

Allameh Tabataba'i University

Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages

Department of English Language and Literature

**Gender Differences in English Language
Classroom
Turn-Taking Patterns**

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Language and Literature in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a
Foreign Language

Advisor: Dr. Zia Tajeddin

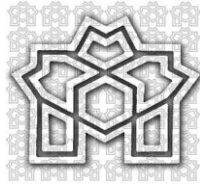
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In the Name of God



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Turn-Taking Patterns**

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Committee of Evaluation

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چکیده

الف. موضوع و طرح مسئله (اهمیت موضوع و هدف):

آگاهی و آشنایی معلمان با الگوهای متفاوت کسب نوبت کلام در کلاس زبان انگلیسی به آنها در مواردی از جمله پیش بینی وقوع یک نوبت کلام، چگونگی پاسخ دهی به آن، چگونگی بیرون کشیدن و فراخواندن نوبت هایی که بجز با بهره گیری معلم از تدابیر مکالمه ای خاص، به دلایل مختلف هیچ گاه شکل نمی گیرند، و کمک می کند.

هدف این تحقیق شناسایی رفتارهایی است که برای به دست آوردن نوبت کلام در دانش آموزان دختر و پسر اتفاق می افتد و بررسی این مسئله که آیا این رفتارها در آنها به یک شکل می باشد و آیا آنها از خصوصیات زبانی و غیر زبانی یکسانی برای این امر استفاده می کنند.

این تحقیق در نظر دارد به مطالعه مدت زمان مکث میان هر کلام، هم زمانی کلام، انگیزه دانش آموزان از بدست آوردن کلام، و بررسی این موضوع که آیا دختران و پسران دچار مشکلات مشابهی برای مسئله بهره گیری از نوبت کلام هستند و اینکه آیا دلایل و راهکارهای این مشکلات یکسان هستند بپردازد.

ب. مبانی نظری شامل مرور مختصری از منابع، چارچوب نظری و پرسشها و فرضیه ها:

این تحقیق به دنبال یافتن پاسخ برای این سوال می باشد که دانش آموزانی که زبان انگلیسی را به عنوان زبان خارجه می آموزند از چه الگوهایی برای کسب نوبت کلام استفاده می کنند و چه تفاوت‌های جنسیتی در این الگوها وجود دارد. بدین منظور چند مشخصه به طور خاص مورد مطالعه قرار گرفته اند که شامل تماس چشمی، هم زمانی کلام، استفاده از موضوعات مشخص صرفاً به منظور آغاز کلام، آغاز کلام به انتخاب خود دانش آموز، و توانایی به دست آوردن و نگه داشتن بستر کلام توسط دانش آموز می باشد.

این تحقیق بر این فرضیه استوار است که هیچ تفاوتی در الگوهای رفتاری دانش آموزان دختر و پسر در زمینه بهره گیری از نوبت کلام وجود ندارد.

پ. روش تحقیق شامل تعریف مفاهیم، روش تحقیق، جامعه ی مورد تحقیق، نمونه گیری و روشهای نمونه گیری، ابزار اندازه گیری، نحوه اجرای آن، شیوه گردآوری و تجزیه و تحلیل داده ها:

این تحقیق بر پایه مشاهده انجام شده است. بدین منظور 20 جلسه از کلاسهای آموزشگاه کلام-گوش توسط محقق مشاهده، ضبط، و نکات مهم یادداشت برداری شده است. این تحقیق در کلاس بزرگسالان انجام شده و متوسط سن شرکت کنندگان بین 12 تا 16 سال بوده است.

بعد از اتمام جلسات مشاهده نمونه ضبط شده رونویسی شده و مورد مطالعه قرار گرفته و فراوانی وقوع هر یک از مشخصه های از پیش تعیین شده تا حد امکان ثبت شده است. در آخر این اطلاعات به اضافه اطلاعات جمع آوری شده در طول مشاهدات از طریق به دست آوردن میزان مربع خی مورد بررسی قرار گرفته اند.

ت. یافته های تحقیق:

بر اساس نتایجی که از این تحقیق به دست آمد زبان آموزان پسر از پنج مشخصه مورد مطالعه چهار مشخصه را بیشتر از دختران در هنگام صحبت و مکالمه استفاده می کردند و در واقع دانش آموزان دختر فقط در استفاده از موضوعات مشخصی که برای شروع مکالمه استفاده می شوند موفق تر بودند. بر این اساس فرضیه ابتدایی تحقیق مبنی بر اینکه هیچ تفاوتی در الگوهای کسب کلام در کلاس زبان انگلیسی بین دختران و پسران وجود ندارد رد شد.

ث. نتیجه گیری و پیشنهادات:

از نتایج تحقیق می توان دریافت که دانش آموزان دختر و پسر هر یک تدابیر خاص خود را برای کسب نوبت کلام استفاده می کنند و شیوه استخراج کلام نیز برای هر کدام متفاوت است. بنابراین آشنایی با این تدابیر و همچنین شناخت راههای بیرون کشیدن کلام برای

معلم زبان انگلیسی یک لازمه محسوب می شود.

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Abstract

This thesis analyzed gender in relation to turn-taking patterns in an English language institute in Iran. The data were collected through observing the actual classroom interaction among and between students and the teacher by the researcher and audio taping 20 sessions of these classes. The investigated elements of turns were eye contact, overlapping talk, taking and holding the floor, teacher turns, and the use of gambits. The frequencies of occurrence of these elements were subjected to a chi-square analysis to find out if there were any significant differences between the two genders. The results showed that Iranian male students are more successful in turn-taking than female students. Thus the null-hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the male and female students' use of turn taking strategies is rejected.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Overview

Every day, we have numerous conversations on a variety of topics and for a variety of reasons. We often go through these conversations without even thinking about the rules which govern person to person interaction. One of these rules is turn-taking, an awareness of which helps us better conduct our interactions.

Because of the ways we are used to seeing conversations represented in the writing, it is tempting to think of a conversation as consisting of a bit of talk by one speaker, then a bit of talk by another, then by another, and so on. These units are often called turns (Johnstone, 2008). Erving Goffman (1976; cited in Pohacker, 1998) refers to a turn at talk as "an opportunity to hold the floor, not what is said while holding it (p. 11)". A turn can be completely short or it might last for a long time. Long turns are usually connected with face saving strategies and negative politeness on behalf of both speaker and listener. Short turns, on the other hand, are associated with adjacency pairs (Pohacker, 1998).

Conversation requires speakers to take turns, and this requirement is managed in a particular way. At any given moment, the turn that is in progress will typically belong to a single speaker. Participants in conversation will not usually all talk simultaneously, and conversely there will not usually be stretches of time in which no one talks at all (Cameron, 2001). We mark the beginning and end of our turns

implicitly. We do not say things like “okay, you may now speak” or “I asked you a question, please answer it now!”. For signaling the end of our turns we usually use some strategies like raising or lowering our tone of voice, drawing out the final syllable of our last word, making a pause or using a filler word like “you know”, “um”, or “kind of.”

Knowing when it is acceptable or obligatory to take a turn in conversation is essential to the cooperative development of discourse. This knowledge involves such factors as knowing how to recognize appropriate turn-exchange points and knowing how long the pauses between turns should be. It is also important to know how one may talk while someone else is talking—that is if conversational overlap is allowed. Since not all conversations follow all the rules for turn-taking, it is also necessary to know how to repair a conversation that has been thrown off course by undesired overlap or a misunderstood comment. So it is the concern of the present study to investigate the ways Iranian EFL learners use in the practice of turn-taking.

1.1. Statement of the problem

Although turn-taking mechanisms seem to be universal, they are subject to some variation (Pohacker, 1998). Different cultures follow different patterns of turn taking. The turn-taking mechanism may actually vary among cultures and among

languages (Cook, 1989). Also if parties do not share the transitional reference point, turn taking would not be harmonious and the parties will find themselves talking at the same time. The listener, therefore, will interrupt the speaker's turn and overlapping talk will occur (Maroni, Gnisci, & Pontecorvo, 2008). One issue that causes many problems in English (EFL) situations and harms the students is unawareness and ignorance of these turn taking variations.

There are many opposing ideas regarding gender differences in discourse, and the differences in the ways that men and women use language have long been of interest in the study of discourse. Some people believe that gender could not be an influential element in determining the way discourse is run; on the other hand, some others consider it as a seminal factor in shaping the discourse. Though turn-taking cues are similar for males and females, one must consider sexual differences in the style of the operation of the turn-taking mechanism. In the language and gender literature, males are usually hypothesized to be more powerful and dominant than females (West & Zimmerman, 1983). It is also hypothesized that men tend to exploit this greater power and exercise dominance over women through the control of language, such as holding the floor at length (Herman, 1995). While the validity of this hypothesis remains to be affirmed by more empirical evidence, it is doubtless that turn-taking and floor-holding in mixed-sex interaction can reveal much about the gender differences in conversational patterns. This study

investigated gender differences in turn taking patterns in separate-sex interaction, because the researcher believed that when the two genders are involved in mixed-sex interactions (usually face to face conversations), this will undoubtedly influence the patterns through which they realize their discourse, compared to when they are interacting with people of their own sex.

1.2. Significance of the study

Turn-Taking is a general feature of interaction which is not just a language phenomenon. In any situation where there are multiple agents, some kind of turn-taking will occur. The interactionally managed patterns of turn-taking can influence such events as (Cobb & Rifkin, [1991](#); cited in Gale, 2000):

- a. speaker selection;
- b. number of turns;
- c. length of turns; and
- d. strength of argument (as it is easier to show the relationship of one's talk to what the current speaker is saying if one can get the very next turn.

If teachers are aware of different turn-taking steps taken by different genders in a classroom context, it will help them expect the turns, know how to respond to

them, and how to elicit turns which will never be taken unless the teacher uses special conversational strategies).

1.3. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate gender-specific turn-taking practices, to explain the different rhythmic turn-taking patterns in genders' conversation, to see what the different paralinguistic and even nonlinguistic features of classroom turn-taking between the genders in Iran are (as some studies investigate these different features in other aspects of language), to study such features of turn-taking as the mean duration of pauses, switching pauses (when a different speaker takes the floor), and simultaneous speech in the two genders' talk, to see if the turn-taking problems and the cases of poor turn-taking are the same between males and females and if the reason for this poor turn taking is the same, and finally, to find out if they have the same motivations and reasons when taking the turns or if each group has its own gender-specific reasons.

1.4 Research questions and hypotheses

This study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What patterns of turn-taking are used by Iranian EFL learners?

2. What gender differences are there in the turn-taking patterns of EFL learners?
 - 2.1. Are there any gender differences in the turn-taking patterns concerning eye contact?
 - 2.2. Are there any gender differences in the turn-taking patterns concerning overlapping talk?
 - 2.3. Are there any gender differences in the turn-taking patterns concerning the use of gambits?
 - 2.4. Are there any gender differences in the turn-taking patterns concerning self-selection?
 - 2.5. Are there any gender differences in the turn-taking patterns concerning the ability to take and hold the floor?

On the basis of these questions, the following null hypotheses can be postulated:

1. There are no gender differences in the patterns of classroom turn-taking concerning eye contact.
2. There are no gender differences in the patterns of classroom turn-taking concerning overlapping talk.
3. There are no gender differences in the patterns of classroom turn-taking concerning the use of gambits.