interactions, which supports prior research concluding that teacher-fronted interactions are dominated by boys (Sunderland, 1992).

On the whole, as the excerpts clearly show, the negotiation of positions of power in teacher-student interactions is related to the gender of the students. Male students in the conversational episodes of these data exhibit a strong tendency to preserve their independence, resisting female students’ efforts to participate more in class activities.

5.1.4 Distribution of Teacher Attention

Over the last three decades, there has been a continuing concern with differential teacher attention to male and female students in the classroom. The issue of who gets the teacher’s attention and who dominates classroom interactions prompts questions about equity of educational opportunity for students sharing the same classroom environment. It is apparent from the research literature that sharing the same physical space with the same teacher does not necessarily equate to a shared or common teaching and learning experience (Beaman et al., 2006).

Researchers have variously interpreted differential teacher attention to male and female students as being an issue of gender politics, of problem behaviour, and of academic or social competence.
Research Question 5: Are there any gender differences with respect to demanding and getting more teacher attention?

Research question 5 asked if male and female students demand and receive differential teacher attention. To address this question, first the participants in questionnaire item #10 were asked who demands and who gets more teacher attention, male or female students.

What is interesting about teachers paying more attention to male students is that even though teachers think they are distributing their attention equally or even consciously trying to give more attention to females, studies show that this is usually not the case. According to Spender (as quoted in Sunderland 1992: 88), after studying numerous transcripts, those teachers who thought they had spent more time with the girls, had in fact spent the minimum of 58 percent with the boys and a teacher who had spent 34 percent of her time with the girls had reported that ‘the boys were complaining about me talking to the girls all the time’. One problem that can rise from this is that male dominance can become natural in the EFL classroom (Sunderland 1992: 88).

Our findings are in accordance with the views of teacher respondents in our study and of feminist researchers writing in 1970s and 1980s, one notable example being Spender (1982) who claimed that gender imbalances are so routinized and expected in classrooms that even when teachers are trying to equalize attention, girls get only one-third of teacher’s time while boys get two-thirds of teacher attention as a ‘fair deal’. He argued that ‘in a sexist society boys assume that two thirds of the teacher’s attention constitutes a fair deal and if this ratio is altered so that they receive less than two thirds of the teacher’s attention they feel they are being discriminated against’ (p.57).
Our findings also corroborate the findings of previous studies (Brophy & Good, 1970; Stanworth, 1981; French & French, 1984; Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Younger et al., 1999; Duffy et al., 2001; Tsouroufli, 2002; Swinson & Knight, 2007) by supporting the assumption that male students tend to ask more questions and are more likely to offer to contribute to discussion. As a result, they get more attention from the teacher as illustrated in the examples below:

Excerpt 46

T: Exercise B, please. Write the sentences in direct speech.

F1: Mary said that she might go to the museum the following week. ‘‘I might go to the museum next week,’’ said Mary.

F2: John told me that he had just bought a new shirt. ‘‘I have just bought a new shirt,’’ said John.

M1: Κυρία, ακόμη δεν έχω καταλάβει πως γίνεται. Μπορείτε να μου πείτε; (I still haven’t understood how we do it. Can you please tell me?)

M2: Ούτε εγώ. (Neither have I.)

F1: Πώς να καταλάβεις αν δεν ακούς και μας ενοχλείς; (How are you supposed to understand if you are not listening and disturbing us?)

T: Boys, we are changing the sentences from indirect speech into direct speech, ok?

M1: Πλάγιος λόγος δηλαδή; (You mean indirect speech?)

T: Yes, from indirect speech into direct speech where following becomes next.

Excerpt 47

T: Please, sit properly and get ready for the lesson. Alex, you too, turn around and get ready.
M1: Κυρία, δεν έχω το copybook εδώ. Στο σπίτι το έχω. (Miss, I don’t have my copybook here. I have it at home.)
T: Have a look, maybe it’s there.
M1: Όχι κυρία, το έψαξα. (No, Miss, I have searched for it.)
M2: Όχι εγώ έχω. (Neither have I.)
T: Κάθε φορά το ίδιο Αγγελε. (Every time the same situation Aggele.)
F: Can I read, Miss?
T: Yes, please, Maria.

The examples above show that male students’ contributions dominate regardless of whether the discussion concerns school subject content, class management or student behavior. In excerpt 46 M1’s utterance is a new initiation regarding the task at hand that the teacher and the two female students are carrying out. Its interactional feature is a clarification request. In the next line M2 comes out with the statement (Neither have I) that he also, like M1, did not understand how they do the task and asks the teacher to clarify it. Here the teacher seems to have a pedagogical goal of keeping the conversation going by extending the learner’s contribution. Again, in excerpt 47, male students (M1 and M2) get teacher attention because of their social behavior in class and not proper preparation for the lesson.

Excerpt 48

F1: (writing on the blackboard) Jenny phoned me today and told me that they were going to Champs – Elysees because she had heard that the shops there are very special.

T: George? Βλέπεις εδώ αγαπούλα μου; (Are you looking here my love?)
M: Ναι, κυρία, αλλά τι κάνουμε εδώ; (Yes, Miss, but what are we doing here?)
T: Be more attentive please. And stop dancing!

Excerpt 49

T: George, number three, please.
G: Ποιά σελίδα κυρία; (Which page, Miss?)
T: You didn’t even open the page.
G: Please show me the page. Είναι αυτό εδώ, το τρία; (Is it this one, number three?)
T: Yes.
G: Είναι αυτό εδώ που λέει direct speech; (Is this the one which says direct speech?)
T: Yes, and try to be more attentive.

Again in excerpts 48 and 49, the male students ask for clarification from the teacher, because they still cannot understand the task. As a result, they get teachers’ attention that reprimands them for not behaving properly in class and for not being attentive during class.

Excerpt 50

T: Δίπλα στο It’s my Fault γράψτε It’s my mistake. (Next to It’s my Fault write It’s my mistake.)
M1: Συνώνυμο είναι έτσι; (It’s a synonym, isn’t it?)
T: Yes, you are correct. Thank you for your information.
M2: Συνώνυμο όταν έχουν το ίδιο νόημα, έτσι δεν είναι; (They are synonyms when they have the same meaning, isn’t it?)
T: Yes, I see you are very active today. Thank you.
M3: Κυρία, τι σελίδα; (Miss, which page?)
M4: Ναι, πού είμαστε κυρία; (Yes, where are we, Miss?)

T: Σελίδα 26. (Page 26.) New words to be learnt at home.

M3: Α, πάρα πολλά είναι. (Oh, they are too many.)

F: Καλά είναι, δεν είναι πολλά. (They are ok, they are not too many.)

T: Please, do what I said.

Excerpt 50 is one of the examples in our study when extended explanations are more likely to come from boys, with girls’ contributions often being linked to simple statements of fact. In this excerpt, one of the male students (M1) receives teacher attention when he says that the sentences *It’s my fault* and *It’s my mistake* are synonymous. As a result, he receives positive feedback from the teacher for providing this information. Immediately after that another male student (M2) makes an attempt to extend explanation given by his male peer by defining the word *synonym*. Here again, he gains teacher attention and her praise for being very active in class.

Excerpt 51

T: Mike, did you do this? on page 26?

M: Exercise A, Miss? (surprised)

T: Yes, on page 26.

M: Hmm…Νομίζω πως όχι. (I think I did not.)

T: Very bad, Mike. So, *Musa’s wife (throw) the mirror into the river*. How about you, girls?

F1: *Musa’s wife threw the mirror into the river.*

T: Ok. *What can Liz use to protect her face?* Did you get that? Maria, what would you say?

F2: I don’t know.
T: Mmm, Ann? Any idea?

In excerpt 51 the teacher singles out one of the male students and asks him if he has done the exercise. In her initiation she even repeats the page number where the exercise is, because she notices that it came as a surprise to Mike that she asked him the question. This is an easy way to get student’s attention, when he is not paying attention to what the teacher is saying. Mike’s response shows uncertainty and surprise. The teacher gives negative feedback, but also wants the student to answer correctly. What is also worth noticing, in this excerpt in terms of gender bias, is how again the teacher refers to the female students as a group.

Comparing participants’ answers with our observations, we can see that in questionnaire responses the participants said they believed that they pay equal attention to male and female students in class. However, our results suggest that this is not the case. The respondents in our study are biased in favour of males particularly in cases when they address them. This issue confirms what Sadker and Sadker (1994: 81) claim, viz., that the teachers not only engaged with male students more, but they also failed to perceive it.

Micro-inequities occur daily in classroom interactions as in excerpt 52, where we can observe that female students receive fewer academic contacts and encouragement than their male peers. Sadker and Sadker (1994) maintain that this imbalance in attention, coupled with the quality and quantity of interaction, may reduce girls’ levels of achievement and self-esteem.
Excerpt 52

T: Please, give me the three forms of the verb give. You Mike!

M1: give – gave – given

T: Ok, thank you, next one, over there, Simos?

M2: understand – understood – understood

T: Your answer is also correct.

F: see – saw - seen

T: If you want to speak, raise your hand, please.

M3: forget – forgot – forgotten

In some cases, the differences in teacher’s treatment of male and female students are quite apparent. Teachers tolerate more calling out from males than from females. When male students call out in excerpt 52, the teacher listens, thus reinforcing their behavior. But when a female calls out, the teacher reminds her to raise her hand if she wants to speak. Males are more likely to use their English regardless of whether they consider their knowledge of language to be good. They take risks, as opposed to females who only use the language if they feel that their English is good. Even when males do not volunteer, teachers are more likely to encourage them to give an answer or an opinion than they are to encourage females.

Excerpt 53

T: Please, open your Companion and let us see the exercise on page 9, please. We are here boys!

T: (writing on the blackboard) start – begin, finish – end...

M1: Και εγώ πρέπει να γράψω; (Should I also write?)
T: Yes, Thanasi, everybody is writing. You too, Saki.

M2: *finish – end*

T: Yes, write the word end on your book, Saki. Be attentive please.

T: Have you done Exercise D at home? You had to insert prepositions here.

M2: Yes, Miss. Κυρία, όλο αυτό έκανα και όλο αυτό. (Miss, I have done all these ones and these ones) (showing the copybook)

T: Εσύ Κώστα την έκανες ἢ πάλι ξέχασες; (You Costa, have you done it or did you forget again?)

M3: Την έκανα κυρία. (I have done it, Miss.)

In excerpt 53 the assignment is to find synonymous words from two columns. We should mention that in excerpts 52 and 53 the teacher had to pay attention to boys because otherwise, they were not engaged with tasks, or they distracted other students’ attention. Moreover, male students misbehave more than females, and the teacher tries to observe where misbehavior is anticipated. Certainly, the teacher looked more intently at male students. Here, we may refer once again to the study by Graddol and Swann (1994), in which boys were gazed at by their teachers approximately twice as often as girls. In excerpt 53 again, teacher attention was paid to male students when the teacher asks M2 and M3 whether they have done the exercise they were supposed to do at home.

Based on the results of our study, it can be concluded that female students are in a disadvantageous situation in the classroom. Males usually receive more attention from the teacher and are addressed more often regardless of whether they raise their hand or not. Some possible explanations for this might be that males tend to be more active and willing to speak, they are not afraid of taking risks when it comes to speaking as in
excerpts 50 and 52. Moreover, the need for disciplining male students seems relevant as well, which might contribute to males having more chances to speak and get attention.

Our study is in accordance with the study of Sadker and Sadker (1994), where teachers call on and interact with males more often than with females. This is probably not intentional. During the numerous teacher-student interactions that occur over the course of the school day, male students use creative and effective techniques to draw the teacher’s attention. They quickly raise their hands to respond or contribute to discussions, wave their hand around and up and down, change the arm they have raised when it gets tired, jump out of their seat and make noise or ask the teacher to call on them. Female students, however, raise their hand but they will soon put it down if they are not acknowledged. As a result, teachers call on males and interact with them most of the time, while females’ passive, compliant behavior often means they are ignored.

Thus, it can be said that the teachers in our study are unaware that they pay more attention to male students. Thus, while we acknowledge that teacher bias can be responsible for more attention being provided to males, we can assert that ‘remediation of male biased teacher attention’ (French & French, 1984) alone may not be sufficient to bring about the shift in interactional bias favoring male students that exists in classrooms. As French and French (1984) state, teachers must also become sensitive to the interactional methods used by students themselves (in this case largely boys) in ‘securing attention and conversational engagement’, and that in the main the strategies female students use remain ‘invisible’ to teachers (p.133).
5.1.5 Class Participation

Research on classroom interaction in general, and class participation in particular, is dominated by studies of young adults (Fassinger, 1995; Consolo, 2000; Duff, 2000; Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Duffy et al., 2001; Hall & Walsh, 2002; Nabei & Swain, 2002); less is known about the dynamics of classroom settings containing children.

Turning our attention to student behavior, we find a clear trend: male students participate in classes more than females do (Brooks, 1982; Wingate, 1984; O’Keefe, 1987; Banks, 1988; Crawford, 1990). Female students perceive themselves as less involved in class interaction (Crawford, 1990; Kramarae, 1990).

In this subsection our main dependent variable is class participation. We define class participation as any student comments offered or questions raised in class during EFL classroom interaction. This definition enables us to investigate classroom interaction in oral class activities. Three questions comprised our measure of class participation. Teachers were asked whether there are any gender differences in their choice of students for class participation; whether the male students are given more power to talk in class; and who they have more instructional exchanges with in class.

The main question to be asked is whether class participation on the whole is gender differentiated in classroom interaction or not. This perplexing question is important because, whether one’s reference is a written task-oriented or a discussion-oriented class, student participation seems to nurture critical thinking. Facilitating students’ willingness to raise questions or offer comments in class is likely to enhance their intellectual development.
Research Question 6: Are there any gender differences regarding class participation during EFL classroom interaction?

Research question 6 asked whether class participation is gender differentiated in the behavior of male and female students in classroom interaction. To address this question, the participants were asked if they select their students for class participation based on their gender (questionnaire item #13). Associated with this, is the questionnaire item #9 which asks the teacher respondents who they give more power to, space to talk in their class, male or female students. Besides, questionnaire item #5 can also be useful here as it aims at examining who the teachers have more instructional exchanges with in their class, male or female students.

There is evidence in the study by Swann and Graddol (1988), that boys are favoured when teachers come to choose pupils to answer their questions. However, the same study also shows boys ‘chipping in’ more than girls in a relatively informal classroom where pupils were not explicitly selected, a finding that has been confirmed by Bousted (1989) and Sadker and Sadker (1985). The latter found boys eight times more likely than girls to call out in class. Likewise, findings of this study indicate that the teacher’s choice of the student for class participation is gender differentiated favouring male students as illustrated in the following examples:

Excerpt 54

T: Whom will I choose to come to the blackboard?
F: May I?
M1: (raising hand) May I come, Miss? Εγώ, εγώ! (Me, me!)
T: Ναι, οραία, έλα Στέλιο. (Fine, Stelio, come please.)
M1: You must know that she tried to be the first woman pilot to fly around the world.

T: Τώρα υπογράμμισε το modal verb. (Now, underline the modal verb.)

M1: You must know that she …

M2: Όμως δεν είναι to know the verb? (But shouldn’t to know be the verb?)

T: Εγώ θέλω modal verb. (I want the modal verb.)

M2: Then it is correct. Πρέπει να είναι το must. (It should be must.)

The example provided in the excerpt above confirms Graddol and Swann’s (1989) claim that ‘boys’ greater participation in classroom talk comes about because of an interaction between the teacher’s behavior and that of the pupils’ (p. 72). Keeping in mind the research question, we need to pay attention to the teacher’s choice of students for class participation regarding their gender. In excerpt 54, in spite of the fact that the teacher formerly did not have in mind someone specific to choose for writing the sentence on the blackboard, she chooses a male student (M1) and ignores the female student’s willingness for participation, even though she called out and asked for permission to speak. And one of the male students (M1) makes himself relatively prominent by hand-raising.

Excerpt 55

T: Read the next one, number five. Please, Niko.

M1: Are you coming next Friday? She wanted to know

F: //if I was coming

T: Yes, Ann, please.

F: So, we have

T: What do we have?
F: So, we have direct question here?
T: Yes, exactly.
F: So, she wanted to know if ...
T: Ναι;
F: if I
T: Τί θα γίνει εκεί; Δεν το είπαμε; (What will we have here? We said it, didn’t we?)
M2: You γίνεται (becomes) I
T: Now read the whole sentence, please.
M2: She wanted to know if I was coming the following Friday.
M1: Κυρία, next Friday εδώ γίνεται following Friday, έτσι; (Miss, next Friday here becomes following Friday, isn’t it?)
T: Yes, exactly! Very good!

Some features of differential teacher treatment can be seen in excerpt 56. In spite of the fact that the teacher chooses one of the male students (M1) for participation in oral exercise, the floor is passed on to a female student who interrupts her male peer and takes a turn to continue. First of all, the teacher makes several questions easier for the girl by continuing the feedback with initiations and trying to rephrase and simplify her question. Secondly, the teacher is much more cautious with the female student than with the male students in her feedback. The teacher keeps the conversation going with male students as well, but not with such blatant simplification of the questions. However, it is possible that the teacher does so with the particular girl, because she is a weak student, and thus this may not be due to her gender.
Excerpt 56

T: What’s a wheel? You, please, Leonidas.

M1: Εγώ, κυρία; (Me, Miss?)

T: Yes, you, please.

M1: ρόδα (wheel)

T: Could you please repeat what you said and its equivalent in English?

M1: ρόδα είναι (is) wheel

M2: //Να κάνουμε με τη σειρά κυρία; (Let us do it in turns, Miss).

T: Yes, please.

M2: They never stay at the same town for more than a week.

T: So, what time expression do we use here? And what other time expressions do we know with Present Simple?

M2: We have never here. We also know sometimes, always, often.

T: Thank you, one more please.

M1: Sorry?

M3: Η δασκάλα λέει μια ακόμη. (The teacher says one more.)

M1: Α, τώρα το κατάλαβα. (Now I got it.)

In addition to allowing male students more time to respond, as shown in excerpt 56, the teacher extends boys’ answers by asking a follow-up question or by asking them to support their previous response. There are more examples that show teacher’s attitude towards both male and female students in the classroom as illustrated below:
The teacher’s attitude to female students can be seen in excerpt 57, when the teacher initiates a sentence and before choosing Katerina to answer, she says that the sentence is easy. What is interesting about this is that after the teacher has implied that the task is easy, she chooses a female student to answer it. In addition, while Katerina is producing her response, the teacher helps her, although the student does not need any help.

The female students were treated as a separate group, as the teacher many times referred to the females as a group and not once did this happen with the male students, who were always referred to by their first names as in excerpts 55 and 56. Contrary to the examples given in excerpt 56, female students in excerpt 57 simply receive an ‘accepted’ response from the teacher such as ‘Ok, good, girls!’. Such instances are also illustrated in the excerpts 58 and 59 below:

**Excerpt 58**

T: Έλα Ελενίτσα στον πίνακα, γράψε ότι σου λέω και πρόσεχε! (Elenitsa come to the blackboard, write down everything I am telling you and be careful! ) *If I study hard every day, I’ll pass my exams.*
M1: Ευτυχώς δεν σηκώθηκα! (Fortunately I didn’t stand up!)

T: Please Georgia, come to the blackboard. Τι είναι αυτό; (What’s this?) (showing the sentence by a stick)

F: Όταν έχουμε ρήμα στον ενεστώτα (pause) τότε έχουμε πρόταση στον μέλλοντα. (When we have the verb in present simple tense, then we have the sentence in future simple.)

T: Συνέχισε, τι άλλο έχουμε; (Go on, what else do we have?)

M2: Να πω εγώ; Έχουμε εξαρτημένη πρόταση. (May I say? We have a dependent clause.)

T: Μπράβο, σωστά! (Good for you, correct!)

Excerpt 59

T: Now, please, read the examples in orange letters.

M1: Ποια κυρία; (Which one, Miss?) I want to read the examples.

T: Εκεί κάτω. (The ones below) (pointing to the examples in the book)

M1: What / the woman / in / the red costume / do/ ? What was the woman in the red costume doing?

T: Σωστά. Πές το πάλι. (Correct, say it again.)

M2: What was the woman in the red costume doing?

M1: Το είπα και πριν έτσι. (I said it like that before.)

T: Το έξρω, ήθελα να ακούσω ο κόσμος. (I know it. I just wanted the others to hear that again.) So, what tense do we have here?

F1: Past continuous tense.

T: Ok, thank you.

The excerpts 58 and 59 have similar patterns of teacher feedback regarding students’ class participation. Although the situations in each excerpt may differ and other differences in the interaction between the teacher and the students can be found, the
feedback sequences are almost identical. These sequences of discourse usually indicate acceptance of the student’s response and are a quick way of giving positive feedback and encouraging them for class participation.

Comparing teachers’ perceptions with our observations, we can see that in questionnaire responses the participants did not report statistically significant gender differences for the variable *class participation*, indicating that their treatment toward male and female students is not gender specified. Nevertheless, the results stemming from the observations suggest that this is not the case. Teacher respondents during our observations are biased in favour of male students with respect of selecting them for class participation. These findings are in accordance with the views of Constantinou (2008), who reported that ‘the overall ratio of teacher-student interaction favoured males’ (p. 29). McDonald (as quoted in Constantinou, 2008: 29) points out that teachers usually have more verbal and positive interactions with boys than with girls. In addition, teachers give male students more corrective feedback than they do with female students (Daunbar & O’Sullivan as quoted in Constantinou, 2008: 29). The following excerpts illustrate such examples:

**Excerpt 60**

F1:  (reading) *A button fell off my new jacket, so I had it sewn on by a friend.*  
M1:  *sewn*  
T:  What’s is *sew* do you know?  
M2:  (raising hand)  
T:  Yes, please. What is *sew* do you know?  
M2:  Yes, of course.
T: Για πες! (tell us)
M2: βλέπω (to see)
T: No, βλέπω means see
M2: είδα (saw)
T: No, it’s the past form of the verb to see. Please, Mike, come to the blackboard and write down the following words: see, sea, she, sew, sow
M1: ράβσι ενα κομπι (I sew a button)
T: Yes! Good job!

**Excerpt 61**

T: Ann, please, go on with the next example.
F1: I can’t carry the heavy parcels, so I will have them brought home.
M1: Τί είναι parcel; (What is a parcel?)
T: Ποιός θα μου πει τί είναι parcel; (Who will tell me what is a parcel?)
M2: (raising hand) May I?
T: Για πες Γιώργο. (Please tell us George.)
M2: δώρο (a present)
T: όχι ακριβώς (not exactly)
M2: δέμα (a parcel)
T: Yes, now you are right, thank you, George.

An issue in terms of gender bias that cannot be ignored in excerpts 60 and 61 is that the teacher refers to male students when they show willingness for active participation in class activities and gives them corrective feedback, contrary to the excerpts 62 and 63.
Excerpt 62

T: Now please, Maria, complete the passage with the correct form of the verb in brackets, using the causative form of the verb, ok?

F: King George had the outside of the Palace (design) designed in Indian style and he had the inside (decorate) decorated in Chinese style.

T: Ok.

M1: Κυρία, preposition in θέλει εδώ ναι; (Miss, it requires preposition in here, doesn’t it?)

T: Yes! You are very attentive. Repeat, please. In

M1: // in Chinese style

M2: επίσης (also) in Indian style

T: Correct.

M1: Και όταν λέμε δύο φορές του χρόνου λέμε twice a year, not twice in a year, yes? (And when we say δύο φορές του χρόνου, we say twice a year, not twice in a year, yes?)

T: Exactly.

Excerpt 63

T: Which are the keywords of the Present Perfect Tense?

F: (calling out) already

T: Hmm…ok.

M1: yet, never

T: Αχ, μου αρέσει, προχώρα! (I like it, please go on.)

M2: for, since

M3: May I come and write it on the blackboard, Miss?

In excerpt 62 the teacher begins the piece of discourse with an initiation addressed to a female student for class participation. The situation which occurs in excerpt 62 indicates
that the female student carries out the task that is required to be done, but does not go further, whereas male students’ (M1 and M2) interactional features seem to be extending the learners’ contribution by providing more information on the task. In the excerpts illustrated above, as we can observe, the teacher does not seem to give female students more power to talk and thus be more active in class participation. Her feedback consists of some form of minimal responses such as hmm and ok that are repeatedly used in these excerpts.

As we can see, gender plays a great role in classroom interaction and is a significant component in class participation, where males are more likely to offer comments or raise questions in class, as it is observed in the following excerpts:

**Excerpt 64**

M1: (reading) King George had the most modern equipment (to install) *installed* in the kitchens in order to have the best meals cooked for his many guests.

T: Good, thank you.

M2: (raising hand) Μισό λεπτό. (Just a moment)

T: Yes, please.

M2: Τι σημαίνει install; (What does install mean?)

M3: (raising hand) Miss, may I?

T: Yes, please.

M3: τοποθετώ (to install)

M1: *To put* δεν είναι συνόνυμο στα αγγλικά; (to put is its synonym in English, isn’t it?)

M3: Εγώ το είπα στα ελληνικά, και αυτό σωστό δεν είναι; (I said it in Greek, isn’t it also correct?)

T: Right!
In excerpt 64 it is evident that male students make themselves relatively prominent; this suggests that teacher’s choice may be a reflection of ‘visibility’ rather than gender *per se*. And the most obvious manifestation of this lies in hand-raising. Likewise, Swann and Graddol (1988) found that teachers tend to select the student whose hand goes up first, and this student is likely to be a boy. Male students have been shown by Good et al. (1973) and Morgan and Dunn (1988) to be more impatient than their female peers during classroom activities and their nonverbal communication in the form of hand-raising may attract attention which is also found in our study.

**Excerpt 65**

T: Please be attentive with the diphthong sh.

M1: *shop, ship, she, shall*

T: Τώρα, αγόρια, προσέξτε το hour. (Now, boys, mind the word hour.) Please, Niko come to the blackboard and write the next sentence.

M1: *We only go to school for three hours a day because most of us perform in the circus too.*

M2: //βάζουμε -h (we put -h)

M1: *Ναι, αλλά είναι εντελώς άφωνο. (Yes, but it is voiceless.)*

In the excerpt above the teacher begins this piece of discourse with an initiation that is addressed to the whole class. Instantly, examples with the diphthong *sh*- are produced by one of the male students (M1), and the teacher’s attention is immediately turned to male students in class, giving them more power and space to talk. Consequently, male students get more academically involved in classroom interaction. Moreover, male students are also likely to be the focus of attention even before the questions are asked.
Excerpt 66

T: What’s a fair?
M1: γούνα (fur)
T: No, others please.
M2: ferry boat
M3: Μήπως παραμύθι; (Perhaps a fairy tale?)
T: No, fairy tale είναι παραμύθι, τώρα fair. (No, παραμύθι is a fairy tale, now it’s fair.)
M1: ἐκθεσθή (fair)
M3: Α, εκεί κοντά στο Λευκό Πύργο. (The one next to the White Tower.)
M2: Έχω πάει εκεί. (I have been there.)
M3: Και εγώ. (Me too.)

In the excerpt above we cannot observe any issue of gender bias from the part of the teacher in the selection of students for class participation; however, only male students come up with their active participation in word guessing. Firstly, one of the male students (M1) takes over by giving the answer. However, the answer given by the student is not correct and he receives negative feedback from the teacher. And almost immediately, the teacher shows a tendency to encourage more student participation regardless of the gender by soliciting student responses. As a result, only male students participated, volunteering their answers in guessing the word ‘fair’.

Of course, accepting that some male students contribute extensively is not the same as accepting that the contributions made by these male students are in any way superior. Quantity does not after all guarantee quality.
One possible explanation for the boys’ superiority in managing interactions can be drawn from the work of Maltz and Borker (1982). They argue that girls and boys learn to do specific things with language within their gender-segregated peer groups. In their social world the girls mainly learn to establish relationships of equality and closeness. The social world of boys, on the contrary, ‘is one of posturing and counterposturin... Storytelling, joke telling, and other narrative performance events are common features… A major sociolinguistic skill which a boy must apparently learn in interacting with his peers is to ride this series of challenges’ (Maltz & Borker, 1982: 207-208). Accordingly, the methods of successful participation in the classroom discourse following the tripartite scheme (giving answers, immediately adjusting to the actual turns and new questions of the teacher, etc.) seem to be more related to the conversational routines of the boys than those of the girls.

As Beaman et al. (2006) believe, one way of breaking destructive cycles of gender stereotyping and overcoming the oppositional construction of gender that may be damaging to student participation is available to teachers (p. 358). By employing classroom strategies, positive teacher-student relationships can be developed, and teachers can play a role in ensuring that all students (irrespective of gender) receive the respect and educational opportunities they deserve as individuals. Moreover, developing student confidence could be the teacher’s first step in promoting class participation.
5.2 Concluding Remarks

This chapter presented a discussion of the major findings of the study concerning gender-specific features in interaction patterns, such as turn-taking, interruptions, distribution of teacher attention, praise and reprimand, as well as teachers’ choice of students for class participation and classroom dominance. Moreover, we tried to discuss teachers’ perceptions about their way of teaching and their engagement with students according to their gender. We also discussed the discrepancies between our observations and those perceptions. In Chapter VI: Conclusion and Suggestions for Further Research, firstly, the major conclusions of the study are drawn. Furthermore, the contributions of the present study, implications for practice, as well as limitations of the study will be discussed. In addition, directions for further research will be suggested.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This concluding chapter aims at summarizing and presenting the final conclusions of the thesis in light of the findings of the present study. After this the contributions of the study as well as its limitations will be discussed. Finally, the avenues for further research will be outlined and suggestions will be made concerning possible areas worthy of future exploration.

There has not been much research done on gendered discourse in the language classroom, and even though gender has been quite widely investigated in foreign language education, there are still very few studies of gender and interaction in the FL classroom.

The purpose of this study is to fill a gap in the research of gender in the language classroom in the Greek context as it has been neglected. Thus, the main aim of the present study was to explore and determine whether the gender of the learner affects the learner’s language use and behavior during EFL classroom interaction in primary schools in Greece.

6.1 Findings of the Study

The study was set out firstly to explore if there are any differences between male students and female students, in terms of turn-taking in conversation as a central issue in classroom interaction and an important constituent of teaching-learning process with a particular focus on interruptions. Based on the results of our study, it can be concluded
that female students are at a disadvantageous situation in the foreign language classroom. With regards to gender differences in turn-taking, the findings suggest that male students take more turns in classroom interaction, and as to the frequency of interruptions, male students interrupted more frequently in teacher-student interaction as well as in peer interaction, which confirms previous findings (Holmes, 1995; Chavez, 2001).

However, the significant gender difference in the present study does not lie in the frequency but rather in the functions of interruptions. The notion that women behave cooperatively in conversations as opposed to men’s competitiveness (Tannen, 2001) has been confirmed by the functions that male and female students used interruptions for. Regarding the gender difference in cooperative interruptions, an interesting result found in the present study is that female students used interruptions mainly for cooperative reasons, such as providing assistance or expressing agreement, whereas male students interrupted intrusively with the aim to gain the speaking floor or to express disagreement. Moreover, another appealing result is that the interruptions are more frequently initiated between opposite-sex speakers than between same-sex speakers, which has not been seen in previous works.

The present study focused also on the interaction between the teacher and both male and female students in terms of providing approval or disapproval (i.e. positive and negative feedback). In terms of the research question as to in what way the teacher reacts and gives feedback to her students’ responses, some interesting conclusions can be made. The teachers used praise and reprimands in response to students’ academic behavior regardless of the gender of the student, whereas in response to student’s classroom social behavior they mostly used reprimands, usually addressed to male students.
Regarding the interaction between the teacher and the students, significant differences are found in teachers’ reactions to male and female students’ responses in the classroom. Teachers seem to be in favor of female students especially in respect of encouraging them more and giving them more positive feedback. This can be attributed to the fact that girls are more reluctant to speak, they are less confident, and thus experience what the literature calls “loss of voice” (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Orenstein, 1994). This form of interaction between the teacher and the student is a key element in our research since the more the teacher addresses the student, the more involved the learner becomes, and, according to Dornyei (2001), the more the student is required to become an active participant of an activity, the more likely he or she finds the learning situation stimulating, which is one of the most important issues in successful language learning.

Furthermore, findings of our study suggest that male students are more likely than female students to be reprimanded during EFL classroom interaction for their inappropriate behavior, and this is in accordance with empirical evidence throughout the research literature (Wing, 1997; Younger et al., 1999; Francis, 2000; Jones & Dinda, 2004).

Another important focus of the current study is the examination of gender differences with regards to student dominance in interaction. Based on the findings of the observations in four classes, it was concluded that male students dominate the class more than their female peers. On the whole, our results corroborate findings of previous studies which show that in the discourse of Greek adults as well as in classroom discourse, women are dominated by men (Altani, 1992; Pavlidou, 1999; Makri-Tsilipakou, 2002). Girls’ cooperative behavior is also observed in the classroom setting by Archakis (1992), who found that girls interrupt the teacher less often than boys, but
also that most of the girls’ interruptions are cooperative, whereas most of the boys’ intrusions are of the dominant kind. Our analysis of interactions in EFL classroom as in Archakis’ (1992) yielded that girls participate to a lesser extent in dialogues with the teacher, but also they develop less verbal initiative in class than boys.

For the most part, as our findings show, the negotiation of positions of power in teacher-student interactions is related to the gender of the students. Male students in the conversational episodes of these data exhibit a strong tendency to preserve their independence, resisting female students’ efforts to dominate both the exchanges and the activities.

The study also sought to find out whether male and female students demand and receive differential teacher attention in class. Our findings corroborate findings of previous studies (Brophy & Good, 1970; Stanworth, 1981; French & French, 1984; Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Younger et al., 1999; Duffy et al., 2001; Tsouroufli, 2002; Swinson & Knight, 2007) by supporting the assumption that male students tend to ask more questions in class and are more likely to offer contributions to discussion. As a result, they receive more attention from the teacher and are addressed more often regardless of whether they raise their hand. Some possible explanations for this might be that boys tend to be more active and willing to speak, and that they are not afraid of taking risks when it comes to speaking. Moreover, the need for disciplining male students seems relevant as well, this might contribute to boys having more chances to speak and get attention.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the teachers in our study seem to be unaware of the fact that they pay more attention to male students. Thus, while we acknowledge that teacher bias can be responsible for more attention being provided to
males, we can assert that ‘remediation of male biased teacher attention’ (French & French, 1984) alone may not be sufficient to achieve a change in interactional bias favoring male students. As French and French (1984) state, teachers must also become sensitive to the interactional methods used by students themselves (in this case largely boys) in ‘securing attention and conversational engagement’, and that in the main the strategies female students use remain ‘invisible’ to teachers (p.133).

In addition, this study provided valuable insights on whether class participation on the whole is gender differentiated in classroom interaction. In our study we find a clear trend: male students participate in classes more than females do, and the results are in line with previous works (Brooks, 1982; Wingate, 1984; O’Keefe, 1987; Banks, 1988; Crawford, 1990).

Moreover, findings of the present study indicate that teacher’s choice of which student will participate is gender differentiated and favors male students. These findings support the results of studies by Sadker and Sadker (1985) and Swann and Graddol (1988). Interestingly enough, questionnaire data do not indicate statistically significant gender differences regarding students’ class participation, showing that teachers’ treatment toward male and female students is not gender specified. Nevertheless, the observations suggest that this is not the case. Teacher respondents during our observations are biased in favor of male students when they select students for class participation. These findings are in accordance with the views of Constantinou (2008), who reported that “the overall ratio of teacher-student interaction favored males” (p. 29).
6.2 Contributions of the Study

It is hoped that the present study makes important contributions to the field of research on gender bias in EFL classroom. It presents findings with important implications for our understanding of gendered classroom interaction and highlights important ways in which students’ gender influences teacher-student, as well as student-student interaction in Greek primary schools. The results of this study hold important practical implications for students, teachers, as well as for gender researchers. It offers new information about students’ and teachers’ gendered behavior so that these issues can be more effectively addressed in pedagogical studies and teacher training. In terms of inequality and gender bias, teachers might need to reflect more on their own behavior, so that certain stereotypes in the classroom could be reduced or even avoided. As Constantinou (2008: 28) points out, even though it is assumed that teachers try to provide “equitable learning opportunities” in a fair way, it seems that they sometimes treat male and female students in a different way and have stereotyped attitudes towards them.

An interesting finding of the present study is that girls tend to benefit more from a positive teacher relationship than boys. This finding supports the notion that due to relational styles and gender socialization, girls are more attuned and in a better position to benefit from close, warm relationships with their teachers. Also, gender schema theory suggests that children identify more with what they label as gender appropriate. (Bem, 1981; Martin, Ruble, & Szkrybalo, 2002). If girls label teachers (who are primarily female in primary school) as gender appropriate, they will gravitate more towards their teachers and identify more with them; boys will identify less with their female teachers. Therefore, girls will seek stronger affiliations with their teachers than boys.
It is hoped that by investigating such important issues as turn-taking and interruptions, praise and reprimand, class dominance, teacher attention and class participation in classroom interaction, the present thesis contributed to raising teachers’ and researchers’ awareness of the importance of gendered behavior. It is suggested that our findings might help teacher training and teacher education programs, as these data and observations might inform the content of those courses.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

Although the findings of this study contribute to research in gender bias in EFL classroom, certain limitations should be pointed out. Due to the limited number of students and teachers compared with the total number of students and teachers in Greece, their views and opinions as well as the limited nature of the data (as for example the lack of videotaped data), the sample cannot be considered illustrative of the whole Greek primary school pupils’ and teachers’ community. However, the themes identified in the present study, and particularly the problems brought forward by the respondents as regards to gender differences in EFL classroom interaction, can outline some general matters of concern on gender issues in classroom interaction. In addition, they can definitely point towards certain directions and serve as helpful tools for other primary school teachers in Greece.

Moreover, the data for the present study is too narrow to allow us to draw any definite conclusions about differences in teacher’s reactions to student’s responses according to their gender, or to generalize teacher’s negative behavior towards all male students. Furthermore, given the preponderance of female teachers in elementary
schools and the lack of male teachers especially in the early grades is by no means an issue only with this particular data set and remains a challenge to this field of research.

Despite its shortcomings, this study holds potential to fill an important gap in the current empirical knowledge concerning Greek state primary school students and language teachers’ gendered behavior.

### 6.4 Suggestions for Further Research

While answering some important questions, this study introduced some new queries that need to be addressed in future research.

First, future studies should continue to explore the influence of teacher gender on interaction and relationship quality. An issue worth exploring would be a comparative study between male teachers’ responses to the questionnaire and female teachers’ responses. Another recommendation is to conduct research on the perceptions of both male and female teachers regarding their attitudes to their students during EFL classroom discourse.

Moreover, teachers need to examine their own biases in order to best accommodate the needs of boys and girls and help all pupils reach their highest potential at school.

While not the focus of this particular study, potential future research may be carried out by expanding the sample to secondary school teachers, broadening the sample to include other content areas, attaining a better understanding of gender differences in the Greek classroom reality.
Furthermore, the Ministry of Education should provide training programs for teachers aiming to emphasize the importance of gender issues and raise awareness of educators regarding gender biases in classroom interaction. Such knowledge will help teachers improve their relationship with their students.

6.5 Concluding Remarks

In this final chapter firstly the conclusions of the study concerning gender-specific features in interaction patterns were presented and summarized. Next, the contributions of the study to the field of research on gender bias in EFL classroom as well as the theoretical implications of the study with respect to the overall study area were identified. In addition, various limitations which were encountered during the sampling and data collection were highlighted. Finally, the chapter provided new avenues worthy of investigation and new areas for further research.
REFERENCES


### Gender Differences in EFL Classroom Interaction

<table>
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<tr>
<th>For Students</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<td>Turn-taking (requests, disagreement, etc.)</td>
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<td>Interrupting the teacher</td>
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<td>Classroom dominance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reception of instructional exchanges</td>
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<td>Agreeing with the teacher</td>
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<td>Getting blame, disapproval</td>
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<td>Getting approval</td>
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<td>Getting academically involved in interaction</td>
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<td>Willingness to volunteer (raising hands/call outs)</td>
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<td>Non-academic exchanges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dominating oral and participatory activities</td>
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<td>Verbal superiority, producing correct linguistic forms (in FLA)</td>
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<td>Approaching the teacher individually and asking questions</td>
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<td>Building up on newly presented linguistic forms</td>
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<td>Non-verbal behaviour in classroom</td>
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<td>Demanding and getting more teacher attention</td>
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<td>Preferring competition and individualization</td>
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</table>

| For Teachers | | | | | |
|--------------| | | | | |
| Distribution of attention | | | | | |
| Selection of students in class participation | | | | | |
| Giving praise/positive comments | | | | | |
| Giving disapproval/reprimand | | | | | |
APPENDIX B

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

The classroom is a place where inequalities between male and female students can be explored and challenged. Thus, my PhD thesis deals with gender differences in language use and behaviour in EFL classroom interaction in primary schools.

I am particularly interested in the special insights, perceptions and experiences you have had on patterns of gender differences in teacher-student interactions.

Although the questions lead you in certain directions, please feel free to add ideas you think might be especially relevant from your point of view. Hope you will also find this occasion insightful or rewarding for yourself as well!!!

1. Who takes more turns (in the form of requests, disagreement, etc.) in your class?
   M □                                            Both □
   F □                                            Neither □

2. Who interrupts you more often in class?
   M □                                            Both □
   F □                                            Neither □

3. Who initiates more interactions with the teacher in your class?
   M □                                            Both □
   F □                                            Neither □

4. Who produces gender stereotypes in your class?
   M □                                            Both □
   F □                                            Neither □
5. Who do you have more instructional exchanges with in your class?

M □ Both □
F □ Neither □

6. Who gets more blame, disapproval from your part?

M □ Both □
F □ Neither □

7. Who dominates the classroom interaction time?

M □ Both □
F □ Neither □

8. Do you have a classroom monopoliser in your class?

Yes □
No □

9. Who do you give more power, space to talk in your class?

M □ Both □
F □ Neither □

10. Who demands and gets more teacher attention?

M □ Both □
F □ Neither □

11. Are there any gender differences in nonverbal behaviour in class?

Yes □
No □
12. Regarding teacher-initiated feedback who do you give more praise/positive comments?

M □ Both □
F □ Neither □

13. Do you select your students for class participation based on their gender?

Yes □
No □

14. Who receives more attention from you in your class?

M □ Both □
F □ Neither □

15. Who is better at learning English as a second language (producing correct linguistic forms in FL, verbal superiority in FL acquisition)?

M □ Both □
F □ Neither □

16. Do male and female students have different attitudes toward FL learning activities (speaking, reading, writing and listening)?

Yes □
No □

17. Are there any events in your classroom regarding gender differences that you think are attributable to the fact that you are male/female?

Yes □
No □

18. Has your attitude towards male/female students changed over the years?

Yes □
No □
19. Have you ever encountered gender discrimination in class from your students?

Yes □
No □

20. Do you use specific sitting arrangement for your male and female students in your class when they do pairwork or groupwork?

Yes □
No □

21. Do you have fixed ideas on gendered behaviour?

Yes □
No □

22. Some teachers report having management problems (e.g. overt disruption, challenging competence, lack of student participation, etc.). Have you had these because you are male/female?

Yes □
No □

23. Please add any comments/remarks related to the topic of my research.

........................................................................................................................................
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........................................................................................................................................

Thank you for your cooperation!

😊
## APPENDIX C

## TEACHER PROFILE

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### STUDENT PROFILE

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<td>7</td>
<td>Μητρική γλώσσα:</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Από πού είσαι; Αν δεν είσαι από την Ελλάδα, πότε ήρθες στην Ελλάδα;</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Τάξη:</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ποιό είναι το επίπεδο των αγγλικών σου; (Πόσα χρόνια κάνεις αγγλικά;)</td>
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