

EXAMINING GENDER AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON CLASSROOM
PARTICIPATION AND INTERACTION OF STUDENTS IN AN ESL AND GENERAL
EDUCATION CLASSROOM

by

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CERTIFICATION OF PROJECT WORK

We, the undersigned, certify that this project entitled EXAMINING GENDER AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION AND INTERACTION OF STUDENTS IN AN ESL AND GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM by Lindsey W. Martin, Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science in Education, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), is acceptable in form and content and demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this project.

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Abstract

English Language Learner (ELL) is a term used to describe a student whose second language is English and is not fully proficient in English (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009). In order for ELLs to become proficient in English they need opportunities to speak and practice using the language (Vogt & Echevarria, 2008, Wright, 2010). According to Higgins (2010) gender discrimination occurs in classrooms in the form of teachers calling on males more often than females. Research has shown that males speak out of turn more frequently than females and when they do, they use longer utterances (Hruska, 2004; Parker & Riley, 2010). This may put female ELLs at a disadvantage in terms of becoming proficient in English and their academic success.

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Introduction

Problem

Gender discrimination in classrooms leads to decreased interaction and participation from, females. Interaction and participation is central to second language acquisition (SLA) and therefore language proficiency (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009; Wright, 2010). A lack of proficiency, assessed by standardized tests, could lead to schools' overall performance being classified as failing which impacts Federal funding (Garcia, 2011). It may also impact teachers' jobs. Teachers may lose their jobs or they may not want to continue teaching in a school that is considered "failing" by No Child Left Behind (NCLB). When students lack proficiency and do poorly on tests it may impact their self-confidence and motivation in school. Often times ELLs drop out of school as a result of poor test scores or they cannot graduate without passing an exit examination (Menken, 2010). If these students do not finish high school their job options are limited and they may find themselves at an economic disadvantage. Teachers may be unaware of discrimination or lack of equitability occurring in their classrooms (Marshall & Reinhartz, 1997; Sadker & Zittleman, 2005). If teachers are not aware of these issues in their classrooms they will not be able to adjust their teaching and create an equitable environment.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is threefold. The first two functions of the study are to observe whether or not teachers call on boys more than girls in classrooms, and if males volunteer answers or speak without being addressed by the teacher. The third purpose of this study is to determine whether or not males and females from Middle-Eastern cultures interact with peers from the opposite gender. Through a questionnaire and interviews, teachers' attitudes about whether they are using gender equitable practices in their classroom will be explored. The

results from the survey and interview will be compared to the results of the observations to determine if teachers' beliefs about their teaching styles correlate with what was observed.

If teachers are aware that they are calling on boys more than girls they may be able to adjust their teaching strategies and try picking names out of a cup or calling on all students regardless if they are raising their hand. If boys are calling out or speaking without the teacher calling on them the teacher may choose to adjust their behavior system. When a teacher has a classroom rule to raise your hand in order to speak they need to enforce the rule for all students regardless of their gender. Creating a gender equitable classroom will allow females to participate fully in their education and it will increase the chances that females will have equal opportunities for success in both the workplace and society (Jones, Evans, Byrd, 2000).

In regards to differences in cultures, specifically the Middle-Eastern culture, a teacher's awareness could make all the difference. If an educator is aware that Middle-Eastern girls do not feel comfortable working with boys they may structure their classroom differently or pair students differently. Allowing teachers to reflect on their practices, strategies, and materials through the questionnaire and interview questions teachers will be able to utilize different strategies to ensure their classroom is gender equitable. These teachers may video tape lessons or have colleagues come in to observe them. They may also choose to look through their materials including fiction and nonfiction books to look for instances of gender discrimination or stereotypes.

Significance

This specific study will be looking at high school classrooms rather than younger grades. The pressure for ELLs to become proficient in English is particularly important as they reach the upper grades. In high schools, specifically in New York, students are required to pass a set of

Regents exams in order to graduate (Menken, 2010). These tests often use sophisticated and complex academic language that complicates the content for ELLs. If ELLs are not able to pass these Regents tests they will not receive a high school diploma. The job market does not offer many quality jobs for individuals who have not received a high school diploma (Gandara, 2010). This lack of English proficiency has the potential to cause these students difficulty not only in high school, but in their future as well.

ELLs are currently the fastest growing portion of the student population in the US (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009). Although not all ELLs are immigrants we have seen a large increase in the number of Middle-Eastern immigrants since 2001. There are over 1.5 million Iraqi refugees living in camps outside of Iraq and the US resettles about 50% of the world's refugees each year which means the US is receiving large numbers of Middle-Eastern students (Nykiel-Herbert, 2010). This study is looking specifically at Middle-Eastern students and how they interact and participate with their peers. It is common for gender research to focus on White participants so the interest of Middle-Eastern students in this study sets it apart from other research (Robbins, 2004) Teachers may not be able to meet the needs of these students if they are not familiar with their cultural norms. There seems to be a lack of research specifically regarding the Middle-Eastern cultures and a lack of awareness regarding these cultures (Nykiel-Herbert, 2010). This study would help to fill in these gaps in the research and make teachers more knowledgeable about the Middle-Eastern culture.

Literature Review

NCLB

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is the Federal legislation to replace the Bilingual Education Act (Wright, 2011). NCLB was signed into law in 2002 by President George W.

Bush and is the driving force when it comes to public schooling today (Menken, 2010). NCLB was created from the idea that public schools were failing and changed the focus regarding schools, to educational outcomes and accountability (Menken, 2010). Under NCLB tests have become the focus of student learning (Nichols & Berliner, 2008). Students in grades 3-8, and at least one time in high school, are required to take tests in Math and Reading. In addition to state exams, students are required to take benchmark tests and district assessments regularly throughout the year. This high-stakes testing culture may send the message to students that their other abilities are not as valuable.

NCLB is the first legislation that makes states, schools, and districts accountable for their ELLs regarding their academic performance and their level of English proficiency (Abedi & Dietel, 2004; Wright, 2010). NCLB requires schools to report Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for four subgroups of students, one of those subgroups being Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, which includes ELLs (NCTE, 2008). There are other subgroups such as ethnicity/race or special education. Students remain in these subgroups for their entire school career. This is not the case for ELLs, they move out of the LEP subgroup once they become proficient in English. As these students move out of the subgroup newly classified ELLs who speak the least amount of English enter the subgroup (Abedi & Dietel, 2004). This makes it extremely difficult for the LEP subgroup to show any type of consistent progress.

Since schools are now accountable for their ELLs and their English proficiency, those students' scores on standardized tests will have an impact on the success of the school. ELLs, as required by NCLB, must be tested each year to record their progress in learning English. If ELLs do not pass the tests the school may not make AYP and be deemed as failing which may lead to the loss of federal funds (Menken, 2010; Wright, 2006). Teachers need to help their

ELLs become proficient in English in order to show improvement each year. These high-stakes tests put additional pressure on teachers with ELLs to meet their diverse educational needs while teaching them English as quickly as possible. This may be difficult since less than 13 percent of teachers have received training or professional development regarding the instruction of ELLs (NCTE, 2008).

The testing mandated by NCLB is given in English and the outcomes are compared to those of native English speakers (August, Shanahan, & Escamilla, 2009). If an ELL is not fully proficient in English it will impact their ability to score well on these tests. Test questions often use words that ELLs are unlikely to know (Menken, 2010). This could result in an even lower score on the state mandated tests for ELLs. These results are used to determine if a school has met the requirements set by NCLB. These tests are created and field tested for students who are native English speakers and not ELLs which may cause the results to give an inaccurate picture of an ELLs knowledge (Abedi, 2008). How language factors impact student scores on tests are often not considered when creating these standardized tests. Since it is incredibly difficult to produce culturally neutral tests, ELLs unfamiliar with US culture may be at an additional disadvantage.

Some think that NCLB will lead to positive benefits for ELLs since it makes the nation more aware of these students (Menken, 2010). In reality, NCLB has had negative consequences for ELLs. There are high dropout rates, low graduation rates, and the schools serving ELLs are often labeled as failing which may make schools have negative feelings about enrolling these students. Menken (2010) looks at the situation as though ELLs are being punished by NCLB. These tests, which include complex language, are linked to punishments for schools and the students since poor scores by ELLs equate to bad reviews for their schools and teachers. Schools

and districts need to find a way to meet the needs of ELLs as a whole group. Excluding them from the school, classroom, or lesson is not going to help them acquire English. If ELLs are not receiving appropriate instruction they may not become proficient in English which may lead to failing grades on these state tests. If schools are not showing AYP because of their ELL subgroup they may be punished and could lose funding. When a school loses funding it may result in even excellent educators teaching to the test rather than teaching life skills and relevant information.

Teaching to the test. These high-stakes tests have resulted in a narrowing of the curriculum and many teachers have begun teaching to the test (Menken, 2010, Nichols & Berliner, 2008). Teachers have started to engage in repetitious instruction that prepares students to score well on Math and Reading tests (Nichols & Berliner, 2008). All teachers are under pressure to improve their students test scores but 98 percent of teachers surveyed from Arizona reported being under pressure to raise their ELLs' test scores in particular (Wright, 2006). Since ELLs do not usually perform well on standardized tests they are more likely than native English speakers to receive instruction that is only focused on test preparation (Menken, 2010). If ELLs are tested for two years without showing any progress the schools have severe consequences to face and may be at risk of losing their funding (Abedi, 2008). 93 percent of the teachers reported that in order to prepare ELLs for these high-stakes tests they were not spending enough time focusing on their linguistic and cultural needs (Wright, 2006). Many teachers noted that their schools did not have English as a Second Language (ESL) curriculum material and ESL teachers were required to provide a curriculum based on test preparation. One teacher who was interviewed explained that there is very little time for assignments other than explicit test preparation (Menken, 2010).

When districts, schools, and teachers create a high-stakes testing climate it sends the message to the students that the primary purpose of learning is to do well on tests. Some schools create bulletin boards, posters, and even daily sayings that emphasize the importance of these tests (Nichols & Berliner, 2008). While schools are most likely using these strategies in an attempt to encourage students to perform well they are probably creating more stress for all students. Students may eventually realize that they are defined as winners or losers based solely on their test performance. This can become a very negative and demoralizing environment for all students over time, especially students who are already struggling academically. When students are learning for the sole purpose of doing well on a test, their low test scores may lower their self-esteem and make them less motivated to learn and do well in school. Chronic failure may cause many students to give up or drop out of school (Nichols & Berliner, 2008).

ELLs in the US. The number of students unable to speak English grew by 40 percent in the last decade and as of 2011 there were 5.3 million students classified as ELLs in the US (Garcia, 2011). ELLs are the most rapidly growing segment of children in American schools today. Almost all states have an ELL population and in 2008 NCTE reported that 43 percent of teachers have ELLs in their classrooms. As these numbers continue to rise, teachers will likely see an influx of ELL students in their classrooms.

ELLs are a diverse population with over 150 languages being spoken by over 100 identified ethnic groups (Garcia, 2011). Languages being spoken by ELLs range from Spanish, to Arabic, to Russian. Some of these students are immigrants, some are refugees, and some are US citizens that live in a home where English is not spoken. ELLs might have a strong connection with their non-US culture or they may identify with only the US culture (NCTE, 2008). According to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), over the past thirty

years the number of immigrants in America has tripled. Many immigrants come to the US without being able to speak English and are then classified as ELLs. Children of immigrants are born in America with full US citizenship but a non-English speaking family (Garcia, 2011). There are other ELLs whose families have lived in the US for over a generation (NCTE, 2008). According to NCTE, in 2008, 57% of ELLs were born in the US while 43% were born outside of the US. This adds to the diversity of the ELL population.

It is not realistic to expect teachers to know the wide variety of languages spoken by ELLs and be familiar with the cultural practices of all the different cultures. One way teachers can help, however, is to be prepared to assist these students as they become more proficient in English through participation in classrooms activities and discussions. ELLs are a diverse group but we know that literacy-rich environments, qualified teachers, relevant professional development for educators, and early childhood experiences will help these students succeed (Garcia, 2011). Classrooms that only have one ELL still require the teacher to adjust their instruction and materials to meet the needs of that student while incorporating the needs of the rest of the class.

NCLB requires schools to test their ELLs in a way that is both valid and reliable though they do not clarify what is meant by valid or reliable (Wright, 2006). ELLs are required to take their state's Math test even if they arrived days before the test. This can potentially be very stressful for these students and lead to decreased test scores. When 40 Arizona elementary school teachers were surveyed 78% reported they observed ELLs complaining that they could not understand the questions or language used on the test (Wright, 2006). 88% of the teachers surveyed reported observing ELLs becoming visibly upset during a test and 71% saw students cry. These tests are clearly stressful and confusing for students, especially when they do not

know the language the test is given in. Students of color often feel that society does not view them as being as intelligent or competent as White students and they fear that if they do not perform well on standardized tests it will confirm this negative opinion (Gandara, 2010). When students have this additional fear and stress they may do even worse on these assessments. Teachers of ELLs must find ways to help their students learn English while reducing this testing anxiety.

ELLs and the achievement gap. The main premise of NCLB was that the focus on student outcomes will lead to improved schooling for all students. This basis is clearly flawed when looking at the widening achievement gap between ELLs and native English speakers (Menken, 2010). When looking at the results of state tests it is clear that ELL students' academic performance is much lower than that of native English speakers (Abedi & Dietel, 2004). ELLs underperform their native English speaking peers by an average of thirty to 50 percent on national state assessments (Garcia, 2011; Menken, 2010). NCLB attempts to lower this achievement gap between ELLs and native English speakers. In order to close this achievement gap, NCLB believes that ELLs must become proficient in English. NCLB sets a goal for all ELLs to become proficient English speakers by 2014 (Abedi & Dietel, 2004). This is clearly an unrealistic goal as schools over the country are receiving new ELL students each school year. The low language ability of ELLs lowers their test scores which increases the achievement gap. This achievement gap does not necessarily mean ELLs are not mastering English or learning content; it may mean that the language is creating a barrier for them to score well on these tests (Menken, 2010).

There is also a disparity in the high school graduation rates between ELLs and native English speakers. In New York, high school students are required to pass a set of Regents exams

in order to graduate and receive a diploma. These tests are also used as part of a school's evaluation under NCLB. These requirements put a strong emphasis on the students' ability to learn English to a level of proficiency that will help them pass exams requiring the understanding of complex language. Only 41% of ELLs are meeting this Regents graduation requirement compared to 76% of native English speakers (Menken, 2010). Even if these ELLs have completed all other graduation requirements if they cannot pass these tests they cannot graduate. These exit exams become a problem for ELLs and their teachers since the tests require students to be proficient in English language and literacy. If ELLs do not become proficient in English, cannot pass the exams, and do not graduate, they are less likely to go to college and meet their career goals.

Ethnic minority students, specifically recent immigrants, are consistently at a higher risk for academic failure than their native-English speaking peers (Nykiel-Herbert, 2010). The curricula and instruction approaches used in American schools are often culturally relevant for middle-class, White, Anglo-American students which adds to an ELL's disadvantage in regards to success in academics. Not only is the curriculum culturally relevant for White, Anglo-American students but the culture of the school is congruent with the culture of their White, Middle-class, American homes. Educators need to be prepared to overcome these challenges of language proficiency, cultural norms, and an irrelevant curriculum to help their ELLs become proficient in English and succeed academically. In order for educators to be able to do this they need to be aware of how ELLs learn best and what strategies they should be using in order to help them learn.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theories

Since ELLs often do not do as well academically teachers need to use research-based practices to help these students become proficient in English and achieve success in school (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009). Language in education is used for transmitting education and explaining the world we live in (Izlar, 2010). If students do not understand the language they may miss information or have a lack of understanding of the world around them. ELLs need the same opportunities to learn as their English-speaking peers (Nykiel-Herbert, 2010). Lavadenz (2010) defines language proficiency as the ability to use language for both academic and social purposes. Social language is important for having conversations with others while academic language is important for learning in school, completing homework assignments, and scoring well on tests. There are different learning theories in regards to second language acquisition (SLA) and how language learners become proficient. The three main SLA theories include Behaviorist, Innatist, and Interactionist.

The Behaviorist theory believes teaching should be done through practice, repetition, and rewards (Lavadenz, 2010). The idea that learning occurs through repetitious drills is one characteristic of this theory (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). This theory was popular in the 1940's and 1950's and it was based on the belief that children imitated the language they heard in their environment (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). People criticized this theory on the basis that the children were choosing what they imitated, rather than the environment choosing for them. Another argument of this theory is that children produce creative language that they have not heard in their environment. Lightbown and Spada (2006) point out that imitation and practice alone does not account for certain forms created by children.

The Innatist theory is the belief that language is innate and there is a specific module in the brain that is programmed for language learning and all children are programmed to learn a

language (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). This theory views learning as a biological process (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Innatists believe that language acquisition is not something that needs to be taught; children will just naturally acquire it. The idea that there is a device in everyone's brain that allows them to distinguish grammar rules as they are listening to the language around them is a characteristic of this theory. Supporters of this theory do not believe the environment is the most important aspect of language learning.

The Interactionist theory considers both environmental factors and the mental capacities of learners. Supporters of the Interactionist theory think Innatists place too much emphasis on the final state of language learning rather than the process (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). The Interactionist theory is the idea that language is acquired through natural and authentic situations such as actual communication or conversations (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). This theory does not support repetitive drill activities but rather activities that help students develop communicative competence. It is believed that learning takes place as language learners interact with native speakers and are able to use the language to communicate meaning and express ideas. This theory supports the idea that impersonal sources of language such as the radio or television are not enough to acquire a language; rather, children need to be active participants in their learning. (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Teachers need to allow equal opportunities for participation in their classroom for all of their students to help their ELLs become proficient in English.

Sociocultural theory (SCT). The sociocultural theory (SCT) views learning as a dynamic social process (Strickland, 2012). SCT is the belief that learning takes place during the social interaction of learners and more capable others such as the interactions between ELLs and native English speakers (Lavadenz, 2010; Strickland, 2012). In a classroom setting the ELL would be considered the learner and the teacher the more capable speaker (Mantero, 2003).

When children interact with another peer or adult it requires some level of understanding by the child. If the child does not understand what is being said to them the other speaker will have to adjust what they are saying. If a language learner is not being understood in a conversation they will have to make adjustments to the language they are using until the other speaker reaches comprehension. As language learners negotiate the meanings, they are learning the language. If ELLs are not interacting with more capable speakers, whether they are native English speakers or their teachers, they may not be learning or acquiring the language they need in order to become proficient.

SCT is the belief that social interaction is the basis of learning and development (Lavadenz, 2010; Mantero, 2003). Learners are seen as social beings and members of social groups (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). According to this theory, in order for learning to take place, ELLs must be actively participating in their learning (Lavadenz, 2010). Students need to be interacting and using the language in order for them to develop proficiency and the ability to communicate. When students are interacting they are also learning the meanings of new topics or vocabulary (Strickland, 2012).

According to SCT an individual's social, cultural, and historical experiences cannot be separated from their learning experiences (Strickland, 2012). A child's past social and cultural experiences affect how they interpret words and actions they encounter in the classroom. Teachers should account for this in their classrooms, instructional strategies, and grouping arrangements. Teachers of ELLs need to take advantage of their students' rich cultural and personal backgrounds (Mantero, 2003). When teachers are aware of the knowledge and experience their students bring with them they will likely be better equipped in helping them acquire English and succeed academically.

Social integration is known as interacting with people from a variety of ethnic or income groups on a regular basis (Izlar, 2010). This is an effective tool for allowing ELLs to interact with proficient English speakers. These interactions allow ELLs to learn alongside their native English speaking peers while developing knowledge and awareness for a variety of cultures. When students are using the language during an activity with their peers they will become aware of social practices as they develop the language (Mantero, 2003). SCT stresses the importance of socially-meaningful activities for ELLs (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). It is important that teachers make lessons or activities culturally relevant for all of their students. Lavadenz (2010) points out that research shows that methods that are communicative, stress free, and meaningful lead to more advances in second language learning. If the activity is meaningful for a student they are likely to be interested and retain the information. When teachers know who their students are and what experiences they have had they can make lessons more applicable and significant.

Sociolinguistic theory (SLT). The process of acquiring a language is both a cognitive and social process that occurs through social interaction. Sociolinguistics includes everything from small group interaction to language planning and policy. SLT considers how language is co-constructed in real-life, everyday settings (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). SLT is the idea that the whole class is learning together and knowledge is cyclically passed to other members. The learner, according to SLT, is seen as an apprentice and they are learning the language as they use it.

According to Coleman and Goldenberg (2009) English oral language is best taught through explicit instruction and interactive approaches. ELLs benefit from practice using the language as well as opportunities to interact with others (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009). Much

of a new language is acquired subconsciously when ELLs are engaged in meaningful interactions (Wright, 2010). Allowing time for students to interact in a classroom setting is important and helpful in developing ELLs' oral language skills.

Importance of speaking. When ELLs are assessed for their level of English proficiency they are tested in four domains: reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Abedi, 2008). ELLs need instruction and practice in all four of these domains in order to improve their English proficiency. It is essential for ELLs to receive appropriate instruction along with the opportunity to practice the language in school in order for them to become proficient in English (Vogt & Echevarria, 2008). If students do not have the opportunity to practice using English through interactions with their peers and their teacher they will likely struggle when trying to communicate (Wright, 2010). ELLs need to practice speaking in order to develop their oral language so their peers and teachers are able to understand them when they converse. Proficiency in oral language allows ELLs to express their comprehension and knowledge in the classroom (August et al., 2009). Not only is this beneficial for students but it allows teachers to informally assess students for their content knowledge.

To become proficient in spoken English, ELLs need as much authentic practice in using the language as possible (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009). Participation in language and cognitive activities with native English speakers or students who are more proficient will improve an ELL's language learning (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009; Garcia, 2011). The interactions that occur between ELLs and their teachers, ELLs and other ELLs, and ELLs and native English speakers are the most essential and beneficial interactions that will take place (Wright, 2010). As Wright (2010) points out, a large amount of language is acquired through meaningful interaction. While learning the elements of English is helpful in becoming

proficient, if ELLs are not producing the language they may not be able to obtain high levels of proficiency (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009).

Oral language skills are strongly connected with English reading comprehension and better writing for ELLs (Wright, 2010). Oral language also correlates with literacy development (August, et al., 2009). According to Coleman and Goldenberg (2009) oral language proficiency is essential for ELLs' learning and academic achievement. Often times ELLs get stuck when they are at a higher proficiency level and the cause is a lack of focus on their oral language development (Wright, 2010). These points reinforce how important it is for ESL instruction to have a strong focus on developing students' English language proficiency skills. If ESL instruction focuses only on reading and writing skills, ELLs will have more difficulty in communicating. Therefore, all students require sufficient practice in speaking, and opportunities to participate, in order to fully acquire English. Educators need to make sure all of their students, both ELLs and native English speakers, and both males and females, are allowed equal opportunities to participate.

Gender and Gender Discrimination

The idea of what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman are communicated to children by the adults and role models in a child's life including their teachers (Kommer, 2006). Sex is biologically based but gender is no longer considered fixed and unalterable (Cameron, 2005). Men and women are living in a culture where aspects of one's identity, such as culture, are seen as a matter of individual choice and effort. Children construct gender in the day-to-day interactions of their lives (Gosselin, 2007). As children construct their ideas of gender teachers need to promote equality in education for both males and females.

Gender hierarchy has not been eliminated in our society according to Cameron (2005). While obvious forms of sexism are not as acceptable as they were years ago it is clear that males still occupy the most powerful roles in institutions today. Society continues to under-value the role of women and, as a result, girls are receiving conflicting messages about their worth and place in society (Tindall & Hamil, 2004). These messages may come from their peers, home, school, or even their community.

Families influence a child's idea of what it means to be a male or female by their treatment, discipline, and guidelines. When parents reinforce or discourage specific behaviors during play they are influencing their children's ideas of gender. Parents tend to play more roughly with sons and react positively when they show assertive or aggressive behavior (Tindall & Hamil, 2004). Often times, boys are given more freedom than girls and are not protected as much. The early gender bias experiences that children encounter may shape their attitudes and beliefs related to relationships in their personal life as well as their participation in the corporate world in the future (Aina & Cameron, 2011). Boys are often encouraged to be more forceful and questioning while girls may minimize their talents and hide their accomplishments (Tindall & Hamil, 2004). These ideals may stay with children through their school years.

When children are faced with gender stereotypes it may limit their potential growth and development. These stereotypes are often perpetuated in the school environment as there are often female teachers and male principals (Tindall & Hamil, 2004). This just reinforces the idea that males are in the position of superiority. Gender bias is often present in classrooms but sometimes teachers may not even detect it (Lundeberg, 1997). Sometimes gender bias is difficult to notice because it affects girls and boys in different ways (Sadker & Zittleman, 2005). Girls are not receiving the same quality of education as males according to Tindall and Hamil

(2004). Even though teachers cannot control the impact society has on gender bias they can control gender bias in their classrooms and they should do everything they can to create an equitable environment.

Gender influences in classrooms. Gender discrimination is a major issue our students are facing in schools today and many researchers have found that classroom teachers give unequal attention to male and female students (Aina & Cameron, 2011; Beaman et al., 2006; Garrahy, 2001; Higgins, 2010; Hruska, 2004; Jones et al., 2000; Parker & Riley, 2010; Sadker & Zittleman, 2005; Tindall & Hamil, 2004). Boys of all ages are receiving more opportunities to speak in preschool through college classroom settings all across the United States. As girls go through school they speak less and less and by the time students reach college males are twice as likely as females to speak up in class (Tindall & Hamil, 2004). This decrease in the participation of females could have something to do with the fact that teachers call on male students more often than female students and male students also call out in class more than female students (Higgins, 2010).

Research has shown that early gender bias experiences that children face can shape their attitudes and beliefs regarding relationships, their access to an equal education, and their participation in the corporate world in the future (Aina & Cameron, 2011). If students attend school for six hours a day for 13 years they are spending about 13,000 hours in classroom settings over the course of their educational career (Garrahy, 2001). This means that students spend a great deal of their time in a school setting. Even if females are speaking more often outside of school, fewer opportunities to participate in school settings will likely impact them in some way. If students are spending this much time in school, girls are receiving much fewer opportunities to participate and speak which could be detrimental to their education, their

attitudes, and their future careers and relationships. If females are consistently being silenced in classrooms they may eventually get discouraged and lose their self-confidence.

Gender Bias in Textbooks (GBIT) is also a problem in education today and may contribute to lowering girls' achievement (Blumberg, 2009). Textbooks are often used about 80 percent of the time spent in the classroom and involve the under-representation of females along with stereotypes of both genders' occupational and household roles. Blumberg points out that in textbooks women are commonly portrayed as passive, nurturing, and accommodating while the men were presented as doing all of the exciting and impressive activities. If students are exposed to these stereotypes on a regular basis it may send negative messages about how they are expected to behave according to their gender. Textbooks, teachers, peers, the school culture, and the family all work together to shape a child's idea of gender (Gosselin, 2007). Teachers need to do the best they can to create equal opportunities for learning and success for all of their students while disproving these negative stereotypes.

Schools often times separate boys and girls in the cafeteria, in lines, on the bus, and even on the playground (Sadker & Zittleman, 2005). When creating a gender-equitable classroom it does not mean dividing a classroom according to gender or creating gender-specific activities (Kommer, 2006). Mehta and Strough (2010) investigated how gender segregation among school-aged boys and girls in the U.S impacted them. They found that when students were segregated by gender the girls' identified more with their same-gender peers. They also found that girls held more expressive and feminine traits and they believed that peers of the same gender were better communicators than their other-gendered peers. Mehta and Strough also found that boys who were more competitive preferred interactions with peers that had the same activity preferences, which were commonly boys. Spending time with peers of the same gender

may become a reciprocal process over time that results in the desire for only same-gendered peers and friendships. When options for friendships and social interactions are limited to peers of the same gender students will likely lower the number of people available to converse with. Students may not learn different vocabulary, new skills, and alternate ways to communicate if they do not interact with their peers of the opposite gender (Gosselin, 2007).

Participation and calling out. According to Lundenberg (1997) men often dominate discussions, interrupt females, ignore contributions made by females, or even attribute a female's idea to a male during classroom interactions. Boys tend to have a more competitive communicative style, where females tend to use a cooperative communicative style (Mehta & Strough, 2010). The style in which boys speak often allows them to dominate classroom interactions so girls have fewer opportunities to contribute (Swann, 2008). This idea was supported in Hruska's year-long ethnographic study done in an English dominant kindergarten in the US in which boys were found to participate more frequently in whole class discussions (Hruska, 2004). The boys participated through interactions with the teacher and calling out during large group discussions. When the teacher asked a question and allowed anyone to call out the answer the boys were quicker to respond than the girls. The boys' willingness to raise their hands, interact with the teacher, and call-out during discussions made it much more difficult for the girls in the class to participate. Robbins (2004) found similar results in her study with Vietnamese refugee students in an English as an Additional Language (EAL) classroom. When a question was directed to the whole class the boys would stand up, raise their hand, and yell "Me!" (Robbins, 2004). The boys in Robbins' class would go up to the board and prepare to write an answer before being chosen by the teacher. This impacted the amount of opportunities the girls had to speak and participate.

Researchers found that educators reinforced males that called out of turn and criticized females when they did the same (Aina & Cameron, 2011; Garrahy, 2001). In Garrahy's study, which involved observations of three teachers, she found that if a female called out without raising her hand the teachers often reminded her of the rule and asked her to raise her hand before speaking. To contrast this, when boys spoke without raising their hand they were allowed to complete their thoughts and the teacher responded to what they had to say without reminding them of the rule. When the boys are not getting reprimanded they are likely to continue calling out during class. Gosseling (2007) looked at two first grade classrooms and found similar results in one of the classrooms but not the other. In one of the classrooms the girls raised their hands and waited to be called on. The boys in the class also raised their hands but sometimes they would call out or comment without being chosen. In the other classrooms the males and females equally shared speaking time, materials, and ideas. In all of the classrooms being observed only one classroom presented males and females as speaking and participating equally.

Not only do boys speak more often in classrooms but they use more words when they talk and often interrupt girls when they are speaking (Parker & Riley, 2010; Robbins, 2004). Robbins found that the males in her EAL class spoke for longer periods of time when they were talking in front of the entire class in a way to maintain dominance and receive attention from their peers and the teacher. To contrast this, when girls had to speak in front of the class they quickly said what they needed to and sat down. The males in Robbins' classroom were the most disruptive when their peers were trying to present or share something with the class. Similar findings were reported from Garrahy (2001) in that she observed boys interrupting lessons with verbal outbursts in the form of tattling, responding to a question, commenting, or calling out. When girls are participating, and using fewer words to begin with, and boys interrupt them it

decreases their speaking time even further. These interruptions and longer utterances give males greater opportunities to speak in the classroom which could put females at a disadvantage in the learning environment.

Teacher attention/being called on. Teachers give more attention to boys, both positive and negative, in the classroom (Beaman, Wheldall, & Kemp, 2006; Garrahy, 2001; Jung & Chung, 2005; Parker & Riley, 2010; Robbins, 2004). Jones, Evans, and Byrd (2000) found that boys draw more attention from the teacher through calling out, causing behavior problems, and interrupting their peers. In exhibiting behavior problems the boys are receiving more attention and an increased number of interactions with the teacher (Beaman et al., 2006). In Robbins' EAL classroom the boys also demanded more teacher attention by misbehaving. Robbins spent much more time disciplining the boys in the class as a result of their disruptive behavior. She felt the boys acted out to maintain dominance, get her attention, as a form of competition, and to avoid appearing unsuccessful. The boys in Robbins' classroom seemed to create higher expectations for themselves in regards to language learning which led them to be more competitive and critical of others. These classroom disruptions interrupted the learning of the other students. Even though these interactions are negative or for discipline reasons the boys are still receiving more individual attention from the teacher. Robbins suggested that girls need to be encouraged to be more assertive and command attention from their peers and the teacher so they do not get lost in the disruptions and behavior problems from the boys.

Males often require more attention from their teachers which leads to the teacher giving them more specific, instructive feedback (Aina & Cameron, 2001; Jung & Chung, 2005; Sadker & Zittleman, 2005). Garrahy (2001) found that boys are receiving more positive teacher attention through praise, constructive feedback, and assistance. Jung and Chung (2005) found

similar results when completing classroom observations in both elementary and middle schools. The results of the observations showed that male students had more social contact with their teachers that included jokes or social conversations (Jung & Chung, 2005). Male students used both verbal and nonverbal ploys to get the teacher's attention including interrupting, calling out, using a louder voice, increased vocal pitch, and jumping out of their seats (Tindall & Hamil, 2004). When females are not receiving this individual attention it may result in lower levels of achievement and, therefore, self-esteem (Aina & Cameron, 2001). According to Sadker (1999) teachers unconsciously make males the center of their instruction while giving them more focused consideration and comments. This increase in teacher attention often leads to greater academic success for males. If teachers are not aware they are paying more attention to males and giving them more opportunities to speak they will not be able to adjust their teaching.

Girls are more likely to sit quietly without raising their hand or volunteering an idea unless they are called on (Gosselin, 2007; Jung & Chung, 2005; Sadker & Zittleman, 2005; Tindall & Hamil, 2004). Research shows that teachers call on boys more than girls to answer questions (Jung & Chung, 2005; Sadker & Zittleman, 2005). When teachers only choose volunteers to answer questions they may not be giving females the opportunity to participate. When females do contribute they often require more wait time to reflect on what they want to say before raising their hand (Tindall & Hamil, 2004). Teachers often do not wait more than five seconds for a response from students (Lundeberg, 1997). If teachers are not giving enough wait time they may be putting their female students at a disadvantage. Teachers should be aware of this so they do not consistently call on the first student to raise their hand. Teachers may also want to implement a random choosing system that requires all students to participate. This would allow students to participate even when they do not volunteer or raise their hand. Hruska

(2004) suggests that educators need to consider who is talking and who has the opportunity to talk in their classrooms so they can be more gender equitable. If the teacher is able to find a pattern and is willing to shape their instructional practices they may be able to end the cycle of gender discrimination in their classroom.

Pragmatics and culture. Pragmatics is the study of how language is used in context (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Even if students have a large vocabulary and knowledge of the syntax of the English language they need to know how to respond to compliments, how to manage conversations, and how to recognize humor. These are all a part of the pragmatics of a language. In order for students to be able to communicate effectively with people from different cultures they need to understand the pragmatics of the language.

Linguistic style, or a characteristic speaking pattern, is shaped by a set of culturally learned signals (Tannen, 1995). Conversation is, in a sense, a ritual in that we use language in ways that our culture has deemed conventional and we expect certain responses depending on the language we use. How people talk and listen is influenced by their cultural experiences. Often times there are miscommunications between cultures as a result of conflicting cultural norms (Kasper & Omori, 2010). This can cause problems for ELLs when interacting with their teacher or peers from different cultures. If speakers are not aware of their conversation partner's cultural norms they may not be familiar with their conversational styles which could lead to miscommunication. Speakers with different cultural backgrounds might misinterpret others' conversational styles as pushiness or inconsistency (Bucholtz, 2008).

Sometimes when speaking to someone from a different culture a person may joke or disclose personal information as a way to bridge the ethnic boundaries. As a result of cultural norms these rituals may cause more of a gap or psychological divergence (Kasper & Omari,

2010). Silence and using pauses in conversations have an important role in achieving successful communication between speakers from different cultures (Ikuku, 2007; Tannen, 1995). Silence may be used as a politeness strategy or as a way of social control or even punishment. Speakers may be silent, giving the other speaker time to think before they respond. In Japanese cultures it is common for much longer pauses which often causes intercultural miscommunications for these speakers. According to Ikuku, depending on a student's country of origin or ethnic background, different lengths of a pause in conversation seem appropriate. This impacts classroom teachers and the interactions they have with their students. If it is normal for long pauses in a certain culture a teacher may interpret it as the student not knowing the answer.

Indirectness is another difference in linguistic style that changes drastically in different cultures and can be damaging in a conversation. Research shows that some American women are more indirect than men and they seem to be particularly indirect when it comes to telling other people what to do (Tannen, 1995). If females are not direct when asking for assistance in school their needs may not be met. These students could be sitting in class without knowing how to ask for help. This may put female students at an even greater disadvantage when it comes to academic success. If a teacher is not familiar with their students' cultures they may not know how to meet their academic needs such as allowing for a long pause before a response or making sure they understand the task or assignment.

Gender and culture. Culture is specific to a social group and is something shared within that group that often reflects their historical circumstances (Kasper & Omori, 2010; Rueda & Stillman, 2012). Where a culture comes from and the history they share may influence their beliefs, practices, and values. Culture is the day-to-day patterns of living or cultural practices that allow individuals to relate and survive in both their social and physical environment. The

culture a child is raised in may impact the way they view gender or their individual role in society.

Gender ideologies can affect students' access to certain interactions in a second language learning context such as the classroom (Hurska, 2004). These interactions may be needed in order to develop a second language. How ELLs think about gender impacts their behaviors and friendships and sometimes shape their participation habits in a classroom. If ELLs are under the impression that females should remain silent, they may not participate during a classroom discussion or raise their hand to answer a question. When ELLs believe they should only speak with peers from the same culture or gender they may not have as many interaction opportunities. Children construct their gender identity with influences from their family and the community before they even begin school (Aina & Cameeron, 2011; Gosselin, 2007). In White, middle-class, American cultures boys are often treated differently than girls beginning at birth. Families often validate what they consider to be appropriate roles and relationships according to the child's gender. There are cultural biases that certain groups are faced with that may expose children to stereotypes in regards to gender (Aina & Cameron, 2011). A study done by Nykiel-Herbert (2010) on twelve ELLs who were refugees from Iraq revealed that if the learning environment represents a student's home culture it will help them succeed. In order for teachers to be able to do this they need to be aware of the norms and attitudes reflected in their students' cultures. It is essential that teachers have knowledge about their students' culture, history, and experiences in order for them to provide effective second language learning instruction (Lavadenz, 2010).

Middle-Eastern culture and gender. There is a long history of gender inequities in Middle-Eastern countries that is still relevant in societies and schools today. In Turkey, the

education of girls continues to be a major concern for the government (Isiksal & Cakiroglu, 2008). There are individuals and groups that are trying to fix these gender inequities. In the 20th century there were women's groups that emerged in the Middle East that demanded full citizenship and other rights for women (Fay, 2008). They also wanted reforms including the abolishment of polygamy, an increase in the minimum age for marriage, and expanding women's opportunities for education and employment. While the male elites in these countries wanted to be recognized as modern and progressive they were reluctant to give up this patriarchal power they had over women. This patrilineal society that men were familiar with granted men certain privileges and deemed women as subordinates (Souweidane & Huesmann, 1999). These reforms and changes regarding gender in Middle-Eastern societies may be a source of conflict and unease for many families. These cultural ideas of women being subordinate or less important may stay with students as they enter schools.

Walters (1999) completed research in Korba, an Arabic speaking town of about 20,000 citizens. When completing his research Walters found that not one person could name a woman over the age of 50 who could read or write. He found the opportunities for literacy, and the access to prestige varieties of the language, were slower to reach the females. Walter paid a female college student to complete his interviews for him since he could not speak Arabic. When a young man was interviewed he criticized the female interviewer for going to school and interacting with men as a part of the interview process. The female responded with silence even though she disagreed with his opinions. The interviewee's opinions are representative of conservative Muslims who feel that the female body, mind, and life chances should be controlled by males. The idea that women should focus on their home and family and constantly be under the supervision of her husband is a traditional view of women in Middle-Eastern countries

(Walters, 1999). Some families who hold these beliefs are faced with conflicting norms and expectations when they enter co-educational situations in America.

Nykiel-Herbert (2010) did an intervention program with a group of students from Iraq with interrupted schooling experiences. She found that the Iraqi students were put in mainstream classrooms and their needs were not being met. Nykiel-Herbert (2010) discovered that the teachers in those classrooms were unaware of the different cultural norms these students brought with them. These families had cultural norms in regards to seating arrangements and interactions between genders, how they dressed, the food they ate, what religion they practiced, and how they acted in public. In Middle-Eastern countries it is typical for students to attend a single-gender school so the concept of co-educational schools was a problem for many of the parents; a problem that many teachers were not aware of.

Cultural norms were not the only problem these students were facing in schools; teacher and learning styles were very different than what they were used to. In Middle-Eastern countries teachers often taught using direct lecturing or reading from a textbook (Derderian-Aghajanian & Cong Cong, 2012). This sometimes creates a problem for Middle-Eastern students in US schools since they are not familiar with the interactive teaching styles used by American teachers. In a qualitative study done by Derderian-Aghajanian and Cong Cong (2012) two Middle-Eastern students were interviewed about their school experiences. The students reported that the teaching styles in America were different than what they were used to. The results showed that the students found it difficult to understand and participate effectively in class discussions as a result of their diverse cultural backgrounds and the variation of teaching styles. In Middle-Eastern cultures the students regard the teachers as the absolute authority so they may have a hard time expressing any concerns they may have.

As a part of the Middle-Eastern culture, girls are not supposed to come into physical contact with boys (Nykiel-Herbert, 2010). This created an internal struggle for girls when they had to take Physical Education with boys and they often made an excuse so they did not have to participate. These conflicts made school difficult for the girls in Nykiel-Herbert's study because they were faced with different cultural norms and expectations at school and at home. These conflicting expectations were likely a source of stress and discomfort for these students which probably made it hard for them to concentrate on school and learning English. If teachers are aware of these cultural norms they may be more sensitive to them when creating lesson plans and activities. If a female Middle-Eastern student is partnered with a male student or put in a group of all males they are probably going to avoid participation of any kind so they do not interact with the males. This may put female Middle-Eastern students at a disadvantage if their teachers are not considering these cultural norms as they are planning for instruction. Students can learn a lot from interacting with peers from the opposite gender but when they are first learning a language and adapting to the culture of the school, the respect and recognition of these cultural norms from the teacher is important.

Nykiel-Herbert (2010) found these conflicting cultural norms were causing the students difficulty in their academics. Often times these students do not have the proficiency in English to explain to their teachers if they have a problem or what situations make them uncomfortable. The teachers in this study set up a separate classroom made up of only Iraqi children who tested very low in English (Nykiel-Herbert, 2010). These children went to this separate classroom for one year and at the end of the year they were to return to the mainstream classroom and continue with the ESL pull-out program they were receiving prior to the study. The teachers allowed the students to choose their seats on the first day in this separate classroom and instantly the students

separated according to gender. They created a row of desks for the boys on one side of the room and a row of desks for girls on the other side of the room. The students only went to the other side of the room if they needed a supply but they never talked to, helped, or worked with peers of the opposite gender. Gender is a part of culture that is covert and subconscious. This makes it harder to describe or explain to others. The cultural norms, in regards to gender, will probably become clear when students are put into a situation in which they are required to interact with individuals from other cultures. A perfect example of this is Middle-Eastern students who were immersed in an American school.

Aligning the students' home culture with the school culture is a factor in their academic success. In a survey of normative beliefs done by Souweidane and Huesmann (1999) it was determined a child's beliefs are influenced by their family and the prevailing beliefs of the culture in which the child is raised. In Middle-Eastern countries it is common for people to visit a friend or neighbor's home without being invited (Nykiel-Herbert, 2010). Children were allowed to come and go as they wanted in these communities. Children were not seen as a burden or disruption when visiting their friends and they often jumped right in to the family routine and helped with chores or making dinner. This cultural norm transferred into the classroom. The females in this separate classroom often visited each other's desk offering help or just to talk. This was something these girls learned from what they were experiencing at home. The teachers were familiar with this cultural norm and did not interfere in these interactions between students. In Middle-Eastern homes children became mature and other members of the family relied on them at a much younger age than American children. They often helped their younger siblings and parents. These students took the same approach in class by helping the younger peers, allowing them to copy their work, and prompting answers as they

considered it taking care of the younger students. If the teacher is not aware of this practice they will likely punish these students for taking or giving other students the answers. In reality these children are just following the cultural norms they see at home. The disapproval from the teacher will not only lead to conflicting norms but it may discourage these students from interacting and practicing the language.

Oral language skills are valued among Middle-Eastern cultures, specifically the Kurdish people (Nykiel-Herbert, 2010). Since the Kurds' literacy was often low they used their oral abilities to talk, joke, tell stories, and express their opinions. The students who took part in this intervention saw great value in oral performances and strived to improve their oral language skills. In a study done by Abdo and Breen (2010) similar findings were found regarding the oral language development for students in Jordan. The study found by allowing students to engage in free-flowing conversations and spontaneous oral presentations, the students' English language acquisition improved. This is important since there is a serious deficiency in Jordanian students' abilities to use spoken English effectively for communication purposes. If teachers are aware of this they may increase the number of opportunities they give students to interact or give oral presentations.

Teacher awareness. Teachers are the only ones who can adjust their teaching techniques and include strategies to provide students with a gender equitable education (Garrahy, 2001). Often times the gender bias that is happening in classrooms is so subtle that teachers are not even aware it is happening (Marshall & Renhartz, 1997; Sadker & Zittleman, 2005). Teachers need to have proof of the gender discrimination in their classroom before they can recognize the problem and possibly choose to fix it accordingly. When teachers are made aware of gender

discrimination they will likely adjust their practices and strategies to make their classroom a more equitable environment.

In a study done by Garrahy (2001), three teachers' beliefs regarding gender discrimination in their classroom were compared with their actual teaching practices. The findings from the study showed the teachers' beliefs did not match their practices. All three of the teachers thought they were teaching from a gender-blind position when, in fact, this was not the case. The results of Garrahy's study showed that the teachers used strategies and techniques that benefited the boys more than the girls. Each of these teachers felt as though they were giving all of their students access to an equal education, regardless of their gender. The findings showed that none of these teachers were teaching in the way they thought they were. The study hoped to encourage other teachers to examine and reflect on their beliefs about gender and how the beliefs influence their teaching (Garrahy, 2001). If the findings of this study show that gender discrimination is happening in both general education and ESL classrooms it will hopefully inspire teachers to make sure they are providing an equitable environment for all of their students.

In a study done by Jones et al. (2000) a gender resource module was used to change teacher behaviors so they were able to provide a more gender equitable classroom. The teachers were videotaped and observed, and the findings were shared with them. When the teachers were shown that they had significantly fewer interactions with their female students than their male students their behaviors changed and there was more gender equity in their classrooms. After the teachers completed this gender resource model they realized that when they were disciplining their male students for acting out and interrupting it was increasing their interaction time with these students, even though it was unintentional. Once these teachers were made aware of these

gender inequities they were more conscious of their behaviors, how their students acted, and the amount of positive interactions with female students increased (Jones et al., 2000).

Not only should teachers be aware of gender inequities in their classroom but they should be aware of who their students are, where they are from, and what knowledge and beliefs they bring with them. Research shows there is a strong need to change teacher attitudes and beliefs about language minority students and what they can contribute to the classroom (August et al., 2009). ELLs are commonly thought of solely in terms of their language differences. Rueda and Stillman (2012) believe that cultural issues are just as important as the language differences for ELLs. Teachers need to be aware of these cultural differences in order to meet the educational needs of all of their students. In Nykiel-Herbert's (2010) study it was found there was a great deal of cultural tension the teachers did not acknowledge that was causing their students distress in regards to their learning.

Helping teachers become prepared to effectively meet the needs of ELLs is an urgent concern in the field of education as a result of the achievement and opportunity gaps these students face in schools across the United States (Rueda & Stillman, 2012). When educators and policy makers are aware of the problems the students who are struggling face, they will be better able to work toward solutions. It is important for teachers to understand their students' cultural and ethnic norms, customs, practices, attitudes, and the relationship between culture and learning (Abdo & Breen, 2010; Rueda & Stillman, 2012). When teachers are aware of the cultural differences they will be able to better meet the needs of the students while connecting with their students on a more personal level (Abdo & Breen, 2010). If the teacher seems like an insider of the culture the students are likely to listen better, have a higher rate of reception, and relate to the teacher better (Abdo & Breen, 2010). Teachers will not be considered an insider

until they are aware and accepting of each one of their student's cultural norms and adjusting the instruction so these students are receiving equal opportunities to learn and participate.

Class discussions and participation are a part of everyday learning experiences. If males speak more, talk using longer utterances, interrupt other students, and require more individual teacher attention this may put all females, and specifically female ELLs, at a disadvantage in general education classrooms. If female ELLs are not participating in class discussions, not receiving equal opportunities to speak, and put in situations that are not culturally appropriate they will likely have more difficulty acquiring a second language. Intrinsic motivation alone does not ensure that ELLs will have the opportunity to practice using English or interact with native speakers (Hruska, 2004). Teachers need to make sure they are giving these students ample opportunities to practice the language, answer questions, and contribute to discussions, regardless of their gender or culture. If the teacher has created an equitable environment, by giving males and females equal speaking time, they are also creating a more comfortable environment for ELLs to practice using the language. This study will strive to answer the question of whether or not males are getting more opportunities to speak in the classroom setting through calling out and being called on by the teacher. The additional question this study is looking at is whether or not Middle-Eastern females and males interact with their peers of the opposite gender. If teachers have the answers to these questions they will be better prepared to adjust their teaching to meet the needs of all of their students.

Method

Setting

The primary researcher distributed a survey to the teachers in a high school located in a suburban school district in Western New York. The researcher also completed the observations

in this school. All of the observations took place at a high school located in this district. The school district serves approximately 8,000 students from ethnically, socially, and economically diverse neighborhoods. There are over 1,000 students enrolled in this high school that includes grades nine through twelve. The graduation requirements for the school include four credits of English, four credits of Social Studies, three credits of Math, three credits of Science, one credit of Art/Music, half of a credit in Health, and two credits in Physical Education. Passing grades on the NYS Regents exams in English, Math, US History, Global History, and Science are also required for graduation. Fifty-three percent of graduated students from this high school go to a four year college or university. The district has recently seen an influx of Arabic speakers and students from Middle-Eastern cultures.

In this school district the ESL teachers work with students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. The ELL students in the district speak a wide range of languages including Russian, Kurdish, Burmese, Arabic, Spanish, Chinese, and more. The district services their ELLs through a Free-Standing English as a Second Language Program. The high school instruction of ESL in this district is a self-contained model. The students receive English language support as a part of their daily schedule. The ELLs in this high school also receive academic content instruction while their English language development is being supported in the ESL classroom. The ESL teacher communicates with the students' content area teachers to collaborate.

Sometimes the ESL teacher co-teaches with a content area teacher but this was not the case for the 2012-2013 school year. The ESL teacher focuses on developing both social and academic language. Students identified as ELLs are required by law to receive ESL instruction every school day. The level of proficiency determines the amount of ESL instruction the student

receives. There are three proficiency levels determined by the students' scores on the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT): beginner, intermediate, and advanced. The students identified as beginners receive the most SL instruction while the advanced students receive the least. The advanced ELLs in this high school attend ESL for one period per day, the intermediate students attend two periods, and the beginner students receive three periods of ESL instruction.

Sample/Participants

Observations. The primary researcher (Lindsey Martin) e-mailed two teachers and asked if she could complete observations in their classrooms. One of the teachers is the only high school ESL teacher in the district. The other teacher observed is a global teacher. He teaches 9th grade Global, Honors Global, and a World War II class. This teacher has general education students, special education students, and ELLs in his classes. Some of his classes are co-taught with a male Special Education teacher. Both the general education and ESL teachers gave tentative approval for the researcher to complete these observations in their classrooms pending SUNY Fredonia's approval of the study. Once approval for the study was given from SUNY Fredonia both teachers signed a consent form (Appendix A) before the observations began.

The two teachers the primary researcher observed were both Caucasian males between the ages of thirty and fifty. Both of the teachers have been teaching for more than ten years and have Masters Degrees in education. The students that were observed were both males and females ranging from ninth grade to twelfth grade. In the ESL classroom the researcher specifically observed the interactions and speaking patterns of Middle-Eastern male and female

students. In the general education classroom the primary researcher observed both male and female students in regards to how much they were participating.

Surveys. The primary researcher distributed a survey to all of the teachers working in this high school through email (Appendix B C). All of the participants who completed the survey were eighteen years of age or older. The survey did not ask for the participant's age, name, gender, or job title. The only part of the survey related to the participants' specific characteristics is the participant had to confirm the statement, "Participant is over 18 years of age". The researcher acknowledged that participants were both male and female since the district is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All of the subjects who participated in the survey are from a range of cultures. The participants are employed by the school district in which the observations will take place and include teachers, principals, building staff, and teacher aides who work directly with the students. The personnel who completed the survey will remain unidentifiable and did not have direct contact with the primary researcher. The researcher does not have knowledge as to accurate participant age or gender.

Procedure and Data Collection

The primary researcher (Lindsey Martin) obtained conditional consent from the school district she conducted her observations in. The tentative consent was obtained by the primary researcher through emailing the principal and was pending SUNY Fredonia's approval of the study. Once the primary researcher obtained approval through HSR the school district allowed her to conduct the study. The name of the school district and the school used in this study were not released. The primary researcher used pseudonyms to protect the teachers observed in the study. The primary researcher did not collect any personal information other than the fact that the

participant is over the age of 18. All checklists and data obtained from research will be destroyed within one year.

Surveys. Once the primary researcher (Lindsey Martin) received approval from SUNY Fredonia she distributed a survey to all the teachers in the school district through district email using Survey Monkey. The primary researcher used a published survey from Jung and Chung (2005) to ensure validity (See Appendix C). There was a statement of consent in the email (Appendix C) and at the beginning of the survey. The goal of the survey was to determine teachers' opinions in regards to gender differences in their classrooms. Specifically, the survey looked at teacher opinions regarding participation, calling out during class, the amount of praise given to certain groups of students, discipline, and individual teacher attention. When the surveys were all collected the primary researcher compiled and analyzed the data. After one year, the surveys and data will all be shredded.

Observations. Once the primary researcher (Lindsey Martin) received approval from SUNY Fredonia she had both of the teachers being observed sign a consent form (Appendix A). Once the consent forms were signed the researcher began her observations. She observed the ESL classroom during periods one, two, and three for a minimum of ten days and a maximum of twenty days. These days were not consecutive. The primary researcher sat in the back of the classroom to complete the observations and had no contact with any of the students. The observations were done to document the types of strategies the teachers used which might impact classroom participation and interaction (and to see if this varies between a mainstream classroom and an ESL classroom). The primary researcher used the observation protocol found in Appendix D. The primary researcher noted the teacher, grade level, date, number of students present, observation times, and topic at the beginning of each class period. Each activity or task

was document and included the content, the nature of the activity, and what the teacher was doing. Some of the activities were marked as sequential and other times the different activities were taking place at the same time. Any materials or teaching aids used by the teacher was documented on this form along with the instructional strategies used in the lesson. It was also noted if the activities were done as a whole group, as small groups, as pairs, or as individuals.

The researcher did not interact with the students or disrupt the classroom in any way. The researcher noticed that the male and female students in the ESL classroom were not interacting with each other. She began to document the interactions on the back of the observation protocol form. The researcher made a chart with the three headings: *females and females*, *males and males*, *females and males*. Each time a female interacted with another female she put a tally mark under the heading *females and females*. Each time a male interacted with another male she put a tally mark under the heading *males and males*. Each time a female interacted with a male she put a tally mark under the heading *females and males*. Any verbal interaction was counted. Sometimes the verbal interacts were short and consisted of a simple question and answer and other times they were long and lasted a few minutes. Regardless of the length of the interaction it received one tally mark. Once the observations were completed the primary researcher added up all of the interactions and put a total on each sheet.

The primary researcher found that often times students were allowed to call out without raising their hand in the ESL classroom. She began documenting how often males and females called out and how often they were called on by the teacher on the back of the observation protocol. She created two T-charts. The first T-chart was labeled *Called On* and had two subheadings: *Males* and *Females*. Each time a male student was called on by the teacher the researcher put a tally mark under the chart *Called on* and the subheading *Males*. Each time a

female student was called on by the teacher the researcher put a tally mark under the chart *Called On* and the subheading *Females*. The second T-chart was labeled *Calling Out* and had two subheadings as well: *Males* and *Females*. Each time a male student called out the researcher put a tally under the chart *Calling Out* and the subheading *Males*. Each time a female student called out the researcher put a tally under the chart *Calling Out* and the subheading *Females*. The total for each subheading was totaled at the end of each period.

The primary researcher observed the general education classroom for periods four, five, six, seven, and eight for a total of thirty class periods. These days and periods were not always consecutive. The primary researcher sat in the back of the classroom to observe the teacher, the instructional strategies used, and the students. During the observations with the general education teacher the researcher used the same observational protocol that was used in the ESL classroom and documented the same information (Appendix D). The same T-charts were created on the back of the observation protocol form for the general education classroom and the same procedure was used to determine how often males and females were calling out and how often they were being called on by the teacher.

Once all of the observations were completed the researcher interviewed the ESL teacher and the general education teacher. The researcher asked the questions found in Appendix E. The questions used for the semi-structured interview were from a published journal article by Garrahy (2001). The researcher recorded the interviews using a tape recorder. The researcher then transcribed the interviews while listening to the recordings.

The observation protocols for both the ESL classroom and the general education classroom were kept in order according to date. The checklists were all kept in a binder separated by one divider. The ESL checklists were kept on one side of the divider and the

general education checklists were kept on the other side of the divider. The transcription of the interview, along with the survey results were also kept in this binder by the primary researcher.

Data Analysis

Once the survey was closed the researcher created a chart in Excel and documented each participant and their response. The survey was a likert scale and each response was given a number. *Strongly Disagree* was 1, *Disagree* was 2, *No Opinion* was 3, *Agree* was 4, and *Strongly Agree* was 5. Forty participants took part in the survey and each one was located in a separate row starting with s1 through s40. Each survey question was the label of a row, numbers 1 through 7. If participant 1 responded *Disagree* for question 1 the researcher would put a number 2 under S1, question 1. This was done for each survey question for all of the 40 participants.

When the observations were completed the primary researcher noted how many students were present each period in the ESL and the general education classroom. She created a chart for each classroom that showed how many males were present each day and how many females were present each day.

The primary researcher also noted how many times each instructional strategy was used in each classroom. She created a chart with each instructional strategy labeled and put a tally mark under the label each time it was used. The researcher created a chart for the ESL classroom and another one for the general education classroom. These results were then transferred to an Excel document. Although the primary researcher documented all of the instructional strategies she decided to focus only on the strategies that impact student participation, interaction, and speaking opportunities. The primary researcher decided to include the following instructional strategies in the results: Presentation/Lecture, Presentation with

Discussion, Teacher interacting with student, Check for Understanding, Class Discussion, Small Group Discussion, and Writing Seat Work.

When the observations were completed the primary researcher added up all of the tally marks under *Calling Out: Girls* and got a total number for each ESL class period. Once there was a total for every period, each total was added together to get a final number for the ESL classroom. The researcher then added up all of the tally marks under *Calling Out: Boys* and got a total number for each period. Once there was a total for every period, each daily total was added together to get a final number for the ESL classroom. The final total for *Calling Out: Girls* was compared to the final total for *Calling Out: Boys* to determine if boys or girls called out more. The same procedure was used in the general education classroom and the same results were compared.

The researcher then added up all of the tally marks under *Called On, Girls* and got a total number for each ESL class period. Once there was a total for every period, they were added together to get a final number. The researcher then added up all of the tally marks under *Called On, Boys* and got a total number for each ESL class period. Once there was a total for every period, they were added together to get a final number. The final total for *Called On, Girls* was compared to the final total for *Called On, Boys* to determine if boys or girls were called on more by the ESL teacher. The same procedure was used in the general education classroom and the same results were compared.

After the surveys were completed, the observations were finished, and the interviews were transcribed the researcher first compared the observation results to the survey answers. The researcher was looking to see if the teachers' answers to the interview questions matched what

was observed in their classroom. The researcher also looked at the survey results compared to the observations to determine if the findings correlated to the survey responses.

Validity Considerations

Structural corroboration, also known as triangulation, was used in this study to make the results more valid. The primary researcher conducted observations, released a survey, and held semi-structured interviews. The test validity was considered when the primary researcher chose the instrument to use to survey the teachers in the school district. The instrument was a survey published by Jung and Chung (2005). The semi-structured interview questions also came from a published journal (Garrahy, 2001).

External validity should be considered when generalizing the results for participants outside of the study. In regards to the applicability, or transferability of this study the primary researcher believes the study can be applied to other individuals in similar teaching situations. The results of the survey can be applied to any teachers teaching in a suburban, co-educational, school district. The results of the observations and interviews could be applied to high school settings in suburban school districts with a similar population of students. The findings from the observations in the ESL classroom may vary from school to school depending on the instructional practices and the different cultures represented in the classroom.

Descriptive validity was considered when the primary researcher analyzed the results. When determining how often girls called out compared to how often boys called out the researcher used tally marks and added the results. The researcher used the same process for all of the tally marks and checked her work over to ensure accuracy of the results. When comparing the responses to the semi-structured interview and comparing them with the observation results the researcher tried to disregard any potential biases she may have. In regards to consistency and

dependability the study could be replicated with similar participants in similar settings by following the procedure and using the checklists, survey questions, and interview questions provided.

Results

The primary researcher observed a general education classroom as well as an ESL classroom in a suburban high school in Western New York for a total of thirty class periods each. The researcher used an observation protocol form to record observations. The results from these observations are documented below.

The general education classroom observed was taught by a male teacher. The teacher taught Global 9, Global 9 Honors, and a World War II class. The desks were arranged in individual rows so students were not sitting with anyone else. The teacher's desk was located on the side of the room. The student desks were facing the front board and projector, which the teacher used during each observation.

The ESL classroom was much larger than the Global classroom. There were two computers located in the back of the room, a table with seven or eight chairs, and 24 desks in groups of two. The teacher's desk was located in the front of the classroom, facing away from the student desks. Student desks were facing the front board and the overhead projector. The ESL teacher allowed students to choose their seats and girls consistently chose to sit with girls, and boys chose to sit with boys.

The ESL teacher that was observed has been teaching for twelve years, with eight of those years teaching in the school district in which the observations took place. The ESL teacher travels between two high schools in the district and is only at this particular school for periods 1, 2, and 3. Period 1 is considered content ESL, period 2 is considered ESL English, and period 3

is normally known as beginner only ESL, but since there are not any beginners this year it is more content ESL for the students who are not in period 1. In periods 1 and 3 the students are allowed to work on their homework for their content classes and complete castle learning assigned specifically for ESL. The ESL teacher services seventeen students identified as ELLs in this school. Seven of the students are from Middle Eastern countries. Five of the seventeen students are from Asian countries, two are from Puerto Rico, and the rest of the students are from a variety of places including Russia, Africa, and Colombia.

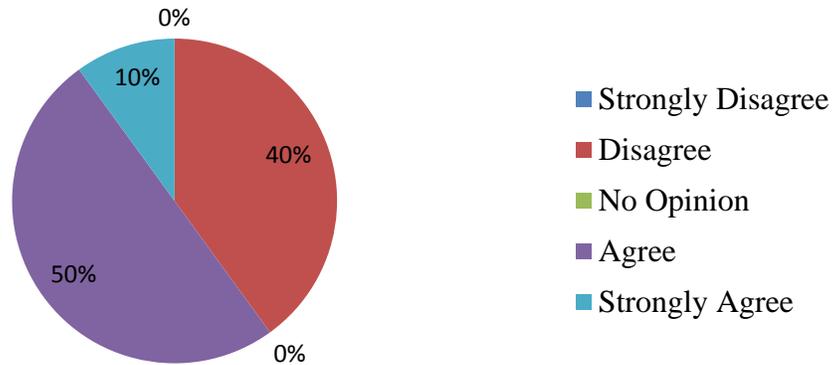
Survey Responses

The primary researcher distributed a seven question survey to teachers who work at the school in which the observations took place. The researcher distributed the survey to 129 teachers and 40 took part in the survey. This provided a 31% return rate which makes the results valid. The survey was a Likert scale in which each statement had five possible responses including *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *no opinion*, *agree*, and *strongly agree*.

The first statement on the survey was “*Male students answer by calling out without being called on more than female students do during a lesson*”. This item was asked in order to determine how many teachers believe that males call out more often than females. If the participant responded with agree or strongly agree it indicated that they believe males call out more often than females. If the participant responded with *disagree* or *strongly disagree* it indicates they believe females call out more often than males. More than half of the participants agreed with the statement while less than half disagreed. These results are shown in figure 1.

Figure 1

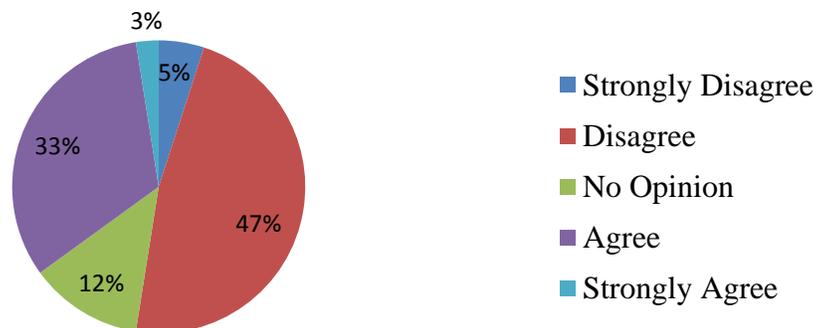
Item 1 - Male students answer by calling out without being called on more than female students do during a lesson



The second statement on the survey read “*Female students take a little more time to think about answers and respond than male students when questions are asked*”. This question was asked to determine if teachers think males or females require more time to think before they speak or respond. If participants agreed with the statement they believe that females take more time to think and if they disagreed with the statement they believe that male students take more time to think. More than half of the participants agreed with the statement indicating they believe females take more time to think before speaking. These results can be found in figure 2.

Figure 2

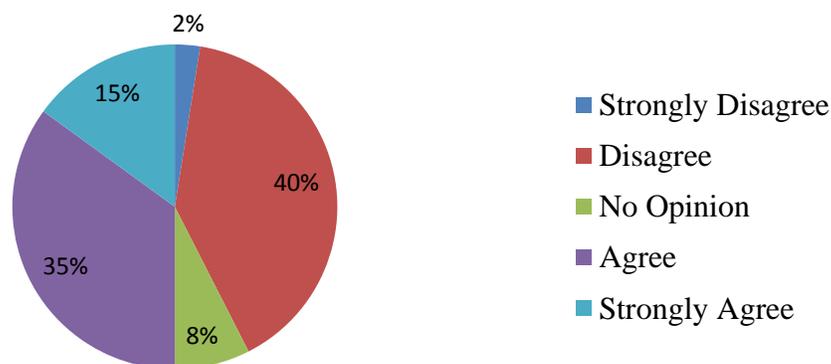
Item 2 - Female students take a little more time to think about answers and respond than male students when questions are asked



The third statement on the survey read “*More female students ask questions than male students do during a lesson*”. Less than half of the participants disagreed with this statement indicating they believe male students ask more questions than female students during a lesson. Approximately ten percent of respondents had no opinion, which may indicate that they are not sure or they may believe males and females ask a similar number of questions during lessons. These results can be found in figure 3.

Figure 3

Item 3 - More female students ask questions than male students do during a lesson



The fourth statement on the survey read “*Those students who are reprimanded during a lesson, due to being noisy or misbehaving, are mostly female students*”. This question was asked to determine if the respondents believed females or males were disciplined more frequently. The majority of respondents, almost 90%, disagreed with the statement indicating they believe the majority of students disciplined during a lesson are males. Less than ten percent of respondents agreed with the statement, indicating they believe female students are disciplined more often than male students. These results can be viewed in figure 4. Item five on the survey also had to

do with discipline and behavior problems and stated “*When individual work is assigned to students during a lesson, the performance of male students is checked more frequently than that of female students because of the male students’ inattentiveness*”. More than half of respondents disagreed with the statement, indicating that they do not check the males’ work more often than the females. More than ten percent of respondents replied no opinion, which may mean they are not sure or they feel they give equal attention to males and females in their classroom. Less than half of respondents agreed with the statement, indicating they believe they give their male students more attention than their female students. These results can be found in figure 5.

Figure 4

Item 4 -- Those students who are reprimanded during a lesson, due to being noisy or misbehaving, are mostly female students

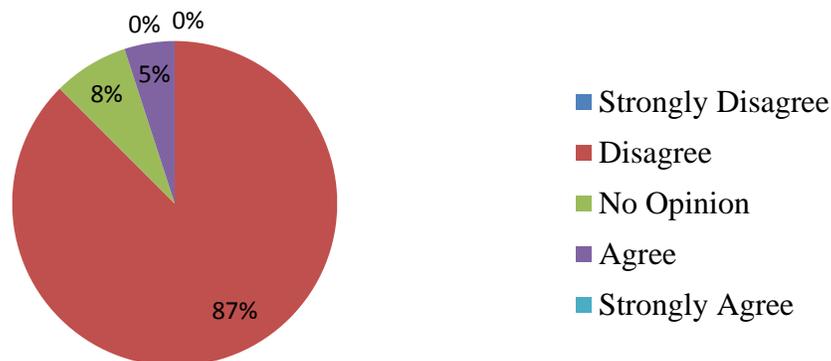
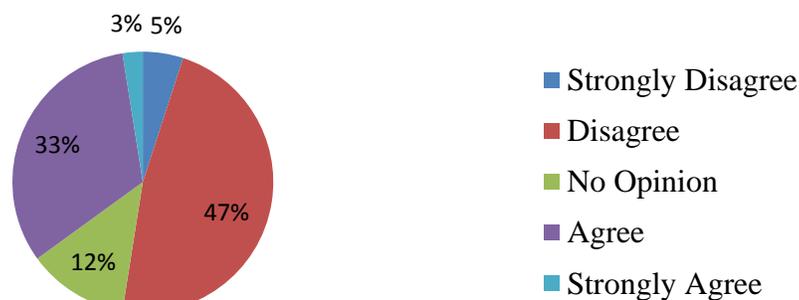


Figure 5

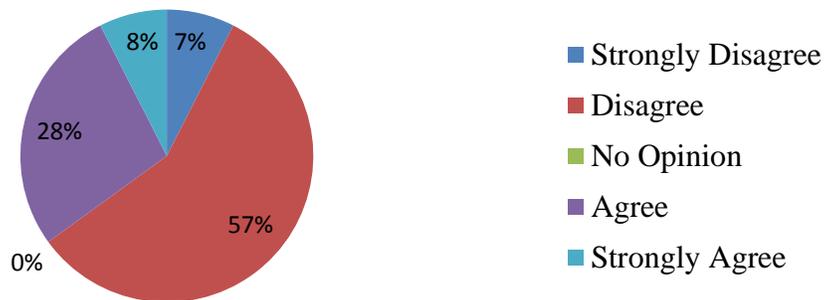
Item 5 - When individual work is assigned to students during a lesson, the performance of male students is checked more frequently than that of female students because of the male students' inattentiveness



The sixth item on the survey stated “*Male students are disciplined more strongly than female students, even when the female students are exhibiting the same behavior*”. Almost 70% of respondents disagreed with this statement, indicating that they do not believe males are disciplined more strongly than female students. Less than 40% of respondents agreed with the statement, indicating that male students are disciplined more strongly than female students. These results can be found in figure 6.

Figure 6

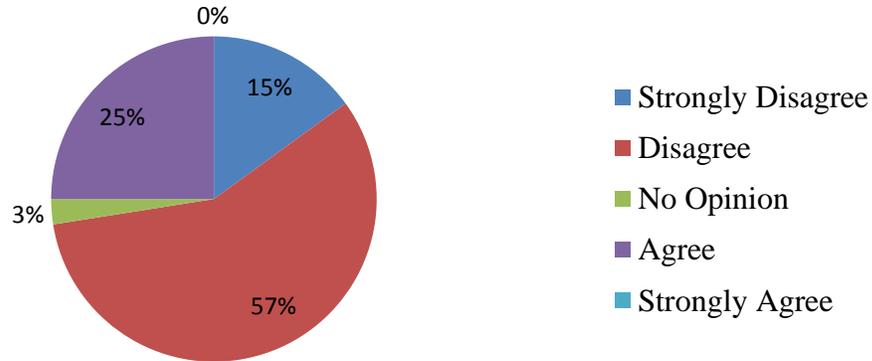
Item 6 - Male students are disciplined more strongly than female students, even when the female students are exhibiting the same behavior



The seventh and final question on the survey stated “*The students praised the most by the teacher for their responses during a lesson are mostly male students*”. This question was asked to determine the participants’ opinion on positive reinforcement. Approximately three fourths of respondents disagreed with the statement, which indicates they do not believe male students are praised more often, but rather the females are the ones receiving more praise. These results are shown in figure 7.

Figure 7

Item 7 - The students praised the most by the teacher for their responses durring a lesson are mostly male students



Calling Out and Called On

The primary researcher found that the number of students present differed for each class period. The researcher organized how many boys and how many girls were present for each class period in the general education room and the ESL classroom and created a chart for each classroom. Figure 8 includes the attendance for the ESL classroom. Figure 9 includes the attendance for the general education classroom.

Figure 8

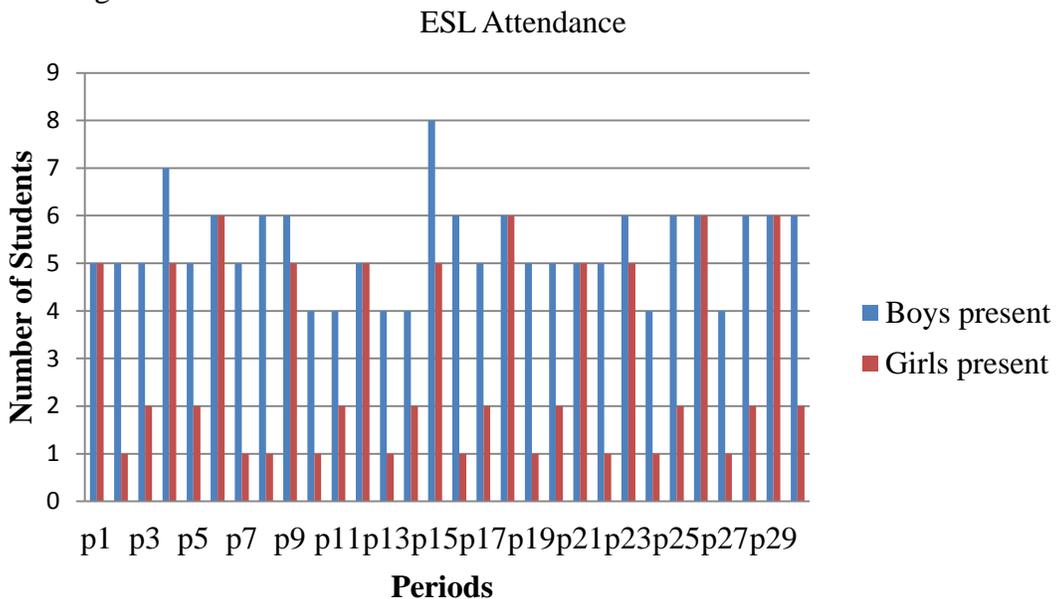
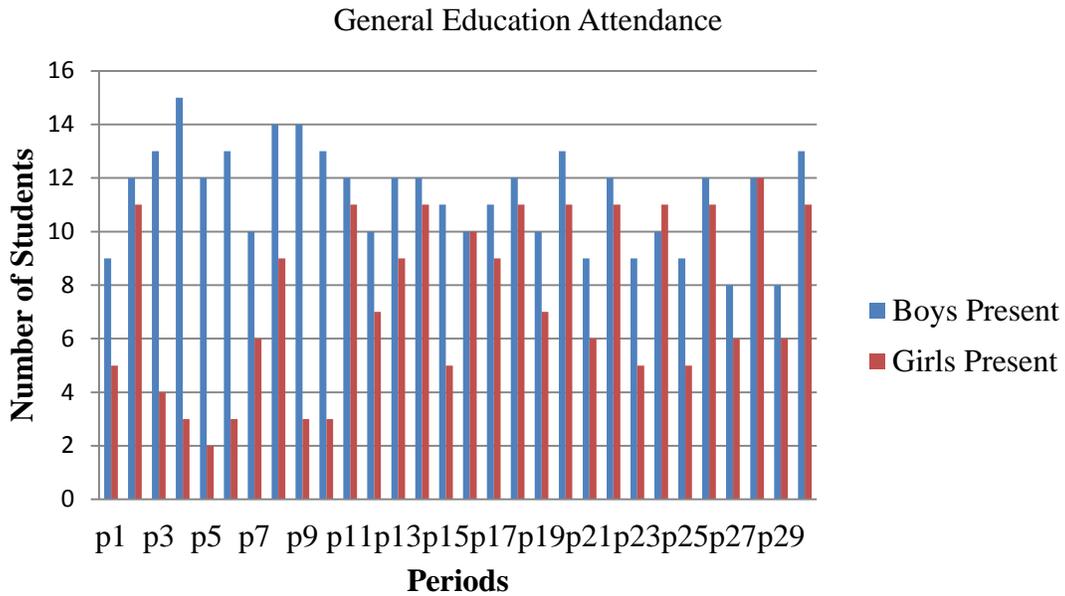


Figure 9



The primary researcher observed the general education classroom for thirty periods over the course of ten days. Throughout the observations the researcher observed boys call out a total of 476 times and girls call out a total of 162 over the course of the 30 class periods. The results in figure 10 show how many times girls and boys called out each individual period that was observed. The primary researcher observed the ESL classroom for a total of thirty class periods. Over the course of the 30 class periods the researcher observed boys calling out a total of 947 times and girls calling out a total of 239 times. The results in figure 11 below show how many times girls and boys called out in each class period.

Figure 10

Calling Out General Education

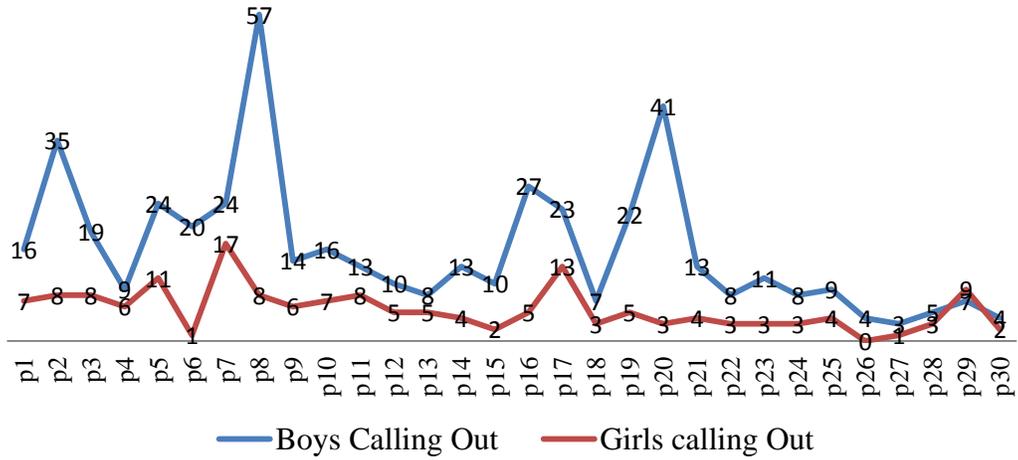
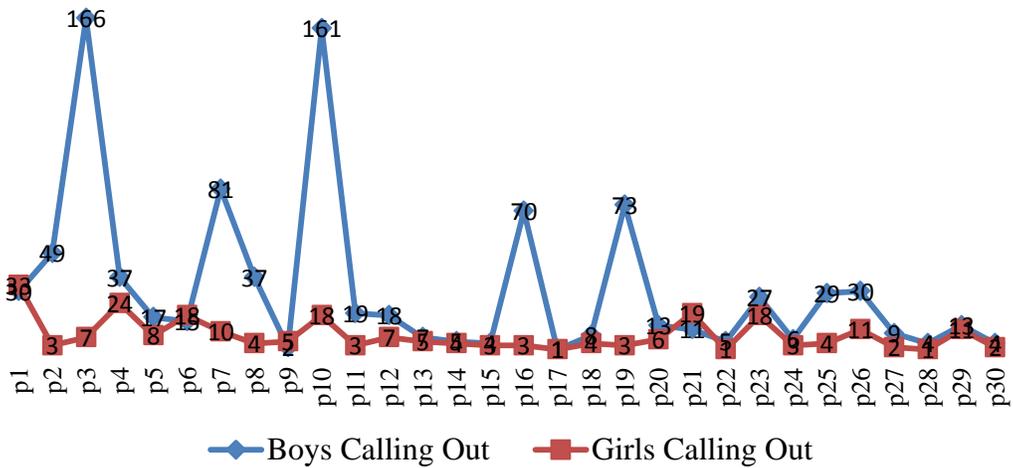


Figure 11

Calling Out ESL



Throughout the 30 class periods of observations the researcher observed boys being called on by the teacher a total of 205 times in the general education classroom. The researcher observed girls being called on a total of 110 times in the same classroom over the course of the observations. Figure 12 shows how many times girls were called on and how many times boys were called on for each individual class period. In the ESL classroom the researcher observed the boys being called on 76 times over the course of the observations. The researcher observed the ESL teacher call on girls 49 times during the same observations. Figure 13 shows how often boys were called on and how often girls were called on each class period for ESL.

Figure 12

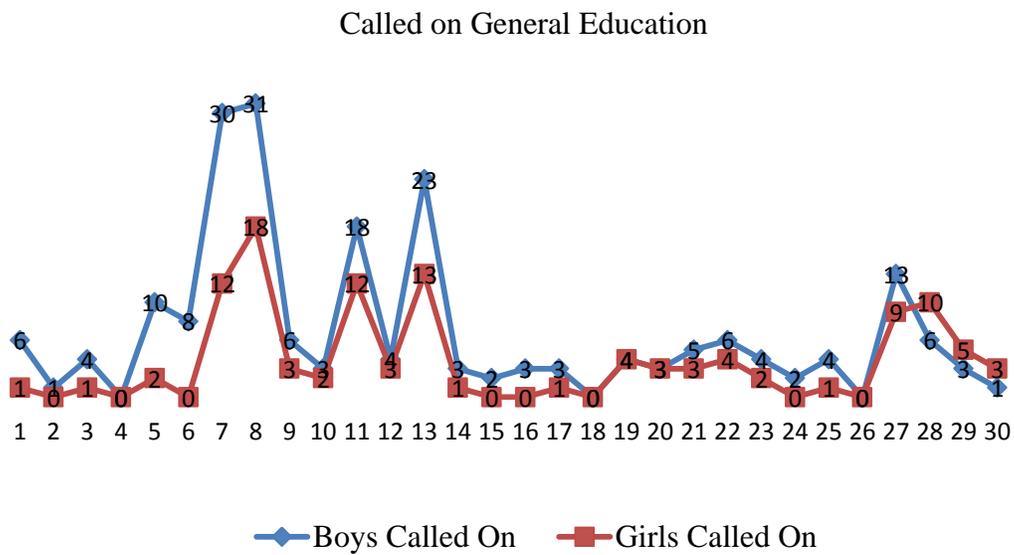
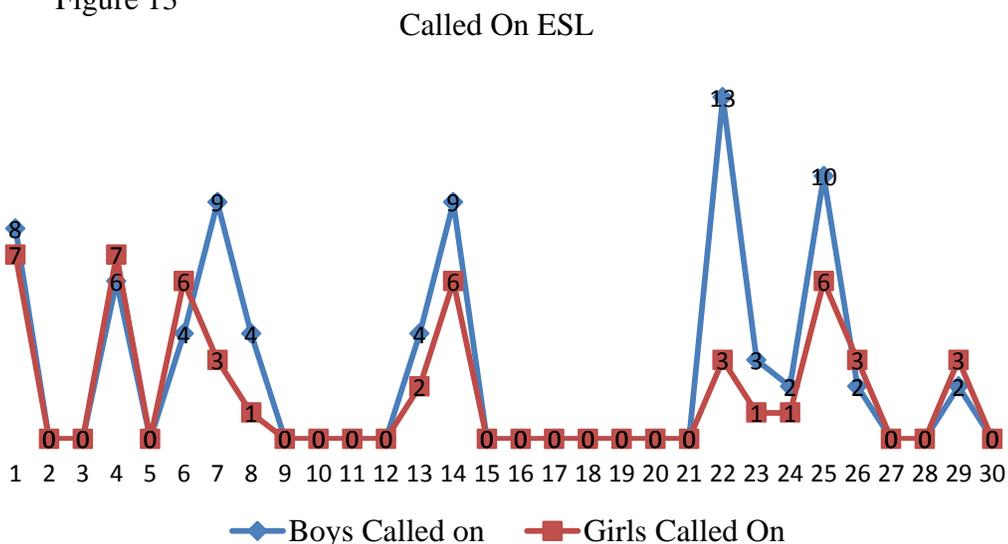
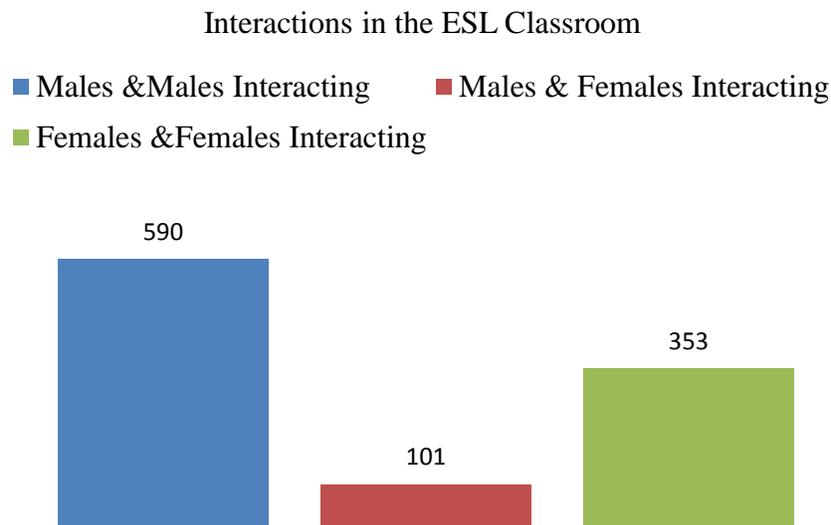


Figure 13



The primary researcher observed the interactions that took place in the ESL classroom among the students. The primary student researcher noted each time a student began a conversation, asked a question, or directed a comment to a peer. Regardless of the length of an interaction the researcher counted it as one interaction. Some interactions lasted ten seconds while others lasted more than five minutes. Over the course of the thirty class periods the researcher recorded more instances in which students interacted with their peers of the same gender than peers with the opposite gender. These results are shown in figure 14.

Figure 14

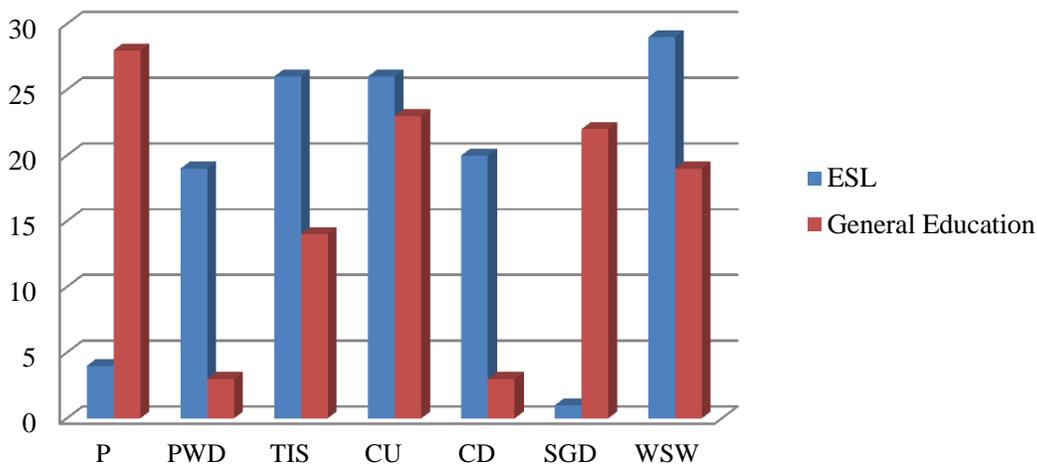


Instructional Strategies

The observation form that was used had a section focusing on instructional strategies used in each lesson. The primary researcher was looking for eighteen instructional strategies and circled them when they were used. For the purpose of this thesis the primary researcher included only the instructional strategies deemed to have an impact on ELLs talk time and interaction opportunities. The instructional strategies shown in figure 15 include *presentation/lecture*, *presentation with discussion*, *teacher interacting with student*, *check for understanding*, *class discussion*, *small group discussion*, and *writing seat work*. Figure 15 compares how often the ESL teacher and the general education teacher used each of these strategies over the course of thirty class periods.

Figure 15

Instructional Strategies Used in the ESL and General Education Classroom



Note. P = presentation lecture; PWD = presentation with discussion; TIS = teacher interacting with Student; CU = check for understanding; CD = class discussion; SGD = small group discussion; WSW = writing seat work

Semi-Structured Interviews

The responses to the semi-structured interview questions varied between the ESL teacher and the general education teacher. The transcribed interviews can be found in Appendix F.

When asked about how boys and girls perceive their academic abilities the ESL teacher believed that families have a big impact on how important the students view education and doing well in school. The general education teacher believed that girls are expected to do better and the boys struggled with writing. When asked about the academic potential and abilities of the girls and boys in their classrooms their answers were completely different. The ESL teacher believed the girls are more intrinsically motivated while boys are more concerned with their jobs they have out of school to support their families. The general education teacher did not distinguish any differences but rather noted that it was dependent on the individual student.

The ESL and general education teacher also had similar adjectives to describe the females in their classes. The ESL teacher described the girls as “respectful, compassionate, and productive” while the general education teacher used the words “serious and hard-working”. The ESL teacher used the terms “worldly, determined, and motivated” to describe the males in his classroom. The general education teacher used the terms “confident, lazy, and laid-back” to describe his male students.

Discussion

The primary student researcher observed both an ESL classroom and a general education classroom for thirty class periods each. The majority of the data aligns with the research cited in the literature review. Implications and suggestions for further research are discussed as well as what the data means in regards to ELLs and their education.

When looking at the results it is clear that there is a theme of male dominance in regards to participation in the classroom. Males called out more often in both the ESL and the general

education classroom. The two teachers also called on males to participate more often than females. These themes carried through to the survey answers in which the majority of teachers indicated that males are disciplined more often than females and it was also indicated that females take more time to think about what they want to say before speaking. The teachers' opinions from the surveys correspond with the observation results and show that boys are more verbal in the classroom. This could be especially detrimental to female ELLs that are acquiring English since practice in using the language and oral acquisition is essential to becoming proficient in English (August et. al., 2009; Wright 2010).

Surveys

Exactly fifty percent of the teachers surveyed agreed that male students call out more often than female students (See figure 1). These responses aligned with both the results of the observations and the literature that states males call out more often than females (Hruska, 2004; Robbins, 2004; Swann, 2008). The other 50 percent of respondents believed females call out more often. These responses conflicted with the results of the observations which indicated males called out significantly more in both the general education and ESL classrooms. The responses also conflicted with past studies cited in the literature review that state males call out more often than females. These teachers are obviously not aware that males are calling out and receiving more opportunities to participate than females. If these teachers are made aware that male students are, in fact, speaking out more often than females these teachers may be able to adjust their teaching strategies to allow for equal participation.

Item two from the survey was used to determine if teachers believed males or females required more think time before responding to a question. The results showed that teachers believed females required more time to think about an answer before responding, which is

consistent with the research that shows males respond more quickly than females (Hruska, 2004). For the majority of lessons in the ESL classroom the teacher would allow students to openly respond. If the literature and teacher opinions are true and females require more think time than the boys, then they are at an advantage when using this strategy in a classroom. If the boys do not take as much time to think they will begin speaking before the girls even have a chance, which gives them more talk time and more opportunities to practice the language.

It is believed that males get more negative and positive attention from teachers (Beaman, Wheldall, & Kemp, 2006; Garrahy, 2001; Jung & Chung, 2005; Parker & Riley, 2010; Robbins, 2004). Item four was directed towards the negative attention that students receive. Almost 90 percent of respondents believed that males are disciplined more often than females, which aligns with both the literature as well as the results from the observations. Item 7 on the survey concentrated on praise and positive attention. The results from the survey do not align with the literature that states males receive more positive attention from teachers. Approximately 75 percent of participants believe that females are praised more often than males, which is not the case according to the research. The responses to item 4 and 7 show that the teachers participating in the survey feel as though they discipline males more often and give more praise to their female students. The primary researcher was only documenting how often teachers called on students regardless if it was praise or discipline. Therefore, these specific results of the survey cannot be aligned with the observation results.

Calling out and being Called on

As cited in the literature review males have been found to call out more during class, use a more competitive speaking style, participate more often, use more words when they talk, and are quicker to respond than females in class discussions (Hruska, 2004; Mehta & Strough, 2010;

Parker & Riley, 2010; Robbins, 2004; Swann, 2008). The results of the observations, shown in figures 10 and 11, reinforce this idea that males call out more often than females. Over the course of the 30 periods that the primary researcher observed the males called out more often than the females in both the ESL and general education classrooms.

As discussed in the literature review, it has been determined by numerous studies that teachers give more attention to boys in the classroom through praise, discipline, and calling on them to participate (Beaman, Wheldall, & Kemp, 2006; Garrahy, 2001; Jung & Chung, 2005; Parker & Riley, 2010; Robbins, 2004). The results of the observations remain consistent with the idea that boys are called on more often than females. Males were called on more often than females in both the general education classroom and the ESL classroom as shown above in tables 12 and 13.

The results of the observations reveal that males call out more often and get called on more often in both the ESL classroom and the general education classroom. The responses to the surveys show that teachers may not be aware that this is the case (see figure 1). This means that males are receiving more opportunities to speak in the classroom. It is important that all students receive equal opportunities to speak and participate, regardless of their gender. These results could be generalized to other content area classes such as math and science. If male ELLs are consistently receiving more opportunities to speak and practice the language they may have a better chance of acquiring the language and achieving academic success than female ELLs (August et. al., 2009; Wright, 2010).

Interaction between Genders

The primary researcher documented how often males and females interacted with each other in the ESL classroom. The results in Figure 14 show that females interacted with other

females and males interacted with other males considerably more often than females and males interacted. This may be a result of the ethnicities and cultures of the students. The ESL classroom had 17 students, 7 of them coming from Middle Eastern countries and cultures. As cited previously in the literature review, Middle Eastern students often attend single-gender schools (Nykiel-Herbert, 2010). This may mean the students are uncomfortable with the co-educational environment of the school. The same study cited in the literature review discussed how males and females from the Middle Eastern culture chose to sit with peers of the same gender and rarely interacted with children of the opposite gender. In these observations the primary researcher found similar results. Whenever students could choose their own seats the females chose to sit with females and the males chose to sit with males. A few students chose to sit alone. Often times the females were on one side of the classroom and males were on the other side, or the females would sit in the front and the males would sit in the back. The researcher rarely observed the males and females mixed in among the desks and tables. The only instance a male and female sat together was a brother and a sister from Burma who were in the same class.

The ESL teacher seemed to be aware of these cultural differences and consistently allowed students to choose their own seats. In the semi-structured interview the ESL teacher also noted in his response that “the girls tend to keep to themselves and not want to work with the boys” and “the boys tend to keep to themselves and not want to work with the girls”. This response was consistent with the results of the observations. The students seemed comfortable in the environment of the ESL classroom and the teacher never required them to interact with students of the opposite gender. It seemed as though the ESL teacher wanted all of his students to succeed and become fully proficient in English. His classroom was not a high stress environment for these students and they were comfortable to speak when they wanted to. A

result of this laid back environment is that the boys ended up speaking more than the girls. Since females require more think time before speaking they might be losing their chance to participate if students are allowed to call out openly. Creating small group discussions may be an effective technique that allows more students to speak and express their individual ideas without creating a stressful classroom climate.

Instructional Strategies

Research shows that teachers give unequal attention in terms of who gets to participate in class, often due to teacher behavior such as their chosen strategies during classroom activities and grouping techniques chosen by the teacher (Faltis, 2001; Hruska, 2004). The primary researcher wanted to examine instructional techniques that may impact interaction opportunities and speaking opportunities for ELLs. The general education teacher used presentations and/or lectures as instructional techniques for almost every class period. This teaching style provides few opportunities for interaction between students. The ESL teacher, on the other hand, used presentation with discussion quite often in his ESL classroom. The researcher observed him use this strategy in 19 out of the 30 class periods. This technique allows for students to interact with each other, as well as with the teacher, in order to gain a deeper understanding. Whenever the ESL teacher was presenting or leading a discussion he allowed for students to participate openly without raising their hands.

Neither of the educators used hands on activities or learning centers and stations. Both of those instructional strategies would give students additional opportunities to interact with their peers and be active in the learning process. There were also a limited number of student presentations used by both teachers. Allowing students to present their work gives them ownership and it also is a way for ELLs to practice speaking and using the language orally.

Teachers should be aware of the instructional strategies they are implementing so they could make a conscious decision to include more student centered strategies that allow for interaction.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The majority of the responses to the semi-structured interview questions varied greatly between the ESL and general education teacher. The ESL teacher seemed to find many differences between his male and female students, to the point where he seemed to be able to generalize them as a group. Most of the questions referring to qualities of males and females the general education teacher responded that it depended on each individual student. The ESL teacher seemed to have a better idea of who his students were and what their lives are like outside of school. He noted that many of the males have jobs after school to help support their families. It is possible that he knows more about his students because he teaches significantly fewer students than the general education teacher. The ESL teacher discussed his Middle-Eastern students in two of his responses. When asked the academic potential and abilities of the girls in his class he said “Often the girls are more academically and intrinsically motivated to be successful. Especially amongst the Muslim culture, females are pushed a bit harder to get a post high school education”. When asked about the academic potential of the boys in the class he also focused on his Middle-Eastern students, responding “Many of the boys are more ‘work oriented’. Most of them have part-time and even semi-full time jobs to help support the family. Many of their focuses, especially among the Middle-Eastern students are not on school, rather working”. It is clear that he thinks culture plays a large role in his students’ academic success. The general education teacher did not mention anything about his students’ families, culture, or backgrounds. He may be unaware of how these things can impact their learning and abilities as students.

Limitations

The amount of time available for observations was a limitation for this research project. The validity would increase if the primary student researcher was able to observe the classes for more than 30 periods. Another possible limitation may be observing the Middle-Eastern students solely in their ESL classroom. These students may speak more or less in other classroom settings. If the ELLs were observed in their other content area classrooms the primary researcher would have gained more knowledge about interaction between genders and what role the teacher plays in how often students participate and interact.

An additional limitation of this study is that it cannot be generalized to include elementary and middle school classrooms since the observations were only done in high school classrooms. The results in elementary and middle school classrooms may have shown different results. Another limitation is that the primary researcher only observed male teachers. The results might have been diverse if both female and male teachers were observed.

Researcher bias is a further possible limitation for this study. Since the researcher has spent so much time with this topic they may have a bias towards the results. They may also have had a bias when completing the observations since they knew what to expect and they were aware of the results they were seeking.

Implications and Future Research

Future research may be done to observe Middle Eastern students in their other content area classrooms to determine if they interact with their opposite gender peers. Their actions may be altered in different contexts. It would also be interesting to observe ELLs from another culture in their content area classrooms and compare the interaction and participation differences

between the two cultures. These findings would help both ESL and classroom teachers to better meet the needs of their students.

In order to be able to generalize the results the same observations should be done in elementary and middle school classrooms. This would not only allow the researcher to generalize the results, but they would be able to determine if age has anything to do with how often students are calling out. It would also be beneficial to look at Middle Eastern students in elementary and middle school classrooms to determine if they interact among genders. If students came to America earlier in life, for example during elementary school, it would be interesting to look at their cultural ideas and how they interact with peers of the opposite gender. This information would help both ESL teachers and content area classroom teachers to better meet the needs of all of their students, especially ELLs.

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Appendix A

Consent Form (observations and semi-structured interview) ***Personally hand to the two teachers who will be observed and completing the interview—formatting will fit one page***

Dear [Insert Teacher Name],

My name is Lindsey Martin. I am a student at SUNY Fredonia, working toward my Masters in Education in TESOL. I am inviting you to participate in a brief survey, which is Part I of my Master's Thesis Project.

The purpose of this three-part research study is to determine the attitudes and opinions about gender differences in classrooms. Part I of the study consisted of an online survey distributed to all the teachers in the school district. Part II of the study includes observations in your classroom to observe how students interact with their peers and participate in whole-class discussions or lessons. I will observe your classroom for a minimum of ten days and a maximum of twenty. I will not have any interaction with the students or disrupt your classroom in any way. Part III of the study includes a semi-structured interview with you, once the observations are complete, that I will be tape-recording to later transcribe. The interview will take 20-30 minutes.

This research study will begin in March, 2013. It will be completed at the convenience of the participants. There are no direct individual benefits to your participation in this research, but the information will be useful for educators who strive to create gender-equitable classrooms.

There are no risks involved in participating in this research study. Participation in this study is kept completely confidential.

Completion of this survey is *entirely voluntary* and you may discontinue your participation at any time *without penalty*.

If you agree to participate in these observations and interview, please sign and date below.

By signing the consent form you confirm that you are at least 18 years of age, are a certified NYS teacher, and you are willing to participate in this research study.

If you prefer not to participate, you need not sign and date this form.

Thank you for your time!

Signature

Date

Sincerely,

Lindsey Martin

SURVEY LINK [actual survey link here]

Any questions, feel free to contact:

Maggie Bryan-Peterson, Director, Grants Administration/Research Services Office

Phone: 716-673-3528; email: petersmb@fredonia.edu

Dr. Karen E. Lillie, Assistant Professor, SUNY Fredonia

Phone: 716-673-4656; email: lilliek@fredonia.edu

Lindsey Martin, graduate student, SUNY Fredonia

Phone: 716-725-1629; email: lindsey13wyant@yahoo.com

Appendix B Survey Questions

Welcome to this brief, 7-item survey which should only take about 5-10 minutes of your time.

This research survey is voluntary, and you may answer all, some, or none of the questions.

There are no risks to your participation. You may withdraw at any time, with no penalty to you.

All survey responses will be kept confidential.

If you have any further questions or comments, you may contact me at lindsey13wyant@yahoo.com.

By clicking 'Next' below, you are acknowledging the following: -I certify that I am 18 years of age or older -I agree to participate in this online survey -I understand all information will be confidential and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty to me. If you would not like to participate in this survey, click the exit browser button and close the browser window.

["NEXT" link will be here on Survey Monkey and will lead them to the survey questions which follow Below]

1. Male students answer by calling out without being called on more than female students do during a lesson.

strongly disagree disagree no opinion agree strongly agree

2. Female students take a little more time to think about answers and respond than male students when questions are asked.

There are no risks involved in participating in this research study. Participation in this study is kept completely confidential.

Completion of this survey is *entirely voluntary* and you may discontinue your participation at any time *without penalty* by simply exiting the browser.

If you agree to participate in this brief survey, please click on the link below my name. By clicking on the survey link, you confirm that you are at least 18 years of age, are a teacher/administrator/teacher aide, are someone who works directly with students, and you are willing to participate in this research study.

If you prefer not to participate, you need not click on the link below.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

Lindsey Martin

SURVEY LINK [actual survey link here]

Any questions, feel free to contact:

Maggie Bryan-Peterson, Director, Grants Administration/Research Services Office

Phone: 716-673-3528; email: petersmb@fredonia.edu

Dr. Karen E. Lillie, Assistant Professor, SUNY Fredonia

Phone: 716-673-4656; email: lilliek@fredonia.edu

Lindsey Martin, graduate student, SUNY Fredonia

Phone: 716-725-1629; email: lindsey13wyant@yahoo.com

Appendix D Observation Protocol

Teacher _____ Date _____ Observation Times: *(start-finish)*

Grade Level: _____ Number of students present: _____

Topic:

Description of the classroom: *(e.g., Are there individual desks? Grouped desks/tables? What does the floor area look like? Where is the teacher's desk?)*

LESSON ACTIVITIES/TASKS

First Activity/Task: (Content; nature of activity, what is teacher doing?).

Duration _____

Second Activity/Task: (Content; nature of activity, what is teacher doing?).

Duration _____

(If applicable) Third Activity/Task: (Content; nature of activity, what is teacher doing?).

Duration _____

Activities are *(choose one):*

- sequential
- different activities/tasks done at the same time

Teaching aids/materials (per activity/task if appropriate):

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES USED BY TEACHER

Indicate the major way(s) in which student activities were structured:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| As a whole group | As small groups | As pairs | As individuals |

Indicate instructional strategies used in the lesson: (use key below as much as possible)

- | | |
|--|---|
| VQ Variety of Questions | CU Check for Understanding |
| P Presentation/Lecture | CD Class discussion |
| PWD Presentation with discussion | SGD Small group discussion |
| PM Problem modeling | LC Learning centers/stations |
| WGW Writing group work | WSW Writing seat work (if group writing use WGW) |
| RGW Reading group work | RSW Reading seatwork (if group reading use RGW) |
| A Assessment | SP Student presentations |
| HOA Hands on activities/materials | OOC Out of class experience |
| TIS Teacher interacting with student (1 on 1) | AIS Aide interacting with student (1 on 1) |

Other?

Time not devoted to teaching and nature of non-academic or procedural activity (e.g., classroom management, announcements, discipline); description of these events:

Adapted from http://ed.fnal.gov/trc_new/program_docs/instru/classroom_obs.pdf

Appendix E
Semi-Structured Interview Questions

- Can you tell me a little bit about your teaching strategies?
- Was there anything that influenced your development of these strategies?
- Overall, how do you think the girls and boys in your classroom perceive their academic abilities?
- Can you describe the academic potential and abilities of the girls in your class?
- Can you describe the academic potential and abilities of the boys in your class?
- Can you describe the types of behavioral interactions you have with the girls in your class?
- Can you describe the type of behavioral interactions you have with the boys in your class?
- Are there adjectives you would use to describe the girls in your classes?
- Are there adjectives you would use to describe the boys in your classes?
- Is there a difference in the competitive interests of the girls and boys?

(Garrahy, 2001)

Appendix F
Transcribed semi-structured interviews

Interview with ESL Teacher:

Interviewer: *Can you tell me a little bit about your teaching strategies?*

Teacher: I try to use best practice teaching for all students. These include direct instruction, student driven activities, individualized, and cooperative learning opportunities.

I: *Was there anything that influenced your development of these strategies?*

T: Yes. In the past I have taught both Global History 9 and 10, as well as French in grades 6-8. As a result I have seen students learn in a variety of classroom content areas and have been able to see “what works”. Additionally, during my mentor process, I did observations of special education 8:1:1 classrooms. Here I was able to see another perspective of productive education strategies.

I: *Overall, how do you think the girls and boys in your classroom perceive their academic abilities?*

T: It is pretty much intrinsic. Those with families that “push education” as an important part of life do well; whether they are male or female.

I: *Can you describe the academic potential and abilities of the girls in your class?*

T: Often, the girls are more academically and intrinsically motivated to be successful. Especially amongst the muslim culture, females are pushed a bit harder to get a post high school education.

I: *Can you describe the academic potential and abilities of the boys in your class?*

T: Many of the boys are more work oriented. Most of them have part-time and even semi-full time jobs to help support the family. Many of their focuses, especially among the Middle Eastern students are not on school, rather working. Attendance rates are much lower in boys than girls.

I: *Can you describe the types of behavioral interactions you have with the girls in your class?*

T: The girls tend to keep to themselves and not want to work with the boys

I: *Can you describe the type of behavioral interactions you have with the boys in your class?*

T: The boys tend to keep to themselves and not want to work with the girls.

I: *Are there adjectives you would use to describe the girls in your classes?*

T: Respectful, compassionate, productive

I: *Are there adjectives you would use to describe the boys in your classes?*

T: worldly, determined, and motivated

I: *Is there a difference in the competitive interests of the girls and boys in your classes?*

T: No, I think competition amongst genders is the same. It is the reason behind the competition that differs.

Interview with general education teacher:

Interviewer: *Can you tell me a little bit about your teaching strategies?*

Teacher: Haa tough love, I try to incorporate as much reading and writing skills as possible, I try and prepare students for college no matter their level. I usually do a college style classroom set up. Verbal quizzes are a quick way to see if kids know it or not.

I: *Was there anything that influenced your development of these strategies?*

T: Again, trying to prepare kids for real life with skills they can use

I: *Overall, how do you think the girls and boys in your classroom perceive their academic abilities?*

T: Girls are expected to do better. Boys, for the most part, struggle with writing.

I: *Can you describe the academic potential and abilities of the girls in your class?*

T: Depends on the individual student.

I: *Can you describe the academic potential and abilities of the boys in your class?*

T: Again, I think it depends on the individual student.

I: *Can you describe the types of behavioral interactions you have with the girls in your class?*

T: It varies with each student and each class type. The honors students behave differently than my special education students.

I: *Can you describe the type of behavioral interactions you have with the boys in your class?*

T: Same thing, it is different with each student and class.

I: *Are there adjectives you would use to describe the girls in your classes?*

T: serious and hard-working for the most part.

I: *Are there adjectives you would use to describe the boys in your classes?*

T: confident, lazy, and laid-back.

I: *Is there a difference in the competitive interests of the girls and boys in your classes?*

T: It depends what class. In the honors you have the best of the best so both sexes are very competitive with each other. With the co-taught classes you have many different learning styles and levels so it depends on the student themselves. With the WW2 classes you have four grade levels so there is no consistency.

Appendix G
CITI training

CITI Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Human Research Curriculum Completion Report

Printed on 3/11/2013

Learner: Lindsey Martin (username: mart5504)

Institution: SUNY - College at Fredonia

Contact Information Department: Language Learning and Leadership
 Phone: 7166733311
 Email: mart5504@fredonia.edu

Group 1.:

Stage 1. Basic Course Passed on 07/06/11 (Ref # 6282044)

Required Modules	Date Completed	
Introduction	06/30/11	no quiz
History and Ethical Principles - SBR	07/06/11	4/4 (100%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBR	07/06/11	4/5 (80%)
The Regulations and The Social and Behavioral Sciences - SBR	07/06/11	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk in Social and Behavioral Sciences - SBR	07/06/11	4/5 (80%)
Informed Consent - SBR	07/06/11	4/5 (80%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBR	07/06/11	5/5 (100%)
Research with Prisoners - SBR	07/06/11	4/4 (100%)
Research with Children - SBR	07/06/11	4/4 (100%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBR	07/06/11	4/4 (100%)
International Research - SBR	07/06/11	3/3 (100%)
Internet Research - SBR	07/06/11	4/4 (100%)
Group Harms: Research With Culturally or Medically Vulnerable Groups	07/06/11	3/3 (100%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees	07/06/11	4/4 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects	07/06/11	2/2 (100%)
SUNY Fredonia State College	07/06/11	no quiz

For this Completion Report to be valid, the learner listed above must be affiliated with a CITI participating institution. Falsified information and unauthorized use of the CITI course site is unethical, and may be considered scientific misconduct by your institution.

Paul Braunschweiger Ph.D.
Professor, University of Miami
Director Office of Research Education
CITI Course Coordinator