


## The Impact of Gender Roles on Acquiring English Language among Yemeni EFL Tertiary Students

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### Abstract

Gender is one of the important factors that affect foreign language acquisition (FLA). Consequently, gender differences are expected to influence the academic performance of both females and males. While previous studies explored gender and language learning globally, limited research has been conducted in the Yemeni context, particularly within public universities. This study addresses that gap and aims to investigate the impact of gender roles on acquiring a foreign language among EFL students at public universities in Yemen. It particularly investigates the extent of gender roles on foreign language acquisition, discovers the degree of gender differences in academic performance, and analyses additional factors that may influence gender differences in foreign language learning. The study adopts a quantitative research method by disseminating a comprehensive questionnaire designed to measure various aspects such as motivation, participation, confidence, and academic performance. The questionnaire was distributed to 31 teachers, and the data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The survey targets a representative sample of teachers from Departments of English, Colleges of Education and Colleges of Arts and Languages at some public universities in Yemen. The results reveal significant insights into the impact of gender on foreign language acquisition and academic performance. The study uncovers how gender roles influence motivation and engagement in language learning. Besides, it identifies any significant differences in academic outcomes between male and female students. These insights will be valuable for developing tailored educational strategies and interventions to support students more effectively.

**Keywords:** academic performance, acquisition, confidence, foreign language, gender, motivation, participation

## **Introduction**

Gender roles have been widely recognized as influential in the study of foreign language acquisition, shaping how individuals approach and succeed in learning a new language. Research consistently highlights that cognitive functions, motivation, and classroom behavior- often differentiated along gender lines- can significantly impact language learning outcomes. For example, studies suggest that females generally demonstrate higher motivation, enhanced verbal abilities, and a greater affinity for social interaction, which are key factors in successful language learning (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Sunderland, 2000). In contrast, males tend to excel in areas such as spatial reasoning, which may not be directly tied to language learning but can influence their learning strategies (Ellis, 1994; Oxford, 1994).

The roots of these gender differences can be traced to a complex interplay of biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors. Biological differences, such as hormonal variations, are known to influence cognitive processes that are pertinent to language acquisition (Kimura, 1999; Halpern, 2002). Psychosocial factors, including societal expectations and cultural norms, also play a critical role in shaping how males and females engage with language learning tasks (Pavlenko & Piller, 2008). In regions like Hadhramaut, where cultural and social expectations regarding gender are deeply ingrained, these dynamics become even more pronounced in educational settings, such as Seiyun University (Elyas & Badawood, 2016).

Additionally, recent studies have emphasized how gender norms, rather than gender alone, shape learners' motivational trajectories. For example, Henry and Thorsen (2018) demonstrated that male learners may feel demotivated in language classrooms where language learning is perceived as a feminine activity, while female learners often experience enhanced motivation when language learning aligns with culturally sanctioned roles. Such findings are particularly relevant to the Yemeni context, where traditional gender roles remain deeply embedded in both society and education.

Understanding the gender-based differences in foreign language acquisition is crucial for developing teaching strategies that promote equality and inclusiveness in the classroom. Educators must account for these disparities to create a learning environment where both male and female students can excel.

## **Literature review**

### **Role of Gender in Foreign Language Acquisition**

Gender plays a crucial role in shaping how individuals engage with and succeed in foreign language acquisition. Numerous studies have indicated that males and females often approach language learning differently due to cognitive, motivational, and sociocultural factors (Ellis, 1994; Sunderland, 2000). Females have been found to generally outperform males in verbal abilities, particularly in tasks that involve memory, communication, and linguistic creativity, all of which are critical for successful language acquisition (Oxford, 1994; Halpern, 2002). This is often linked to higher levels of motivation and stronger use of learning strategies, such as collaboration and social interaction, which are essential in acquiring a second or foreign language (Nyikos, 1990).

Research by Sunderland (2000) suggests that societal expectations and gender socialization patterns may contribute to these differences. In many cultures, females are encouraged to be more expressive and communicative, which can translate into stronger language skills. This may explain why, across different educational settings, female learners tend to excel in foreign language courses compared to their male counterparts. In contrast, males are often socialized to excel in spatial and analytical tasks, which are less directly linked to language learning (Kimura, 1999).

Additionally, Pavlenko and Piller (2008) argue that gender dynamics in the classroom, including teacher interactions and peer behaviors, can either reinforce or challenge these traditional roles. This highlights the importance of understanding gender roles not just biologically, but also in the context of cultural norms and expectations, which significantly shape foreign language learning experiences.

Building on this, Menard-Warwick (2021) argued that gender identity is not static but negotiated within the language learning process. Her work highlights how learners-especially women in conservative societies-may find in language learning a site for agency and redefinition of self, as well as tension between cultural norms and emerging identities. This adds depth to the sociocultural lens through which gender and language acquisition are analysed.

### **Gender Differences in Academic Performance**

The academic performance of male and female students in foreign language acquisition has been extensively studied, with results consistently showing that females tend to outperform males in both language proficiency and academic achievements (Ellis, 1994; Vandergrift, 2005). Several large-scale studies have found that female students generally score higher on language proficiency tests and demonstrate better retention of vocabulary, grammatical rules, and overall linguistic competence (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

One explanation for this difference is that females tend to employ more effective learning strategies, such as metacognitive strategies, which include planning, monitoring, and evaluating their own learning (Oxford, 1990; Vandergrift, 2005). These strategies allow learners to become more aware of their language acquisition process, thereby enhancing their ability to self-correct and improve. Males, on the other hand, may rely more on task-based or competitive approaches to language learning, which can be effective in some contexts but may not lead to the same level of linguistic proficiency as strategies used by females (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

Supporting these claims, Alzahrani (2019) found that Saudi female EFL students consistently outperformed males in academic achievement and strategy use. His study, situated in a culturally comparable region to Yemen, highlighted the significant role of motivation and cognitive strategies-particularly those emphasizing reflection and self-regulation-in explaining female students' stronger performance.

However, it is important to note that these findings are not universal and may vary across different cultural and educational contexts. In some studies, such as those conducted in more gender-equitable educational environments, the gap between male and female academic performance in foreign language acquisition has been shown to narrow (Elyas & Badawood, 2016). This suggests that while gender differences in academic performance are significant, they are also influenced by broader educational and societal factors. These findings echo Alzahrani's (2019) conclusions and reinforce

the idea that the sociocultural context plays a moderating role in gender-based academic differences.

### **Additional Factors Influencing Gender Differences in Foreign Language Acquisition**

In addition to cognitive and motivational differences, several other factors contribute to the gender disparities observed in foreign language acquisition. One major factor is the influence of teachers and the classroom environment. Research has shown that teachers may unconsciously perpetuate gender stereotypes by offering more language support and encouragement to female students than to males, thereby reinforcing the notion that language learning is a 'female domain' (Pavlenko & Piller, 2008; Sunderland, 2000).

Complementing this, Çelik, Arikan and Caner (2019) investigated gendered beliefs among pre-service English teachers and found that many held implicit biases associating language aptitude and classroom discipline more with female students. Such perceptions can shape teacher-student interactions and potentially contribute to unequal encouragement or evaluation in EFL classrooms, especially in traditional contexts like Yemen.

Cultural expectations regarding gender roles also play a significant part. In traditional societies, where gender roles are more rigidly defined, males may be discouraged from engaging fully in language learning because it is viewed as less aligned with masculine identity (Norton & Pavlenko, 2004). In such contexts, females may have greater opportunities to practice language skills, both inside and outside the classroom, which can lead to better outcomes in language acquisition. Conversely, in more egalitarian cultures, where language skills are equally valued for both genders, these disparities are often less pronounced (Piller & Takahashi, 2006).

Moreover, individual differences in personality traits, such as openness to experience and extroversion, have been linked to language learning success, with some studies suggesting that these traits may manifest differently between genders (Dewaele & Furnham, 1999). Females, who tend to score higher on measures of openness and social orientation, may find it easier to engage with the communicative aspects of language learning, whereas males, who may score higher on measures of independence and competition, might favor different approaches that could affect their overall language acquisition (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

Khany and Ghaemi (2020) advanced this discussion by demonstrating that gender impacts language achievement through metacognitive awareness. Female students showed significantly higher levels of planning, monitoring, and self-evaluation, which contributed to their improved outcomes in EFL contexts.

Finally, access to language learning resources, including exposure to native speakers and language learning technology, has also been identified as a factor that can influence gender differences in foreign language acquisition. In environments where both genders have equal access to such resources, the gender gap in language proficiency tends to decrease (Sunderland, 2000).

As a result, recent scholarship calls for the adoption of gender-responsive pedagogies to mitigate these disparities. For example, Tate (2022) advocates for inclusive curricula, equitable classroom practices, and teacher training programs that critically address gendered expectations. Such approaches could be especially

impactful in Yemen, where structured efforts to promote gender-sensitive teaching in EFL are still emerging.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, gender differences can significantly influence students' language learning outcomes. In Yemen, traditional gender roles often shape how male and female students engage with educational environments, including classroom participation, self-expression, and language learning strategies. These cultural and societal expectations may result in varied experiences and academic performance between male and female learners.

Research has shown that females often display higher levels of self-regulation, motivation, and metacognitive awareness in language learning, whereas males may demonstrate greater confidence in task-based or competitive settings (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Vandergrift, 2005). However, most of these findings emerge from Western or more general international contexts. There is a noticeable gap in research focusing on how gender roles specifically impact foreign language acquisition within the Yemeni EFL university setting.

Although previous studies have explored gender and language learning, limited attention has been given to the influence of gender roles in shaping language learning behaviours and academic outcomes in Yemeni public universities. Without a contextual understanding of these dynamics, educators may unintentionally employ uniform teaching methods that fail to address the distinct learning needs of male and female students. If these gender-related differences are not addressed, they may contribute to unequal learning outcomes and hinder some students from reaching their full potential.

This study aims to fill this gap by examining how gender roles affect foreign language acquisition among EFL students at public universities in Yemen. In doing so, it also seeks to evaluate whether current teaching approaches accommodate gender-based differences in motivation, participation, and performance, ultimately informing more inclusive and effective instructional strategies.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are to explore the role of gender in foreign language acquisition and its impact on the academic performance of EFL students. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Investigate the influence of gender roles on foreign language acquisition among EFL students at public universities in Yemen
2. Examine the extent of gender-based differences in academic performance among male and female EFL students
3. Identify gender-related factors (e.g., motivation, participation, and learning strategies) that shape students' experiences and outcomes in EFL learning

## Research Questions

To address the objectives, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do gender roles influence foreign language acquisition among EFL students at public universities in Yemen?
2. How significant are gender differences in academic performance within the EFL context at public universities in Yemen?
3. What gender-related factors (e.g., motivation, participation, classroom engagement) affect students' success in acquiring a foreign language?

## Scope of the Study

This study focuses on investigating the role of gender in foreign language acquisition and its effect on academic performance among EFL students at public universities in Yemen. The study targets a specific group of students enrolled in English language programs, with the aim of understanding how gender differences manifest in their language learning experiences. The scope is limited to this educational context and does not extend to other universities or non-EFL learners.

## Limitations of the Study

This study acknowledges several limitations. Due to time and resource constraints, it relies primarily on quantitative data obtained through self-administered questionnaires. While this method allows for broad data collection from a large sample, it may limit the depth of insight into personal experiences and cultural nuances, particularly those related to gender dynamics in language learning.

Another limitation is the use of convenience sampling, which may affect the representativeness of the sample and limit the generalizability of the findings beyond the specific group of EFL students at public universities in Yemen. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data introduces potential risks of social desirability bias or misinterpretation of questions by respondents.

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable preliminary insights into the influence of gender roles on foreign language acquisition in the Yemeni EFL context.

## Significance of the Study

This study holds significance for students, educators, curriculum designers, and researchers interested in English language acquisition within gendered cultural contexts. By examining the role of gender roles in shaping language learning experiences, this research contributes to a better understanding of cognitive, motivational, and socio-cultural factors that may differ between male and female learners.

In the Yemeni context, where traditional gender expectations often influence classroom dynamics and academic engagement, the findings can inform the development of more inclusive and effective teaching strategies. These strategies can help address the distinct learning needs of male and female students, improve academic outcomes, and promote equity in foreign language education.



Furthermore, this study supports the growing movement toward gender-responsive pedagogy in EFL contexts. As Tate (2022) argues, implementing equitable instructional approaches that acknowledge gender-based learning differences can help reduce disparities and foster more supportive classroom environments for all learners. These insights are especially relevant for countries like Yemen, where language education reform must consider deeply embedded cultural norms.

Moreover, this study adds to the limited body of literature on gender and foreign language learning in Arab and developing country contexts, offering a foundation for future research and educational reform.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study is intended to explore the role of gender in foreign language acquisition and its impact on the academic performance of EFL students. Therefore, the survey method was implemented here as the design for this study to investigate the influence of gender roles on the process of foreign language acquisition among EFL students, examine the extent of gender differences in academic performance within the context of EFL learning, and identify how gender-related factors shape the overall experience and success of students in acquiring a foreign language at public universities in Yemen.

### **Research Instrument**

The research instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire, developed specifically to assess how gender roles influence foreign language acquisition among EFL students. The questionnaire was designed based on a review of established instruments from previous studies (e.g., Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015) and was adapted to reflect the cultural and educational context of Yemeni public universities.

To ensure validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of three specialists in EFL education and educational psychology. Their feedback helped revise ambiguous or culturally inappropriate items. Subsequently, a pilot study was conducted with 30 EFL teachers to assess the clarity and reliability of the instrument.

Importantly, the structure of the questionnaire was also informed by research highlighting the impact of teacher perceptions and gender-based classroom dynamics on student outcomes. For example, Çelik, Arikan and Caner (2019) found that pre-service English teachers often held implicit gender biases, which influenced their expectations and interactions with students. This insight supported the inclusion of items related to motivation, participation, and perceived gender roles in language learning, which are often shaped by both internal beliefs and external classroom influences.

The final version of the questionnaire consisted of two main parts. The first part collected demographic data, including gender, academic year, and major. The second part included 17 items divided into three sections:

Section 1: Five items measuring perceptions of gender roles in language learning.

Section 2: Five items assessing differences in academic performance between genders.

Section 3: Seven items identifying factors such as motivation, participation, and cognitive style that may contribute to gender-based differences.

**Table 1**

*Reliability Cronbach's Alpha*

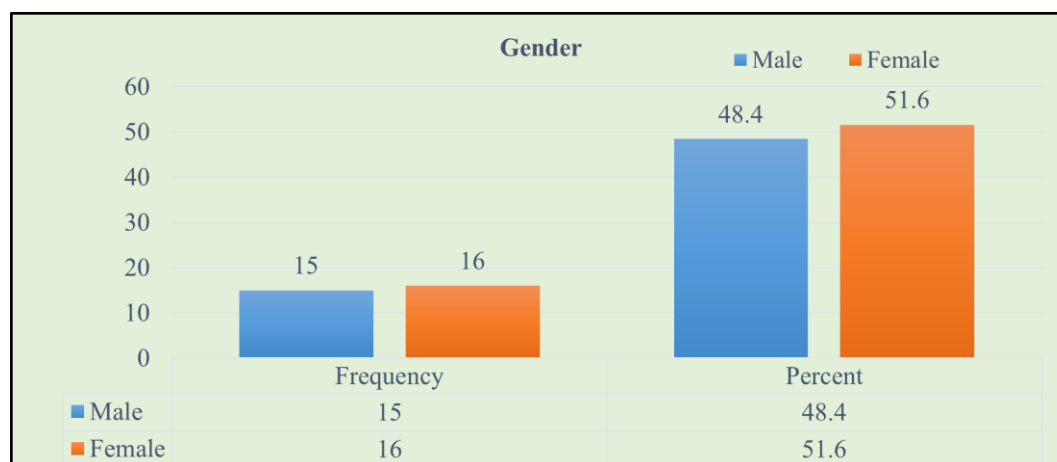
Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items	No. of Participants
.825	17	31

### Population and Sampling

This study included respondents from public universities in Yemen. The participants were teaching staff from English departments at these institutions. A convenience sampling strategy was employed, whereby the questionnaire was initially distributed to known contacts who then shared it with colleagues who met the research criteria. A total of 31 respondents completed the questionnaire: 15 were male (48.4%) and 16 were female (51.6%). This near-equal gender distribution contributes to the credibility of the findings, as it ensures representation from both male and female perspectives. Such balance helps reduce gender bias and enhances the overall reliability of the data (See Figure 1).

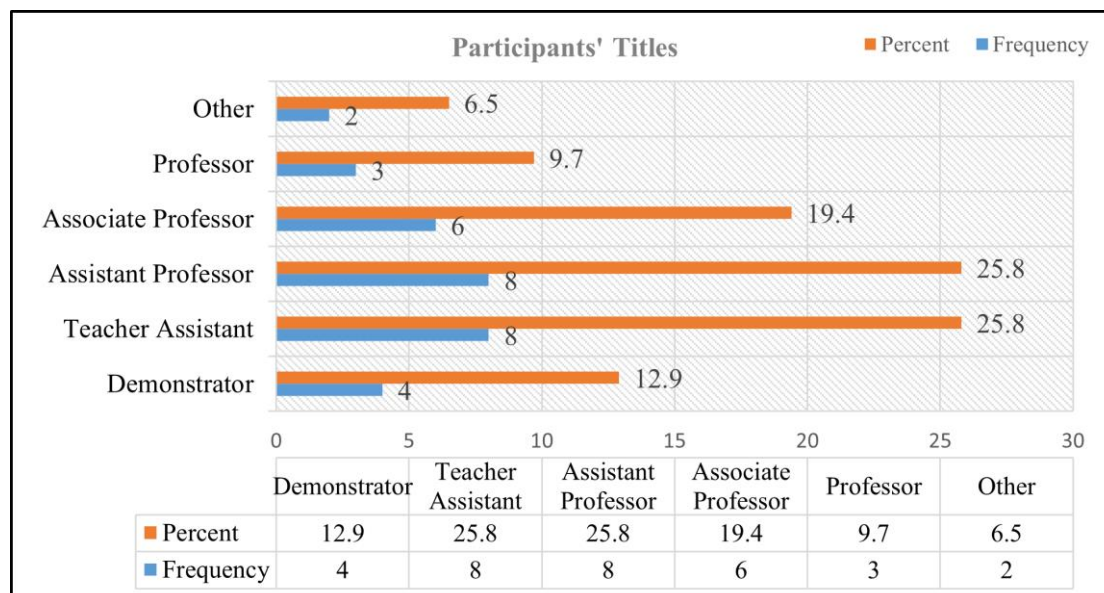
**Figure 1**

*Gender of the Questionnaire Respondents*

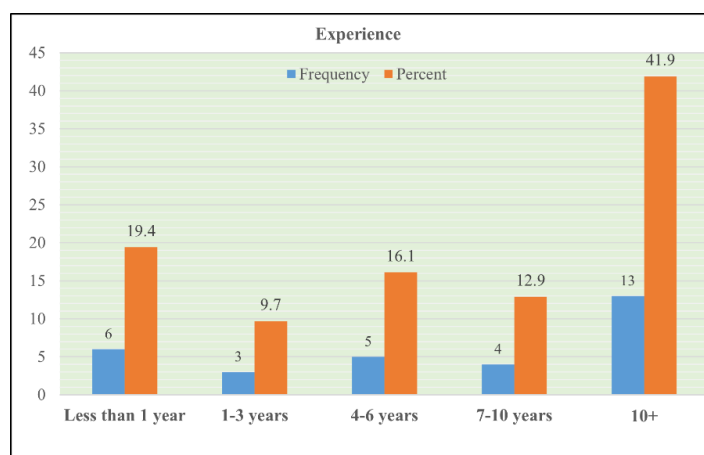


As has been mentioned earlier, the study respondents are experts in English educations. The results revealed that the majority of respondents were either Assistant Professors (i.e., PhD holders) or Assistant Teachers (Master's Holders) with equal percentages (25.8%) each. Assistant Professors came in the second level with a percentage of (19.4%) followed by Demonstrators (12.9%) and then Professors (9.7%). Other respondents, who have no specific title constituted only (6.5%), see Figure 2.



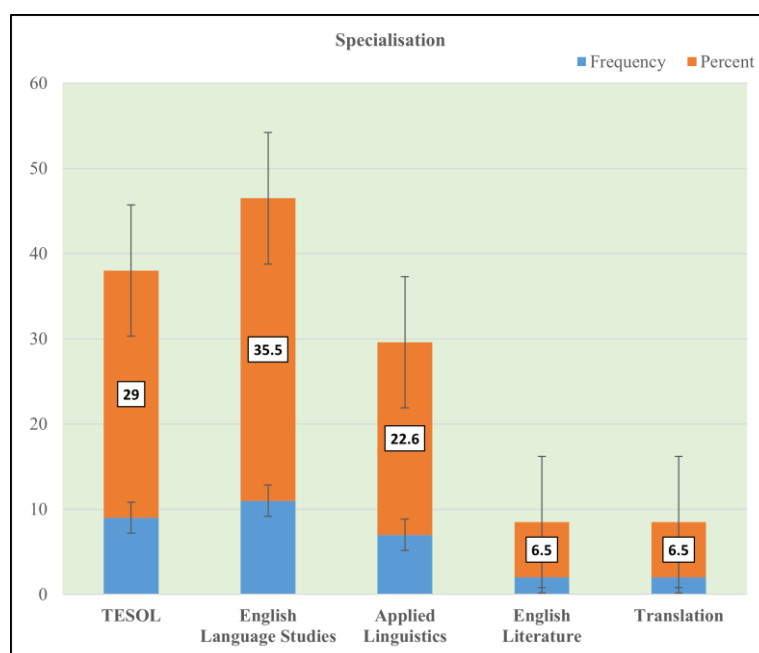
**Figure 2***Respondents' Designations at Their Universities*

With regard to the respondents' teaching experience, the results showed that almost half of them (41.9%) had more than ten years of experience in teaching English as a foreign language. This high percentage supports the validity and reliability of the study, as it reflects the perspectives of experienced educators who have spent a significant portion of their professional lives in EFL teaching. In contrast, respondents with less than one year of teaching experience made up the second-largest group, accounting for 19.2%. Notably, their responses did not significantly differ from those of their more experienced counterparts. Those with 4 to 6 years of experience constituted 16.1% of the sample, followed by participants with 7 to 10 years of experience at 12.9%. The smallest group consisted of respondents with 1 to 3 years of experience, comprising only 9.7% of the total (See Figure 3).

**Figure 3***Respondents' Years of Experience*

Concerning the respondents' majors, the results revealed that (35.5%) of them were of English Language Studies major followed by (29%) in TESOL then those whose major is Applied Linguistics came in the third position reaching (22.6%). As the nature of the study is an educational oriented, those majoring in literature and translation are found to at the bottom of the list each is of only (6.5%) (see Figure 4). It could be argued here that such results significantly contribute in the authenticity as well as the validity of this study findings and rationale of its concluding suggestions and recommendations.

**Figure 4**  
*Respondents' Majors*



### Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed using Google Forms. Responses are collected over two weeks. To ensure participant anonymity and encourage honest responses, no identifying information will be requested.

### Results and Discussion

As has been mentioned earlier, the results of the current study essentially rely on the experts' viewpoints based on their responses to the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of a number of seventeen items distributed on three sections. The first section consists of five items all focus on role of gender in foreign language acquisition. The second section includes five items too and all of them deal with the concept of gender differences in academic performance. Finally, the third section is devoted for important factors influencing gender differences in foreign language acquisition such as teachers' motivations, attitudes and perception of the gender role language education. The questionnaire items were on a five-point Likert scale of agreement where: 1= Strong Disagree (SD), 2= Disagree (D), 3= Neutral (N), 4= Agree (A) and 5= Strongly Agree (SA). However, while making the analyses the first

two choices were considered as one concept indicating disagreement ( $SD+D= D$ ) as negative responses while the last two choices were also dealt with as one concept indicating agreement ( $A+SA= A$ ) as a positive response. The respondents' indecision was also considered and retained the same statistical values. The results have been analyzed in details based on the study variables including the respondents' agreement (A) and disagreement (DA) along with the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) against each item.

In response to the first research questions “**To what extent do gender roles influence foreign language acquisition among EFL students at public universities in Yemen?**”, participants were asked to reflect on both societal expectations and observed motivational trends. One survey item asked whether respondents believed that females are more motivated than males to learn a foreign language. As shown in Table 2, the majority of participants (77.4%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, suggesting a widespread perception that females display higher motivation in language learning. In contrast, only 11.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 6.5% remained neutral.

Although motivation is an individual factor, these responses may reflect perceptions rooted in gender norms, where females are often expected to engage more actively in language-related fields. This perception may influence both actual motivation and performance.

Regarding academic specialization preferences, more than half of the respondents (51.6%) agreed that males tend to prefer other fields over foreign language studies, implying that English is more strongly favoured by females. Meanwhile, 19.4% disagreed with this statement, and 29% remained neutral, suggesting uncertainty about whether these preferences are shaped by gender roles or personal interests. (See Table 2.)

**Table 2**

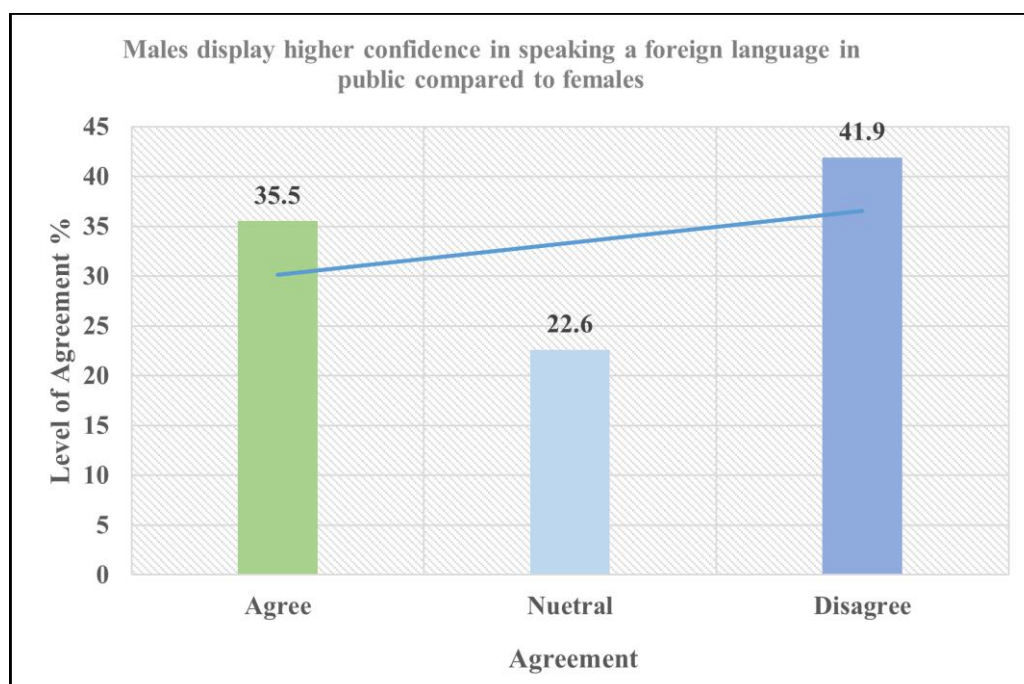
*Descriptive Statistics (N=31), the Role of Gender in Foreign Language Acquisition*

No.	Item	A (%)	N (%)	DA (%)	M	SD
1	Females are more motivated to learn a foreign language than males.	77.40	6.50	16.10	3.839	0.97
2	Males prefer to specialize in other majors rather than studying a foreign language.	51.60	29.00	19.40	3.323	0.98
3	The cognitive processes of female students give them an advantage in foreign language learning.	61.30	19.40	19.30	3.548	0.94
4	Females participate more actively in foreign language classes than males.	74.20	9.70	16.10	3.774	0.89
5	Males display higher confidence in speaking a foreign language in public compared to females.	35.50	22.60	41.90	2.839	0.98

In the above Table (2), it is clear the majority of the respondents believe that ‘the cognitive processes of female students give them an advantage in foreign language learning.’ On the other, the rest of the participants are either frankly disagree to this viewpoint (19.3%) or reserve their perspective on this issue. Relatively, almost three quarters of the respondents (74.2%) believe that ‘females participate more actively in foreign language classes than males’ and only (16.1%) disagreed to this point and only (9.7%) kept neutral. Unlike the items discussed above, the last statement (q5) revealed that that majority of the respondents either disagreed (41.9%) or provide no opinion (22.6%) about the point restricted to the belief that ‘males display higher confidence in speaking a foreign language in public compared to females.’ Only (35.5%) agreed to the priority of males in confidence level (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5**

*Respondents' Viewpoints on Students' Confidence Level*



In response to the second question, ‘**How significant are gender differences in academic performance within the EFL context at public universities in Yemen?**’ Pearson correlation test was carried out to find out effect of gender role on students’ language sensitivity, assessment scores, verbal ability divergent thinking and numerical and spiritual abilities based on the participants’ perspectives. In other words, the items related to this variable were tested both descriptively measuring the Mean (*M*) and Standard Deviation (*SD*), and inferentially through Pearson correlation (see Table 3).

**Table 3***Descriptive Statistics (N=31), Gender Differences in Academic Performance*

No.	Item	M	SD	Pearson Correlation	Rank	Sig. P-value
2	Females generally score higher in foreign language assessments than males.	3.87	0.98	0.625**	1	0.001
4	Females' divergent thinking style helps them achieve better scores in foreign language courses.	3.58	0.92	0.716**	2	0.001
1	Females are more sensitive to new language forms and more likely to use them in communication than males.	3.52	0.89	0.769**	3	0.001
3	Females have an advantage in verbal ability, memory, comprehension speed, and fluency.	3.48	0.93	0.686**	4	0.001
5	Males have an advantage in cognitive measures such as numerical ability, spatial orientation, and spatial imagery.	3.10	0.94	0.435*	5	0.014

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As could be seen in Table 3 above, the second item “Females generally score higher in foreign language assessments than males,” came in the first rank with a mean of (3.87) and a standard deviation of (0.98). Inferentially, the Pearson correlation reached (0.625\*\*) showing a significant effect ( $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that ‘Language Sensitivity’ is most affected concept by the gender differences in academic performance followed by ‘Divergent Thinking’ in the fourth statement with a mean of (3.58) and a standard deviation of (0.92). It important to mention here that this item achieved the higher Pearson correlation value (0.716\*\*) than the second item with a same  $P$ -value. The third item came in the third rank with a mean of (3.52) and a standard deviation of (0.89). It is important to note here that this item got the highest Pearson correlation (0.716\*\*) compared to the other items. This indicates that ‘Language Sensitivity’ is the most affected aspect by the gender differences in academic performance ( $p < 0.001$ ).

Relatively, gender differences in academic performance shows a high impact students’ ‘Verbal Ability’ as seen the results of fourth ranked item stated as ‘Females have an advantage in verbal ability, memory, comprehension speed, and fluency,’ with a mean of (3.48) and a standard deviation of (0.93) and a Pearson correlation reached (0.686\*\*) with a high significant  $p$ -value (0.001). The fifth item, stated to cover students’ ‘Numerical and Spatial Abilities’ came at the last rank with a mean of (3.10) and a standard deviation of (0.94). Pearson correlation showed a moderate (0.435\*) impact of the gender differences in academic performance on numerical and spatial abilities of students with a  $p$ -value of (0.014).

In the same vein, the Pearson correlation test was used to find a typical answer to the last question of the study, “**How do gender-related factors, such as motivation, cognitive styles, and classroom behaviors, impact the process of acquiring a foreign language at public universities in Yemen?**”, the Pearson correlation test was applied. The study results have been listed accordingly in Table (4).

**Table 4**

*Pearson Correlation, the Impact of Gender-Related Factors, on the Process of Acquiring FL*

No.	Gender-Related Factor	M	SD	Pearson Correlation	Rank	Sig. P-value
1	Classroom Behaviors	3.52	0.58	0.822**	1	0.001
4	Cognitive Styles	3.51	0.61	0.876**	2	0.001
2	Motivation	3.50	0.62	0.852**	3	0.001

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As can be seen in Table 4 above, the gender-related factors almost have an equal high influence on the process of acquiring a foreign language in the Yemeni context. The means of the three factors seem to be in sequence where classroom behaviors came in the first rank followed cognitive styles then entailed by the factor of motivation reaching 3.52, 3.51, and 3.50 respectively. However, the case is not the same for results of Pearson correlation cognitive styles surpasses the other factors reaching the highest Pearson correlation value (0.876\*\*) followed by motivation then classroom behaviors reaching (0.852\*\*) and (0.822\*\*) respectively. These high, and interchangeable, results reveal the great influence on the gender-related factors on the process of acquiring a foreign language in the Yemeni Universities. This is proved by the results of significance value where all alpha ( $\alpha$ ) results were found at zero level ( $p < 0.001$ ).

## Conclusion

Recent linguistic research has increasingly emphasized understanding gender as a social and cultural construct, particularly in relation to foreign language acquisition (FLA). This study confirms that gender roles, shaped by societal expectations and cultural norms-significantly influence language learning, especially within the context of public universities in Yemen. The findings indicate that gender differences affect multiple dimensions of FLA, with female students generally outperforming their male counterparts in language-related tasks. Females demonstrated higher levels of motivation, verbal proficiency, and alignment with socially constructed language-oriented roles, while male students tended to exhibit strengths in areas such as numerical or spatial reasoning, which are less directly connected to language acquisition.



These results underscore the importance of recognizing the intersection between gender and educational performance. Tailoring teaching strategies to acknowledge gender-related learning preferences and challenges can contribute to more equitable and effective language instruction, especially in culturally conservative contexts.

From the researchers' perspectives, these findings resonate with observations made during data collection. Many female participants expressed strong personal investment in language learning, often linking their motivation to long-term goals such as teaching, translation, or international careers. In contrast, several male respondents reported feeling socially discouraged from prioritizing language study, perceiving it as misaligned with their masculine career trajectories. These reflections illustrate that addressing gender disparities in education requires not only pedagogical reform, but also broader cultural shift.

Ultimately, this study has reinforced the importance of integrating both empirical evidence and cultural sensitivity into foreign language education. By acknowledging the role of gender in shaping learning experiences, educators and policymakers can design more inclusive practices that support the success of all learners.

### **Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Studies**

The study of gender roles and foreign language learning remains a relevant and evolving field of inquiry. Given the social and cognitive dimensions of FLA, future linguistics research should continue to explore how gender influences language acquisition, particularly in diverse educational contexts such as public universities in Yemen.

Due to time constraints, this study relied on online data collection methods, which may have impacted the accuracy of some responses. As a result, it is recommended that future research employ field-based data collection methods to obtain more reliable and diverse input. Additionally, the sample for this study exhibited an uneven age distribution, with the majority of respondents in the 23-27 age range. For future studies, it is advisable to ensure a more balanced age distribution to obtain a more representative dataset.

Furthermore, educators and policymakers are encouraged to integrate gender-responsive teaching practices into EFL curricula. These practices may include gender-neutral classroom management, inclusive materials, and equitable participation strategies that empower both male and female learners. As emphasized by Tate (2022), such pedagogical approaches are essential for promoting fairness, increasing engagement, and improving outcomes for all students in language education settings.

Finally, there is a need for further exploration of gender paradigms in FLA, as this area has not been extensively researched. Understanding these paradigms can contribute to the development of more equitable and effective language learning strategies that accommodate both male and female learners, particularly in EFL contexts.

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