Gender differences in the classroom

– A linguistic study of how language is used, from a gender perspective

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Abstract

This is a qualitative study which examines students' language use from a gender perspective. The survey was done through observation analyzed using Dell Hymes method, Ethnography of Communication. The focus is on how these students speak and also if the teacher's didactics have any impact on the classroom interactions. The results show a clear gender difference in how the language is used and the teacher's didactics may be one reason why these differences occur in classrooms.

Keywords: Linguistics, gender, didactics, classroom interactions
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1 Introduction

The culture specific usage of language is a very important aspect of communication in the multicultural society today. There are many different languages around the world and they are used in different ways, but do we talk in the same ways when we use the same language? Is it the language diversity that divides us, or are there perhaps other aspects such as class and gender that make us use language differently? Issues of language use have interested both females and males for a long time. Even in the field of popular psychology, author Wayne Dwyer published the now famous book called *Women are from Venus and men are from Mars*, which pointed to the interest in the differences between men and women having increased more and more. This expression comes from the vast differences between men and women, one of the big differences is evident in the way men and women speak. There has been much linguistic research in this field and many researchers claim that there is variation in how men and women use language. Women are perceived to talk more cautiously than men and deliberate before they speak. Another important question concerns what we can expect from each other in gendered communication, and for example, men are expected to talk rougher and are allowed to swear, while women are expected to talk stereotypically like a lady, which means soft and careful. One of the big differences is that women tend to be more polite than men.

These differences do not affect everyone, but the general idea is that there exist gender and language variations. Scientists such as Robin Tolmach Lakoff (2004), George Yule (2006) and Jennifer Coates (1993) claim that these differences are something we learn from our childhood, because it sits within us throughout our youth when the adult identity is acquired.

This means that boys and girls use language differently in school. Girls have thus learned the social communicative structures to not be as loud or vulgar in their expressions as boys are. These general public claims point to what many researchers in the English speaking world have concluded, but the question remains, does the same apply in other cultures, such as the Swedish school? Do gender based claims about different ways of talking among girls and boys call true in Swedish schools? Are there norms in society that make girls apprehensive about taking as much communicative space, as do boys or do girls speak the same amount of content and in the same discursive way? This raises issues for English teaching research. What implications does this have for the ways in which teaching and learning is conducted in the English as a Foreign Language classroom?
1.1 Central definitions

There are some key concepts that are important to understand and that are linked to this study. Concepts are repeated in the essay, which are familiar to educators, are therefore important to explain in order to make the paper clearly comprehensible to all readers. These concepts are defined below.

English as a Foreign Language

This study is conducted in the context of the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom at secondary level in the Swedish national school system.

1.1.1 Didactics

Central to the study is the issue of EFL classroom didactics in communicative differences between boys and girls. Multiliteracies experts Kalantzis and Cope (2008) explain that didactics is a theory applied to teaching, a theory and useful inquiry of the science of teaching and learning. In the English speaking world it is more common to talk about teaching and learning instead of using the concept of didactics. However, didactics can be defined as the science of all the factors that affect teaching and its content, and place the focus on learning and how learning is organized for example in the classroom. In the English speaking world the understanding of didactics is mostly based on teacher centered pedagogy. But in the northern European tradition, didactics also involves understandings of how the curriculum is adapted to make learning possible (Kalantzis & Cope 2008 p. 17-21).

1.1.2 Gender based communications

Gender-based communication focuses on interactive meetings between men and women. This concept explains differences in how these two communicates with each other; the master suppression technique is an interesting factor in gender-based communication.

1.1.3 Classroom interactions

Classroom interaction is a term used to describe the behavior and speech in a classroom, it can also be seen as social interaction in the classroom. Research has mainly focused on the study of whether gender, class and "race" has any effect on the didactic relationship between teachers and students in the classroom.
1.2 Aim and scope
The research rationale for the study derives from an interest in how gender may play out in the Swedish culture of an EFL classroom and what didactic implications this might have. Therefore, the aims of this essay attempt to investigate any differences in how girls and boys use English language in school. Do girls speak more politely and deliberate before they speak out, or are there other visible gender differences? The research questions for this study are the following:

- Do communicative norms and values show an impact on how girls and boys talk in the context of the classroom?
- Are there any observable gender differences, if yes, how can these be understood through a study of language features?
- If there are any gender differences, do these differences have any observable impact on classroom didactics?

The objective of this study is motivated by the current state of national curriculum guidelines encouraging equity and equality. According to the Swedish national curriculum for compulsory schooling (Lgr 2011) there should not be any differences in how girls and boys speak in the classroom. According to the guidelines, all students, regardless of gender, ethnicity or class must have equal right to communicate and express themselves in the classroom. They should be given as much time and energy by the teacher. This study has examined the occurrence by observing communication in an eighth grade class.

1.3. Theoretical Background
In this chapter, I present previous research in the field of language and gender. I also explain the phenomenon of gender as a social construct.

1.3.1 Language and gender
Researcher Jennifer Coates (1993) writes about men and women’s language in her book *Women, men and language*. She explains that men have culturally been seen as the heart of society while women have existed in men’s shadow. Throughout history men have taken decisions and been in charge socially, they have been the important people in society. For example, all the important positions in society were held by men and even though today’s society is more equal than before, inequalities still exist. There are still more men than women
for example, in high positions in politics in today’s society (Coates 1993 p.5). Coates believes that there are structural and status differences between men and women in society and that this may be a consequence and a cause of the linguistic differences between women and men.

The nature of language use is known to differ between men and women. Women are expected to talk more properly than men and men are expected to speak more carelessly. In *Language and woman’s place* Robin Tolmach Lakoff talks about the difference and the expectations of how men and women are supposed to talk. He says that men say whatever they have in mind without thinking; therefore they speak careless (Lakoff 2004 s.80 & 84). Lakoff claims that when thinking about women’s language there are some things that automatically comes to mind, talking correct, polite and powerless. Women and men are not expected to talk the same. When thinking about men’s language people are expecting them to talk rough, spontaneous and swearing. While women are supposed to talk like lady and more proper than men. He also explains that we expect men to swear when they speak but if a woman swears then she is not seen as a woman because that goes against the image we have of how a woman should be and talk. Lakoff means that there are norms in society that makes us expect that we should behave according to certain categories such as class, gender and ethnicity. When it comes to gender George Yule explains in *The study of language* that there are three aspects:

1. a biological distinction between male and female, also called natural gender. 
2. a distinction between classes of nouns as masculine, feminine (or neuter), also called grammatical gender. 
3. a distinction between the social roles of men and women, also called social gender (Yule 2006:242)

This paper focuses on social and natural gender. Yule (2006) explains that social gender and natural gender have a connection and are also related to biology, by the biological distinction “male and female” underlying the social distinctions “father and mother” (Yule 2006:222f). He means that people inherit a gendered culture by learning that there are differences between boys and girls and what it means to be a boy or a girl. These gender regulations are made by society; this leads to society norms that according to Yule are the reasons why people learn how to be a girl or a boy. It is through these social rules that the individual learns to behave “normally” as either a girl or boy. Society tells the individual that there are differences between the sexes but also to understand the differences that exist in how to behave in
different social context depending on which sex one has (Yule 2006 p.223-225). Yule uses the word natural gender when talking about biological gender. He believes that there are certain characteristics and behaviors that are not learned but that man is born with. These characteristics are difficult to change because it is innate, but because of social gender goes hand in hand with the natural gender as they can affect each other. Yule believes therefore that it is important to distinguish between these different genders explanations but also keep in mind that they influence each other and that there is already an innate difference between the way girls and boys behave, these differences become stronger with community standards.

These three authors argue that there are differences in how men and women behave and speak. They claim that society has a major impact on these differences, the norms and values in society forms people differently depending on the gender they have. Therefore, it is necessary to use sociolinguistic in this paper to analyze the language from a gender perspective.

“Sociolinguistics” could be taken to refer to use of linguistic data and analyses in other disciplines, concerned with social life, and, conversely, to use of social data and analyses in linguistics. The word could also be taken to refer to correlations between language and society, and between particular linguistics and social phenomena. (Hymes 2001 p.2)

Sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and society; it has been defined as the study of language in its social context in other words the study of linguistic variation (Coates 1993 p.4-6). Sociolinguistics analysis why people speak differently, depending on social context and on terms as gender, class and ethnic group. For example; people in the “upper class” speak differently than people in the “lower class” – this is called social variation, both stylistic and social variation is interesting in sociolinguistic (Hymes 2001 p. 2-4). This essay will make use of sociolinguistics to analyze the relationship between gender and language in schools. How norms and values regarding gender affects the way people speak and use language in school environment.
1.3.2 Swedish society and school

Sweden is valued as one of the most socially equal countries in the world, where individuals aim toward the freedom of being exactly as they like as long as they do not offend another human being of violate the social and cultural rules. According to the laws and regulations everyone has freedom of opinion and may look just like he or she wants, one can have whatever religion he or she wants, choose if they want to be a women or a man that means that one can look exactly as he or she wants (Lindberg 2012).

Equality between women and men is a current topic that is constantly taken up in public discourse, politics, according to Swedish laws; there is no difference between men and women. But there are some differences that go against gender equality. In Sweden men earn more than women in most occupations, although they perform the same tasks. But there is a general gender vision of society that makes people realize that all individuals have equal value regardless of gender, class or ethnicity.

This is also current in schools, the national curriculum “Lgr 11” contains the Swedish school laws and regulations and which states the following:

Inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, human equality, equality between women and men and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable are the values that the school shall represent and impart.

”Människolivets okränkbarhet, individens frihet och integritet, alla människors lika värde, jämställdhet mellan kvinnor och män samt solidaritet med svaga och utsatta är de värden som skolan ska gestalta och förmedla” (Lgr 11 p. )

This means that school should be an environment where all students should feel equal. Students should feel comfortable and be allowed to be themselves, there should not be any differences between how boys and girls are treated and they should get exactly the same opportunities to succeed in school.

This poses the question of what is equal in Swedish society and school, and what does it really look like in practice? Most people in the Swedish society would probably call themselves open-minded and believe that they do not have preconceptions when thinking of
gender. Many professions are gendered based. The construction industries are almost all male dominated; police profession is dominated by men, while it is almost only women working in makeup and Costume shops. This shows that people on some level have an image of what is masculine and what is feminine.

Is it the same thing with language? People do expect there to be a feminine way to speak and a masculine way to speak. This is what Lakoff (2004) means when he says “when it comes to women’s language there are some things that automatically comes to mind, talking correct, polite and powerless” (Lakoff 2004 p. 11-13). Swedish society is generally equal and everyone has equal value, but at the same time, there are clear gender divisions that can be seen as an hindrance of the free choice and equality that exist. This paper will examine whether there are linguistic differences between boys and girls in school and if so, whether there are societal norms that are the cause of these differences and how we might approach these issues didactically in the schools setting.

2. Method
In this chapter, I present the methodology and method that is used for in this research.

2.1 Methodology
This study uses the ethnography of communication (EOC) as an approach to language research. It has origins in the development of a view in anthropology of culture as expressed through language and of the view in linguistics that language is a system of cultural behaviors (Hymes, 1968).

Hymes argues that the study of language must occur in real situations (communicative competence). When using language in particular communities, people are able to communicate with each other in a way which is not only correct but also appropriate to their socio-cultural context. This ability includes a shared knowledge of the linguistic code and of the socio-cultural rules, norms and values which guide the behavior and interpretation of speech and other ways of communicating in a community. EOC is interested in what a person knows about the appropriate pattern of language use in his or her community and how he or she learns about it. The speech community that Hymes refers to may be as large as a country or as small as a class of children within it. In a speech community, communication is organized in terms of events which are defined as “activities that are directly governed by
rules or norms for the use of speech” (Hymes 1974 p 56). EOC is thus used by analyzing a group the way people communicate with each other within a certain situation or social context. The focus is not only on how those people communicates with each other, but even if they are aware of how talking in that context.

This study will make use out of the ethnography of communication by examining whether there are any differences in how girls and boys use language in Swedish schools. Do norms and values show an impact on how they talk in the context of the classroom? Are there any gender differences, if yes, how can that be understood by the language?

2.2 Method
The study applies classroom observations to investigate gendered talk. The participants were observed in a context of the classroom for an observation of spontaneous occurrences of speech in English lessons. The class that was observed is an eighth grade class with eight boys and eight girls, it is an English profile class so the student are comfortable with speaking English even though it is their second language. The purpose of these observations is to elucidate the usage of language from a gender perspective. The study focuses on examining whether boys and girls use language in different ways in the classroom but something that is not going to fold in these studies and situations are how the students behave. Behavior and use of language goes hand in hand when the students' way of speaking affect their way of being and vice versa. The main focus during the observations will be to identify any differences in how girls and boys speak in the classroom.

The lesson was 50 minutes long and students talked a great deal during this lesson. Because of scope of the study the relevance of 30 minutes of the lesson time was chosen for observation. The reason why I chose a class with eight girls and eight boys is because the aim of this essay is to see if there are any differences in using language in a gender perspective; the result will be more credible and fair if the investigation will be made in a class where there are 50% girls and 50% boys. This provides and equal division of gender.

2.2.1 Ethics
Research involving human subjects must follow ethical conventions. When researching the humanistic Social Science Research Council (HSFR)'s four main demands have been used, these are 1) the information requirement, 2) the consent requirement, 3) the confidentiality
and 4) use requirement. According to the information requirement the respondent must be informed about their role in the research and the conditions governing their participation. They should also be informed that their participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw their participation when they want. I emailed the teacher and asked her/him to tell the students that their participation is voluntary and that they can choose not to be a part of the study. The teacher gave this information to the students a week before the observations. Consent requirement requires that the researcher must obtain the declarant's consent, they have the right to independently decide on how long and under what conditions they should participate. According to confidentiality obligations, all participating in the research to sign a confidentiality concerning ethical sensitive data, the respondent should not be identified from the results. Useful requirement means that data on individuals, collected for research purposes shall not be used or borrowed for commercial or other non-scientific purposes (http://www.codex.vr.se/texts/HSFR.pdf). These requirements have been respected and used in this investigation in the way that the teacher informed the students of their rights one week before the observations, and also I went through these demands rights before the lesson started.

2.2.2 Reliability, validity and generalizability

When doing a research project, it is important that everything goes right, therefore it is necessary to explain and describe how it proceeded and how the empirical material were collected, that strengthens the research works validity (Stukát 2005 p. 125-129). Therefore, it is my duty to explain the work and also to present an honest depiction of what was observed. The validity of this study can be criticized because of the narrow range of observation. A classroom is not sufficient to draw valid conclusions or generalize the results to represent all the classrooms in Sweden. The study is based on the observation of a lesson in a class, the result is valid, based on this class or school, but cannot be seen as a general study. It is important to bear in mind that the results can be different if you do the same study in different classes throughout Stockholm. The study is valid from the perspective of being hypothesis-generating and lays the foundation for future research. The study seeks therefore not to render an absolute truth, but only a small sample. The research was done through 30-minute observation of a lesson. The observation was noted and recorded, which made the transcription be done fairly. I also went through the results with the teacher right after the lesson to be sure that she/he understood the results in the same way. It is also important to have in mind that the pupils were aware of me being there and observing them. They did not
know exactly what I would look at, but they knew I observed them for my essay and this may have an impact on how they talk. Students can show of or not daring to talk when someone else is in the classroom. But after the lesson, the teacher explained that this is how the lessons usually are.

2.2.3 Participants
The school that was chosen for this study is a secondary school in Stockholm, the importance in the survey is not the school but the class and the students. Students that were observed are in a class that has English as a profile, this means that they are comfortable with speaking English which is their second language; it is important for the study that students are comfortable in class and talks and behaves as spontaneously as possible. The class that was chosen consists of eight girls and eight boys, although this is important to the investigation because the results are analyzed from a gender perspective. The teacher is female that has been working as a teacher for twelve years; she has had this particular class for two years. The research was conducted through 30-minute observation of a lesson. The observation was noted and recorded, which enabled the transcription to be done accurately.

3. Results
After the empirical data was collected, transcribed and analyzed, the data seemed to fall into two distinct communicative categories, which fitted well into Hymes framework, "Carefulness and hesitation "and "Rule violation" the events in the classroom can be related to these two headings and then analyzed from a gender perspective.

3.1 Rule violation
The analyses begin by presenting an excerpt in which the pupils have just been watching a movie and will discuss this film together in class. The teacher begins the lesson by discussing with the class what they thought of the movie and then they go into the film’s theme and discuss the message of the film.

Teacher: *Okay so loyalty is one of the themes in this movie, how can we see that?*

One boy (without raising his hand): *They were friends!*

Another boy (without raising his hand): *They were best friends!*
Teacher: Yes they were friends, what else?
A boy (raised his hand and were allocated a speaking turn): They trusted each other and helped each other.
Teacher: Very good, they helped each other in many different situations. Can anyone tell me one of these situations?
One of the boys (that talked earlier started answering without raising his hand): When they got… the teacher stopped him: Raise your hand please!

The discussion started with the boys breaking the classroom rules by not raising their hands before speaking. They are active, they participate and are staying on the topic but the teacher has to tell them that they cannot speak out in class without raising their hand. This interrupts the classroom interaction and is an example of Lakoff's theory of boys/men speaking without thinking. This behavior of breaking the classroom rules continues throughout the whole lesson.

The teacher gave the word to a girl who was raising her hand.
The girl: (With a quiet voice) I think one of the situations was when they were walking on the train track on the bridge and the train came.
The teacher: Yes exactly! And what did the boys do?
Two of the boys shouted out: Ran!!!
Teacher: Yes they ran but try to raise your hand next time. How can you relate loyalty to that scene?
No one answered or raised their hands.
The teacher tried again: What was so loyal about the train situation?
One of the boys without raising his hand shouted out: He helped the fat kid.
Some of the boys started laughing.

The boys continue to talk without raising their hands, it is the first time a girl speaks during the lesson and she waited until she got the word. The teacher gave the girl a following question and was hoping for her to answer but one of the boys shouted out the answer. This is one example of a boy taking a girls attention in the classroom. The boy is trying to be funny and screams out possible answers and hoping to get his classmates’ to laugh. The teacher has didactic difficulties which also affects her authority as a teacher because of her lack of controlling the classroom interactions.
One of the boys: He didn’t leave him like a girl. He said and looked at one of the other boys.

The boy answered him: Shut up!

The teacher tried to avoid a fight and asked another question:

You said that Curiosity is another theme, why?

One of the boys shouts out: When does this class end?

Teacher: It says on the board but that was not what we were talking about was it?

The boy: Yes it was! You were talking about curiosity and I was curious about when this class ends.

Some of the boys and girls start to giggle.

Teacher: Are you done? She asks with a very tired voice

The boys tease each other and one of the boys swear; it seems like the teacher is use to the boys behaving like this and knows that it can lead to a fight so she starts talking about something else. This is also an example of how the boy challenges the female teacher, not only does he break the classroom rules, but he also challenges the teacher’s authority, by ridiculing the meaning of the task. He interrupts the didactic flow and curriculum work, by using the culturally appropriate male language register. The teachers respond to the boy is an example of how her didactics does not work with these students. The giggling among the students is a sign of classroom interaction that excludes the teacher and therefore weakens her authority.

One of the boys (without raising his hand): It was a bad movie

Another boy answered the first boy: You have bad taste in movies. You don’t like any movie.

The first boy: Yes I do!

The boys started discussing in class and the teacher shook his/her head.

Teacher: Okay boys it doesn’t matter if you liked the movie or not, we are discussing the themes.

Here is a good example of how the boys take the liberty to discuss what they want and also how they say everything they want/think straight out. The teacher tries to
take control again and emphasizes that their opinion regarding whether the movie is good or bad does not matter in this discussion.

**The first boy:** One of the themes are “boring”!

**Teacher:** Tell us why you thought it was boring

**The boy:** It just was

**Teacher:** In what way was it boring?

**The boy:** Nothing happened; they were just walking in the woods to find a dead boy.

**One of the girls got** annoyed and said without raising her hand: A movie doesn’t need to have fighting and killing to be good.

All the boys started talking about good action movies it is not clear what they were saying because they were speaking all together in the same time.

**Teacher:** Okay.. Okay.. guys I understand that this is not your favorite movie but we are still discussing it and no other movie.

In this dialogue, a boy takes the right to proclaim what he thinks, he thought the movie was boring and he wanted everyone in the class to know it. The interesting thing is that now a girl skips into the discussion and says what she thinks about his opinions without raising her hand. It is the first time during this class that a girl speaks out without raising her hand and this was because she got annoyed and answered one of the guys that has been talking a lot during the lesson. The teacher tries again to take control of the situation by showing that she/he decides what should be discussed.

**One of the boys:** Can we watch 300 next time?

**One of the girls:** Don’t you have to be 15 years old to watch that movie?

The boy answered her in Swedish: Och? Är du feg eller? (So? Are you afraid?)

Some of the boys started laughing and starts talking about other war movies.

**Teacher:** English please! And no we are not watching a movie where you have to be 15.

300 is a war movie that has an age prerequisite of 15 years, the pupils are 14 years old and may not legally see the movie until next year. The guy also takes the freedom to respond
the girl in Swedish forcing the teacher to try to take control again. The suppression technique that gender-based communication focuses on is clear in this dialog as the boy superior accusing the girl of being a coward.

Teacher: What else was important in the movie?
One of the boys shouted out: Money!!
Teacher: Money? In what way was money important?
The boy: I am just joking.
Teacher: Okay, What else was important in the movie?
No one said anything

Money is not one of the themes or a topic in this movie, but the boy just wanted to get his classmates to laugh by joking. The teacher said nothing when the boy was joking like that; it was noticeable that he/she was tired of all the silly and frivolous answers. Again, we see how a boy is taking place in the classroom and talk about what he wants to get attention.

Teacher: Did you think about something special when watching it?
One of the boys raised his hand and said: Summer!
Teacher: Yes, what about summer?
The boy: It was summer so the boys slept out in the wood.
Teacher: That’s correct, were they scared?
Another boy (without raising his hand): Yes! The..
The teacher interrupted him: Please raise your hands when you want to answer.
She told the boy to continue with his answer even though he did not raise his hand.
The boy continues: They were scared and they “turades om att vakta” (took turns guarding). The boy couldn’t find the English words so he finished the sentence in Swedish.
Teacher: Yes! They took turns guarding.

This time is sufficient one guy raised his hand, perhaps because he saw how irritated the teacher was that they just shouted out things. He raised his hand and got the word, the next question in other hand, was answered by a guy who did not raise his hand and that made the teacher interrupt him. The guy answered the question, but could not find certain words in English and said them in Swedish, the teacher showed that it is okay to not find the
words sometimes, and responded by saying the words in English. The teacher has repeatedly been telling students to raise their hands and to stick to the subject, students still continue to break the rules. This is a clear sign that the teacher's didactics is not working. She does not give any punishment or challenges students when they violate classroom rules.

**Teacher:** Yes, and do you think that the boy had a chance or was reputation important?

**The girl:** Reputation was important, they accused him of stealing some money that a teacher stole, and everybody thought it was him because his family had a bad reputation.

**Teacher:** Yes and that is why you should never judge someone because of his or her background or look.

**One of the boys:** What if someone is reeeeeeally ugly?? He said laughing and looking at his friend who was laughing to

**Teacher:** Please raise your hand if you want to say something, and no you should not judge anyone, it doesn’t matter how ugly you think that person is. And who are you to say if someone is ugly or not? The teacher looked at the boy with a serious face when talking.

**The boy** was quite.

The girl responds in detail on the teacher's question and the teacher wants the pupils to learn something from this situation in the movie. But one of the boys began to joke again and asks a question that upsets the teacher, she/he responds very irritated and gets the boy to feel ashamed. The teacher feels the need to talk about respect and acceptance in this class so she changes the discussion and ask the pupils to give each other compliments.

In sum, in the first part of the result we see that the boys are the ones breaking the classroom rules. They are those who talk without raising their hands, talking about other things than the subject and also interrupt when others are talking. The guys talk more but also higher than the girls, they talk more spontaneously and do not think before they speak. They use language to get attention.
3.2 Carefulness and hesitation

This is the second part of the results and includes examples of students hesitantly communications and when they talk to uncertainty and caution. This happened several times during the lesson, and therefore becomes part two of the result.

**Teacher:** *He helped his friend, yes!* *How did he help him?*

The teacher looked at some of the girls and was hopping for them to raise their hands and participate. The teacher asked one of the girls and she said with an annoyed voice: *Why are you asking me? I have not raised my hand.*

**The teacher said:** *I know that’s why I want you to try to answer the question.*

**The girl rolled her eyes and said:** *He helped him by not leaving him and screamed at him so he would run, he saved his life.*

**Teacher:** *Exactly! He did not leave him.*

One of the girls gets annoyed at the teacher for asking her to answer the question from nowhere. The girl knows the answer but she got annoyed anyways, it seems that she did not want to answer the question because of uncertainty. When the teacher tells her to answer she rolls her eyes and yet gives a great answer.

**The teacher** asked the question again: *Why is curiosity a theme in the movie?*

She looked at one of the girls who had not talked yet.

**The girl** answered whit a question: *Is it because of the dead body?* She asked carefully.

**Teacher:** *Yes, what about the dead body?*

**The same girl:** *They wanted to see the dead body.*

**Teacher:** *Yes they wanted to find the dead body of the boy who was missing, they were curious about how a dead body looks like.*

Again, we have a girl who knows the answer but is uncertain and do not take own initiative to reply. As soon as the teacher looked at her, hoping that she would answer, than she knew that it was okay for her to answer, yet she answers with a question and hesitation in her voice.

**Teacher:** *Something else you thought about worth mentioning from the movie?*

**The teacher** looked at the girls and wanting them to answer.

One of the girls raised her hand carefully; the teacher gave her the word.
The girl: Education? (With a quiet voice)
Teacher: Yes education is an interesting subject in this movie. Why? She looked at the same girls while asking.
The girl: One of the boys wan...
One of the boys interrupted her: What? I cannot hear you!
The girl started talking a bit louder: One of the boys wanted to study and get out of that town and his friend wanted that but he was from a family with bad reputation so he knew that he couldn’t.

Here, we see that the teacher wants the girls to participate more, she/he is trying to get them to answer questions and discuss. Again a girl answers a question with a question and with hesitation. She speaks so quietly that one boy interrupts her and asks her to speak louder; she continues to answer the question with a little louder voice.

Teacher: I want you to say three good things about the person next to you. She looked at the boy she just had a dialog with. Why don’t you start?!
Say three good things about your friend here.
The boy started laughing and said: I do not want to.
The teacher: I have noticed that some of you don’t understand the importance of respecting each other and not judging people and accepting them for who they are. You have been in the same class for almost two years now so it shouldn’t be hard to say three good things about each other.
The boy looked at his friend and they started laughing. The teacher noticed that the boys had a hard time saying good things about each other so she/he turned to the girls.
Teacher: Okay let’s start here with the girls. She/he looked at one of the girls and asked her to start.
The girl looked at her friend and said: She is kind, she has beautiful hair and she is funny. The girls looked at each other and started giggling.
Teacher: Okay really good. She/he looked at the girl who got the compliments and asked her to say three good things about the next girl next to her:
The girl: She is good in school, she has good taste in clothes and she is my best friend.
Teacher: Okay next.
The girl looked at the one next to her and said: She is smart, eeee she loves dogs
and she….. the girl was thinking… and she is kind.

The girls looked at each other and smiled.

The teacher interrupts the discussion about the movie and starts talking about acceptance between people. She tells the pupils to give each other three compliments. The boys seem to have trouble with this but it seems to be easier for the girls who do not find it difficult to find three good things about each other.

Teacher: okay good, next.

The girl who just got the compliment was supposed to give compliment to one of the boys now because he was sitting next to her.

The girl: He is kind, he is helpful and he…. Eeee ... he has nice hair.

Everyone started laughing and said: Oooooooohh.. the girl and boy were laughing too.

The boy: He.... He got quiet.

Teacher: is he kind?

The boy: Yes

Teacher: Okay good, is he funny?

The boy: Sometimes

Teacher: We will take that as a yes. Something else? Is he good at something?

The boy: He is good at playing football

Teacher: okay good, so he is kind, funny and good at playing football.

The boy has a hard time giving his friend a compliment, the teacher notices that and has to help him, she gives examples of compliments and the boy agrees. In “carefulness and hesitation” section we see that there are girls who speak cautiously and hesitantly, as Lakoff explained, it is the image we have of how girls / women should talk. The girls mostly speak out only if they get a question from the teacher, it seems that the girls are accustomed to the guys taking more space, and they accepted it.

This can be linked to Yule's theory that there are norms in society that allows girls and boys to learn to behave differently. The boys were in general much louder than the girls. All of these eight boys were not loud and noisy, five of them were, the other three were quiet and only talked if they got the word or a question. 5/8 of the boys did not follow the rules by not raising their hands, they talk about other things and didn’t stay on topic and they spoke loud and some can say that they had an attitude while speaking to the teacher. The girls raised their
hands; one of them did not when she got annoyed at one of the guys for talking to much. One of the girls had attitude when talking to the teacher when she got mad because the teacher gave her the word when she hadn’t raised her hand. An interesting thing is that the guys talked a lot and loud throughout the lesson until they would give each other compliments. Then they were unsure and quiet, during this short part of the discussion was the girls who were talking.

4. Discussion

The results clearly show that the boys talked more in frequency, had higher tone of voice and expressed themselves more spontaneously than the girls did. It started with two boys shouting out answers without raising their hands, and took the liberty to call out what they were thinking. This can be connected to what Lakoff (2004) says about men saying things without thinking. Throughout this lesson part, we can see that the boys have had a hard time raising their hands, they would rather shout out the answer, or their comments straight out. The teacher seems to be accustomed to this and therefore asks the guys to put their hands up on several occasions but it does not make much difference, as the boys continue to talk without raising their hands. After a while a girl raised her hand and got the word, she answers the question but does so in a low voice. The low voice is a common thing among the girls, later on another girl speaks so low that one of the boys interrupts her and says that he cannot hear what she says. This leads to her being forced to raise her voice but even then she did not speak loud enough that everyone in the class could hear her. Overall, the girls spoke with a low and soft voice, especially if we compare it with the boys who shouted out things and almost screamed at times. It was noticeable that the teacher on several occasions tried to silence the boys and get the girls to talk more. This is because we almost only heard the boys all the time. There was a girl who was a bit annoyed at the teacher who asked her a question when she did not raise her hand. This girl talked quite elevated and with a little attitude which I noticed because no one else of the girls talked like that. But she was quiet during class and talked only when the teacher asked her something. On several occasions the girls responded with a question and this with a hesitating voice, indicating uncertainty.

It seems like these boys and girls has inherit a gendered culture by learning that there are differences between boys and girls and what it means to be a boy or a girl just like Yule (2006) explained. Those society norms are a reason why people learn how to be a girl or a boy; the girls do not seem to want to be seen as much and do not take place in the classroom.
They think before they speak therefore they raise their hands and wait to get the word before they speak, and they also stick to the topic. Once they spoke, they spoke with a soft and often hesitant voice. This applies to Lakoff’s theory that we humans automatically have a picture of how men and women should talk. He says that women are supposed to talk correct, powerless and soft while men talk rough and without thinking, we also expect men to swear. Two of the boys tried to get the class laughing and joking therefore very much, and could say nasty comments that made the teacher upset on several occasions. This is another example of the boys taking the liberty to talk about what they wanted and changed the subject. Something that surprised me was that after a while when the boys had joked and talked freely for a while, one of the girls got irritated and answered one of the boys without raising her hand. The reason why I was surprised is because the girls had so far during the lesson not taken the freedom to talk without raising their hands, and they only spoke when they responded to a question.

When analyzing the result with the ethnography of communication method it is clear that the girls either consciously or unconsciously, on some level have an idea of how girls should behave. That they will not be as loud as the boys, they should follow the rules, like raising their hands and only talk in English during English lessons. The reason why I think of this is partly because of how they behaved during the lesson but also when one girl was annoyed at the guy who constantly interrupted the teacher and joked, so she forgot to put her hand and spoke straight out with a serious and steady voice, as she had not done earlier in the lesson when she received a question. The girls’ way of speaking affect their behavior, they talk with a low tone and with hesitation in his voice, which means that they behave uncertain and ends up in the background during the lesson. The boys however, talking loudly and incessantly with the result that they behave cocky by breaking the rules. This is an example of language and behavior goes hand in hand.

The results thus show that the boys took more space in the classroom; the teacher had to say to those on several occasions, which took a lot of her energy and time. The girls ended up in the background and some of the girls said only a few words during the entire lesson. This shows that there is a large gender difference of classroom interactions. What could this be due to? Secondly the social norms that shape us, but in this case I would say that the teacher's didactics have a great impact on this. The boys did not follow classroom rules during almost the whole lesson. They changed the subject, they talked without raising their hand, and they
interrupted when their classmates talked. At one point a boy challenged the teacher's authority; the teacher was then as passive as before. On several of these occasions she was just quiet and asked a new question. These gender differences are not the teacher's fault but I believe that the teacher's didactics has big role in how the classroom interactions are formed. If the teacher would make sure that everyone in the class follows the rules through punishment or any other method, there is a big chance that the boys would not dare to take as much space in the classroom and the girls would be heard a little more. Therefore, it is important that teachers are aware of gender differences in the classroom and that they can use a didactics that benefit all students and provides the same amount of space in the classroom. It is important that the teacher has authority so the students do not dare to shape classroom interactions in their own way, which in this case leads to the boys take more space in the classroom. It is also important that teachers do not allow social standards to have a negative impact in the classroom.

5. Conclusion

The result confirms earlier research about men and women use of the language is also true in Swedish schools. This study shows that there is a difference between how boys and girls are talking. The boys talk more, higher and take the liberty to change the subject, while the girls follow rules, speak with a soft voice and wait to get the word. Although the Swedish society is equal and Swedish schools have a rule that there should be no gender differences in school, so results show clear differences in how girls and boys are talking in the classroom but also how much space the boys take in the classroom compared to girls. This leads to the boys take more time and energy from the teacher than girls do and end up in the background. But it is important to bear in mind that this is not a general result of the students in Sweden but is merely a result of a class.

Because of the scope of the study, there are limitations to time and place to include interviews regarding students' ideas about social norms and their actions in the classroom. It would have been very interesting to interview some of the boys and girls separately in order to get a clearer picture of why there are so many gender differences in the classroom and how these differences impact on didactics. This is something that would be interesting to research further.
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