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Bc. Darina Suchomelová

Gender differences in language use at school

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DECLARATION

Prohlašuji, že jsem dipolomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila pouze literární a informační zdroje, které jsou uvedeny v seznamu literatury.

V Šumperku dne …….

Podpis

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ABSTRACT

Diploma thesis focuses on general gender differences in language use amongst students at school. The theoretical part deals with sociolinguistic and sociologic aspects of language use ach speech acts used by gender representatives. It analyses the contrast of former and actual approach to gender problematics along with social and cultural norms, conventions and expectations of the way that language is used by particular gender. Practical part of this diploma thesis shows how much these gender differences are visible in the school area amongst students in 5th and 9th grades along with their attitude towards English language.

Keywords: gender, gender differences, language, language use

ABSTRAKT

Diplomová práce se ve své teoretické části zaměřuje na genderové rozdíly v užívání jazyka obecně. Zabývá se sociolingvistickými a sociologickými aspekty užívání jazyka a jazykových aktů mezi zástupci jednotlivých pohlaví. Analyzuje kontrast bývalého a nynějšího přístupu k problematice odděleného pohlaví, základní sociální normy, konvence a očekávání v používání jazyka daným pohlavím. V praktické části je nejen ukázáno, jak moc jsou tyhle rozdíly viditelné ve školním prostředí mezi studenty pátých a devátých ročníků, nachází se zde ale i výzkum týkající se přístupu daných studentů k anglickému jazyku.

Klíčová slova: pohlaví, genderové rozdíly, jazyk, užívání jazyka

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THEORETICAL PART

1 INTRODUCTION

The topic of gender has become broadly discussed over the last few decades. Once a very controversial term, this label of some sort of "taboo", is being slowly torn apart.

The distinction between terms gender and sex is rather important because these two relatively similar words have quite a different meaning, indeed. Sex comes from a biological field where it mainly means that the population is divided into two categories, based on physical appearance for the most part. Males and females.

„Gender is an understanding of how society shapes our understanding of those biological categories". We could say it is a notion which helps society establish sex categories or determine the cultural roles attached to them. Every society developed certain norms and attitudes that are believed to belong to one sex or another. Some actions are supposed to be more masculine, appropriate to behaviour of a man and some are expected to be more feminine, fitting for woman's behaviour (Zevallos, 2014). This indicates that a person can simply learn or pick up a gender role in society which is commonly influenced by education, family, religion or economics. In short, while one's sex is set by the nature and does not change, gender roles are determined and expected by society or culture and they are variable (Crawford, 1995).

Although the term gender influenced primarily the field of social sciences in its first wave, the universes of language and literature were soon to be consumed by the term too. In particular, language is an area where underlying assumptions of differences between men and women do exist as well. There is a belief that they speak differently which was clearly presented in two books. The first one written by psychologist Jonathan Grey called *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus: The Classic Guide to Understanding the Opposite Sex* (1992) and a second book titled You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation (1990) by linguist Deborah Tannen (Wardhaugh, Fuller, 2015).

This theoretical part explores the topic of gender differences and language further in its content. It will gradually clarify particular differences and explain to what extend these contrasts are significant in the society. The knowledge will be applied in the practical part of this work. The practical part examines the existence of said differences in English language among students of 1.ZŠ in Šumperk along with their attitudes towards the second language.

2 SOCIOLINGUISTICS

Every time a builder wants to build a house he has to start from the bottom. Every time a writer wants to write a new book he has to start from the beginning. This process cannot be reversed. Therefore, in order to understand the gender and the language, the connection between them or the terminology, we shall go back to the beginning. **Sociolinguistics.** Everyone in this world have experienced any level of sociolinguistics, at some point. It could have been a raise of an eyebrow over an accent, a thought about why instructions are in various languages, a conversation with grandparents, spouses, an argue with a group of friends or an email addressed to a boss with hopes of promotion.

Meyerhoff (2006), a Professor of Sociolinguistics at the University of Edinburgh, states that sociolinguistics is a very extensive discipline and there is not one simple sentence that would describe the term properly while remaining comprehensible. On the other hand, Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) were successful in the ability to summarize the meaning into one sentence: "Sociolinguistics is the study of our everyday lives". Since it may appear very simple, they continue with further explanation. Sociolinguistics focus on how people use language in casual conversations, how is language presented to them by the media and how existing norms and rules, formed by the society, influenced the language.

2.1 LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

The term **society** expresses a group of people associated together for certain motives such as religion, culture and other. It seems to be a very broad term and it most certainly has considerable meaning in further study of language and gender. **Language** is used to describe "a system of linguistic communication particular to a group; this includes spoken, written, and signed modes of communication" (Wardhaugh, Fuller, 2015).

Findings, like those said above, provide sociolinguists with valuable information about the entire language system existing in society, relationships within and the ways how individuals form particular features of their social identity through language. Mainly the spoken one. While written language could provide some information, the speech delivers key details about one's different identities, family background or education (Holmes, 2013). It is important to remember that society plays a big role in gender differences. The foundations of these

differences have roots in the historical development of social roles and status. Being on a different status level, women's and men's speech started to evolve in separate ways. They were part of a completely different environments. Men held the power, they were discovering the outer world, communicating with different people and making money. Women spent most of their time at home. Although the modern society is less conservative nowadays, social factors are still causing these differences to exist. After a child is born, it receives a name which automatically navigates its life towards socially expected directions. Young girls and boys typically mature by social expectations of their gender (Jinyu, 2014).

2.2 IDENTITY

A plural form of the word **identity** plays a great role here. A person during conversation can identify strongly with his profession but can also highly refer to his identity as a parent, for example. Other aspects such as gender identity or social class identity may interfere the conversation as well. The same person will most likely shift his attention to a different identity in next conversation. In other words, identities are flexible and can easily move from one to another in different contexts. In addition, **groups** follow nearly the exact pattern, meaning that group identities are constantly being shifted as well. One speaker can identify himself as a member of various social categories in different contexts. Sometimes, the social categories may not be obvious at first, hence the primary identification with certain groups is based, for example, on race, nationality or sexual orientation. (Crystal, 1997).

2.3 LINGUISTIC VARIATION

Within or outside these groups speaking the same language, members do not have to use the same phrases or words to express the same thought. Even one speaker can use different ways of greeting people or describing objects. These contrasting choices of language structures are called variants. **Linguistic variation** is a core theme of sociolinguistics. It proceeds through multiple levels of the discipline as it investigates areas of phonetics, phonology, morphology, lexicology or syntax (Spolsky, 1989).

- **Phonetic variables** – different phonetic realisations of the same phonological device. For example, /t/ can be pronounced with a glottal stop, an r-like flap, a d-like tap, alveolar stop and so on.
- **Phonological variables** – an alternative phonological structure of the exact lexical item. For example, presence or absence of /h/ in *house.*
- **Morphological variables** – an alternative morphological structure of the same word, mostly concerning roots or affixes. For example, residents in Norwich tend to let go of the suffix -s in present tense verbs occasionally. Creating *she read* instead of *she reads.*
- **Lexical variables** – two non-identical lexical items can indicate the same meaning. For example, words like *pavement* and *sidewalk.*
- **Syntactic variables** – different syntactic structures possess the same meaning. For example, *Nobody saw it* and *Didn't nobody see it.* However, to explain why exactly speakers choose one or another form would require further study combined with other disciplines, like psycholinguistics or discourse analysis (Hudson, 1996).

Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) indicated what is the most valid purpose of sociolinguistics. They claim that sociolinguists do not only study simple and individual facts. This discipline deals with the influence of societal standards, such as gender, on our everyday language use. An ideal example may be the use of nicknames. Why are men repeatedly called by their nicknames while women are usually not? How did this stereotype affect language use in society? This is just a tip of an iceberg because there is a great deal of other gender related differences in language use worth mentioning…

3 GENERAL GENDER DIFFERENCES

A well-known book by John Gray states that men are from Mars and women are from Venus. There are no valid evidence supporting the statement so any differences between men and women can be produced according to this. However, modern science is able to offer credible documentation of every physiological and psychological difference existing (Gray, 1992).

3.1 PHYSIOLOGICAL

Physiologists from all over the world assembled essential information about differences between men's and women's bodies. Here are some examples. They claim that although the functions of kidneys are fundamentally similar for both sexes, the size is different. Males have slightly larger kidneys and chance of chronic kidney disease increases as well. Generally, men have more muscle mass and less body fat than women. Their abdominal areas have less subcutaneous fat as a result of better oxidation processes, meaning that bodies of females tend to store more lipids (Neigh, Mitzelfelt, 2016).

As for language, the main area of focus is the brain and its functions. The brain is divided into two sections and the general belief is that left hemisphere is the one controlling the language. The right hemisphere usually does not have an influence over linguistic operations including phonology, morphology or syntax. However, it does have an impact on understanding the language correctly. Sometimes how the sentence is said becomes more important than the actual syntactic accuracy. The general belief is that men have dominant left hemisphere and women favour the right part of their brain (Mitchell and Crow, 2005). However, Cameron (2009) points out the possibility of different organization of the brain for females and males regarding those language functions. These claims originate from various tests using neuroimaging techniques or clinical experiments with patients that suffered brain damage. Other theories investigate the effect of hormones. The level of testosterone, to be exact. Testosterone is a hormone which is usually found in female and male bodies. The theory suggests that the level of testosterone have influence on the growth of the right hemisphere. This would support the arguments that females have better developed verbal skills but are struggling with visual and spatial abilities. However, the correctness of this theory remains debatable and needs further research (Crow, 1998).

3.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL

While the anatomical differences between men and women are apparent, the topic of psychology is much more complex. Modern technologies have collected fundamental documentation, of how women's and men's brain function. Those differences could be seen rather early in life. Infant girls are starting to talk sooner, they are able to perceive faces as well. Later in life, women are sensitive to emotions and they are affected by intense feelings leading to possible depression or anxiety (Goldman, 2017).

The questions of personality are particularly difficult. A study, published in 2013 by Jeffrey R. Gagne, Michele M. Miller and H Hill Goldsmith, shows similar findings. In most cases, personalities begin to differ early in life. The research participants were three-year-old infants. The girls were found rather shy and being able to control their behaviour well, whereas the boys were rated more active and harder to tame. Another research questioned the fact of social influence over personality. Costa, McCrae and Terracciano (2001) studied over 23,000 men and women from 26 cultures, such as USA, India, Russia or Hong Kong. The study shows that the personalities of men and women differ more in countries considering gender to be equal.

During the previous and following years, other studies have come to a conclusion that language of both genders generally differ in many ways.

Women were found to be:

- strengthening conversations in order to maintain relationships
- passionate about conversations while remaining respectful
- interested in discussing relationship problems
- using softer language and voice (without swearing or offense words but with tag questions or intensifiers)
- paying attention very well during a conversation

While **men** are:

- trying to show power and dominance in conversations and relationships
- more phlegmatic and straightforward when speaking
- avoiding unnecessary complications by providing quick solutions
- using more direct language and stronger voice
- lacking interest in everyday conversations (Thorne and Nancy, 1975).

However, the topic of different personalities between genders, whether the society is influencing the findings or not, requires further research. Some of these differences are studied more in depth in the chapters below.

4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 FOLKLINGUISTICS

Old poems, novels and other pieces of literature indicate that people were very well aware of certain differences between men and women from the early times. Their point of view on the topic was typically influenced by the perceptions of the society and the time they were living in. The establishment of Standard English initiated the interest in the structures of language, both lexical and grammatical. In the eighteenth century, a large number of dictionaries were written due to the efforts to codify the language and invent one set of rules. Said dictionaries were one of the first evidence of gender differences in literature. Jennifer Coates mentions one example by Richard Cambridge (1974) in her book called *Women, Men and Language: A Sociolinguistic Account of Gender Differences in Language* (2013). It signals that women, their speech and vocabulary were seen as insignificant in contrast to men's.

"I must beg leave . . . to doubt the propriety of joining to the fixed and permanent standard of language a vocabulary of words which perish and are forgot within the compass of a year. That we are obliged to the ladies for most of these ornaments to our language, I readily acknowledge" (Cambridge, 1754).

Although it is not clear what the mentioned "ornaments" represent, the struggle with the thought of a change in language made by women during this period of time is very obvious. The change in mentioned perception of language surfaced almost two centuries after, when Professor Otto Jespersen, eventually admitted the change and recognized it as some sort of a challenge.

The eighteenth century was an era of adverbials for women's language. Said parts of speech were considered to be "fashionable" amongst women, letting gender to be easily determined during a written or spoken conversation. Favoured examples were *vastly, amazingly* or *excessively* (Coates, 2013).

"A fine woman . . . is vastly obliged, or vastly offended, vastly glad or vastly sorry. Large objects are vastly great, small ones are vastly little; and I had lately the pleasure to hear a fine woman pronounce, by a happy metonymy, a very small gold snuff-box that was produced in company to be vastly pretty, because it was vastly little" (Chesterfield, 1754).

Robin Lakoff (1975) mentioned yet another adverb she believed to be used with a different purpose by men and women. Although she claims that both genders can certainly apply *so* in their speech, men would use it in a sentence that shows little to no emotions and zero connection to the speaker.

Example: *"That water is so clear!"*

While women commonly hedged in situations where they wanted to tone down or soften the statement referencing to themselves.

Example: *"I feel so angry!"*

Jespersen (1922) claims that the appearance of hedging in women's speech signify that women were traditionally known for speaking without thinking through the conversation. This idea was presented over fifty years before Lakoff's work was published. Even though both linguists based their ideas on almost the identical concepts, Lakoff's thoughts are receiving more praise nowadays.

The importance and accuracy of women's speech is not the only issue that used to be widely questioned. According to the late eighteenth century men, written language of their significant others was considered to be less literate and educated as well. Coates (2013) describes the possible reason as the fact that women disposed with significantly less opportunities to educate themselves. In addition to that, even if they had the chance to become literate, women were expected to learn no more than one language. A quote by John Milton (1608 - 1678) supports said statement: "*I will not allow my daughters to learn foreign languages because one tongue is sufficient for a woman"*. Languages such as Greek or Latin were forbidden since they were slowly disappearing to the areas of school classes only, visited exclusively by men.

Virginia Woolf (1929) believed that the written form of language, a sentence, was created by men. She described sentences as "too heavy" for women. Whether she was right or wrong, requires a further discussion.

4.2 ANTHROPOLOGY

During the seventeenth century, numerous church representatives were sent into the foreign countries on similar missions. They were expected to teach locals and spread the ideology of certain religion amongst them. Said missionaries were ones of the first people to point out the differences between language of men and women in communities they visited (Coates, 2013).

An extreme example, featured in a book called *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (2013) by Janet Holmes, a sociolinguist from New Zealand, describes a community of Indians. These people live in the Amazon alongside a river called Vaupés. Men and women in this community speak entirely different languages. The "mother tongue" and the first language the children learn when growing up in their fraction of the community is considered to be the language of the father. However, there are several other languages the inhabitants could speak and use every day. Later in their life, Indians learn the mother's language as well as the "lingua franca" of the Vaupés area, Spanish and other. While the difference between men's and women's language is natural for Indians from Vaupés area, there are other examples. Sometimes women from a native tribe married members of a different society which invaded the area. Therefore, women were forced to learn new language while keeping their own and teaching their children both. Said situation occurred, for example, between Carib women and Arawak men (Brown, 1998).

Needless to say, there are numerous, less extreme, differences which anthropologists discovered during their research. Differences that occur particularly in the phonological, morphological and lexical parts of the language. Members of different societies often pronounce certain words in a different way, according to their gender. In rural regions of the USA, women of Gros Ventre tribe from Montana, pronounce the word "*bread*" as /kja'tsa/ while men use different pronunciation, such as /dna'tsa/. In addition to that, Cowell and Brockie (2016), points out the contrast of the differences that occur in more urban areas of the same country.

On the other hand, various anthropologists studying Western cultures had a completely different view on gender. They understood it as a product, an entity which could be possessed and controlled by themselves. However, this perception of gender shifted to the almost exact opposite amongst people of Melanesia. Melanesia is an area of Oceania, located in southwestern

part of the Pacific Ocean. Local residents believe that the knowledge of gender is dependent on the interaction with others (McElhinny, 2003).

4.3 DIALECTOLOGY

So far, the previous parts focused mainly on gender differences in producing linguistic variables. The differences in dialect variation had been significantly less reliable as many traditional dialectologists were highly subjective during their studies. What it means is that they almost completely neglected one part of the speech community, women. There are various reasons for this statement. Women were seen as not enough interesting with their language being too much ordinary, therefore there was a little to no interest from the dialectologists side to include them in the study. The table below shows the details of various dialect surveys and the number of informants.

Dialect survey	Date of publication	Male informants	Female informants	Total informants	% women
France (Gilliéron)	1902–10	640	60*	700*	8.57
Catalonia (Griera)	1923–39	107	1	108	0.93
S. Austria (Tesniere)	1925	70	18	88	20.45
Italy/Switz. (Jaberg and Jud)	1928–40	380	40*	420*	9.52
Sardinia (Pellis)	1933–35	55	5	60	8.33
Corsica (Bottiglioni)	1933–42	61	6	67	8.96
Italy (Bartoli)	1933	316	48	364	13.19
Belg. Congo (De Boeck)	1942	?	0	?	0.00
North China (Giet)	1946	495	29	524	5.53
England (Orton)	1962–78	867	122	989	12.34

Table 1: The differences between women and men informants during various surveys (Coates, 2013).

Wartburg (1925) presents an explanation. He claimed that women tend to be more traditional or old-fashioned than men. Said statement was based on the fact that women were spending most of their time at home, taking care of the house, the children and hardly ever socialised with strangers. His claim was supported by Trudgill (1974) in his work *The social differentiation of English in Norwich,* where he stated that women are more conservative because they are more aware of their social status and they tend to use standard forms of speech because of it.

On the contrary, other dialectologists, such as Orton (1962), described that he favoured men in his surveys only because their language appears to be the closest to the original dialect of the area. In his work *The Linguistic Atlas of England* he followed the steps of Jules Gilliéron (1902), the author of *Atlas linguistique de la France,* who claimed that the speech of women is definitely not conservative since they are able to acquire new words and phrases better and quicker than men. Gauchat (1905) supports Gilliéron's statement but yet again, states that women spend most of their time at home, doing housework and taking care of the children, without explaining how exactly it is different from Trudgill's statement. There was no explanation given. The only difference was that not only women's perception shifted, the perception of men did as well. The first group of dialectologists described men as outgoing, traveling often and communicating with strangers a lot. The second group related to them as very silent and isolated. The one who neutralised these contrasts was an author who did not join either of the two groups, McIntosh (1952). McIntosh studied Scottish dialects and he claimed that he did not find any differences between the speech of men and women.

To summarize previous findings, the selection of participants for majority of the dialect studies was highly subjective and it left enormous loophole in traditional dialectology. However, it does not mean that dialectology is completely lost. Sociolinguists have picked up where dialectologists left, as they are trying to improve the status of the field by studying linguistic variations with only one difference. Instead of focusing on geographical variability, they shifted their focus to the social depth of the linguistic variation (Coates, 2013).

4.4 WOMEN LIBERATION MOVEMENT

The study and analysis of gender and the differences between men and women were ignited by numerous historical events. Both sexes were viewed as two completely different individuals, according to not only their physical appearance but mostly due to the social status. Therefore, women were traditionally put at certain disadvantages as a result of men being superior throughout the history. The fact of women feeling less worthy sparked an immense feminist movement in the late eighteenth century. The movement helping women to have their own voice went through three well known phases (Burkett, 1999).

4.4.1 FIRST WAVE

Women's suffrage and their right to vote were the centre of attention of the first wave. Around the end of nineteenth and the beginning of twentieth century women started to question the traditional role of female in the society. The desire to have higher education and career elevated women's demands for freedom. Apart from this, women in this period of time were supported in owning up to their sexuality by people like Sigmund Freud. With the efforts of erasing the differences between women and men, it was supposed to be completely normal for women to have the same wants and desires as men. Biological and psychological (Lehmann, 2001). Margaret Fuller is, in her work *Woman in the nineteenth century* (1845), convinced that giving women their liberty and rights would greatly benefit the entire society.

4.4.2 SECOND WAVE

The second wave of women liberation movement took place roughly between two decades of 1960's and 1980's. In contrast to the first wave, which focused mainly on women's legal rights to vote, this phase targeted the topic of sexuality, women's status at work and at home as well. In addition to that, the subject of violence against women was heavily discussed (Wharton, 2005). Amongst many writers, such as Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan or Gloria Steinem, who took a sizeable part in this movement, women could rely on a very important person. The President of the United States, John Fitzgerald Kennedy pushed women's rights into the front of his administration schedule. The contraceptive pill was introduced to society

the same year. This and the permission to divorce their husbands led women to pursue their careers and independency instead of taking care of children at home (Thompson 2002).

Numerous linguists and psychologists initiated further study of gender differences since they believed in its importance. Studies and research, examining the topic in the linguistic field, were published by scientists like Lakoff, Key and Thorne in the 1970's. These documents are claimed to be the fundamental works of gender language study to this day (Gu, 2013).

4.4.3 THIRD WAVE

The final wave of the movement started at the end of the twentieth century. This wave was supposed to fight mainly against social discrimination and racism. Whereas the second wave allowed numerous women to join the labor force, they were mostly white women. Other races represented only about 5 percent of all working people. During this period of time, people in poor communities were granted the permission to vote as well, especially young women (Scott, 1986).

Each of these waves contributed to freedom and independence of women. Society started to view women as equals to men with similar rights but different personal and communication skills. It has not always been uncomplicated as women still face numerous issues at places such as work, however the changes proceed definitely in the right direction (Merchant, 2012).

5 THEORIES OF LANGUAGE AND GENDER

Female linguists began to question the relationship between language and gender between 1960's and 1970's. During those years, numerous writers and researchers tried to draw attention to a fact that women repeatedly felt discriminated by more powerful male language use. One of the first female linguists exploring this area was Robin Lakoff, a professor of linguistics at the University of California in Berkeley. Lakoff introduced the topic of women's language and initiated further research. There are four approaches, often called "the four D's", describing gender language which are associated with Robin Lakoff, Deborah Tannen and others (Crosby, Nyquist, 1977).

5.1 DEFICIT APPROACH

The earliest approach, established by Lakoff in 1975, questioning language and gender. According to this approach, women were not raised to be assertive and use language accordingly. Lakoff described their speech features as lacking "something", such as certainty or confidence while being extremely polite. For example, women used hedges or tag questions repeatedly. This was supposed to show that women are not confident in using their language while men's language is superior (Lakoff, 1975). In an essay called *Twenty years after Language and Woman's place*, Bucholtz and Hall (1995) state that Lakoff's book was one of the first and most influential works on language and gender which was made available to broad audience of ordinary people. As a result of Lakoff's works, the deficit approach very much overlap with the dominance approach.

5.2 DOMINANCE APPROACH

According to Zimmerman and West (1975), the centre of attention of said approach is the distribution of power over the language between genders. It studies how asymmetrical are the power relations in everyday conversations with men having the lead and dominating language. The position of women during an interaction is only to support a smooth continuation of the conversation. At the same time, they conveyed their support by asking questions or showing active listening signs. Men would typically interrupt their significant others or reject conversational topic proposed by women (Jan, 2017).

5.3 DIFFERENCE APPROACH

This approach was publicized by an American author and professor of linguistics at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., Deborah Tannen. Her work "*You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation"* (1990) denies the dominance approach with stating that women are no longer powerless and submissive in the conversation because both genders are equal. The approach also constructs the model of "men" and "women" where both groups have different communication skills. For example, competition between men and cooperation amongst women. A natural outcome of this statement is a miscommunication. Crawford (1995) claims "men and women are fated to misunderstand each other". However, Cameron (1998) remains sceptical. She states that this approach became so popular simply because of its nature to exclude the weighty topic of power relations. Sexes appear to be equal which is, according to Cameron, not the case. They are not and they have never been. The cultural background is another key term attached to the difference approach.

5.4 DIVERSITY APPROACH

According to Judith Butler, an American gender theorist, biological sex and gender are completely different items. In her book "*Gender Troubles*" (1990), she claims that human input and the use of language determines gender. For example, the associations of blue being masculine colour and pink being feminine are completely society-made. Women and men have initially exactly the same foundation in extent of their language use and society trains them to perform in a certain way. Ultimately, they accept the dominant social norm which becomes their identity. To sum up, language is not a reflection of gender (Butler, 1990).

6 GENDER DIFFERENCES IN USING LANGUAGE

In the second half of the twentieth century, many sociolinguists, such as Lakoff, Tannen or Cameron, shifted their focus and started studying gender differences intensively. As said before, women and men do not speak in the same way. There are certain features that distinguish women's and men's language performance, such as the attitude towards the language, pronunciation, intonation, the choice of vocabulary or conversational styles (Meyerhoff, 2006).

6.1 ATTITUDE TOWARDS LANGUAGE

Attitude towards language is considered to be one of the crucial elements having enormous influence on learner's language performance. Brown (2014) explains that the term "attitude" is heavily based on emotional engagement. In other words, feelings that the learners are having towards the first or second language have a large effect on their linguistic behaviour and the success of their performance. If these feelings are positive, learners try to engage with the language more during their everyday life. They are selecting foreign books and articles to read or people to speak with. The overall outcome seems to be very beneficial. As expected, learners with negative attitude towards language are proven to have rather poor language performance results.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) presented terms *integrative* and *instrumental* motivation which are very closely related to the attitude towards language and most of the time, they over-lap. People or students who are **integratively** motivated are learning second language because of their inner beliefs, personal and cultural development. They want to get closer to the people who speak that particular language, learn about their culture, traditions, personalities or themselves. These students are typically very successful in all of their goals because their motivation is very strong. The second term, **instrumental** motivation, represents people who are learning language because of some outside, practical reasons. They are driven by social status or a personal recognition. In other words, these people seek to pass an exam, get a salary raise or a promotion. Instrumental motivation is obviously weaker and, in most of the cases, is not long term. As said, both terms do over-lap often. However, Baker (1992) suggests that the differences between them should not be neglected, no matter how small they are. They both

affect the direction of a behaviour but not the behaviour itself, although motives do have some sort of "driving force" when it comes to the outcome action. Also, as the author stated: "*attitudes are object specific, motives are goal specific*".

Weinburgh (1998) in her study of gender attitudes described gender differences on multiple scales. She stated that females felt less anxious during the lesson and had better attitude towards the teacher. Male students enjoyed the subject more. Other than that, there were no significant results. All of the other determiners were very close to neutral. The results are equal in other surveys studying various languages. Gardner and Lambert (1972) investigated attitudes towards French in Canada. They also claim that female students had more positive attitude towards the language and other speakers. Spolsky (1989) studied Hebrew in Israel. Again, the results were fairly similar. Females expressed better attitude towards the target language. Henry (2011) confirmed this statement in his work *Gender differences in L2 motivation*. According to Ludwig (1983), females are driven by integrative motivation and males tend to lean towards instrumental motivation. This fact would explain all of the results mentioned previously. Females have naturally more positive attitude towards second language which means their motivation is, indeed, integrative. Males do not have such positive attitude therefore they are motivated mainly instrumentally. Tannen (2001) added that even though all of the statements above are correct, male students do tend to talk more in English classes. Although the speech is not always as flawless as with female students, men are naturally more dominant than women. Female students enjoy talking to their small group of friends however they usually hold back in classes.

6.2 PRONUNCIATION

Generally, women are more sensitive to accurate and standard forms of language. The higher usage of these forms is, according to Labov (1990), tied to the women's need to maintain the position in situations where they feel vulnerable and inferior to men.

As English became the international language, majority of notable research have been done in English focusing on British pronunciation. As a result, many linguists set English pronunciation as some kind of standard. Macaulay (1977) found out that between the ages of

10 and 15, teenagers learn to pronounce words such as *water* or *bottle* with a glottal stop instead of [t]. According to a study by Shuy (1969), women's pronunciation is generally better. He mentioned an example of pronouncing *-ing*. In his study, only 37,8% of men pronounced *-ing* correctly while 71,1% of women had no problems with said suffix. The results were almost identical while studying the same fact amongst the second language learners. Female participants were way more accurate in pronunciation while men tend to "*mumble".* Women tend to articulate better because of their ability of speaking more open mouthed. A vowel reduction is a common matter that occurs in pronunciation studies. The frequency of the reduction becomes significantly higher with faster speech. Generally, women are not the fastest speakers. They tend to speak slower, have more gaps and pauses in their speech during which they make sure the pronunciation is correct. In contrast to men, they do not reduce their consonants and vowels to schwa as often (Byrd, 1992).

Literature does not show any other significant differences between the pronunciation of women and men. The crucial factor is different system of sounds in L1. Learning pronunciation and speaking accordingly could be an extremely difficult task for non-native speakers. Their mother tongue has a major influence and it could be hard to isolate the rules of both languages. If certain sound of consonant does not exist in the mother tongue, the absent object is replaced with anything similar from the first language. For example, words like *thumb, this* or *that.* In Czech, learners tend to substitute the /θ/ and /ð/ sounds with /s/, /f/ or /t/. The pronunciation can be trained and improved by learning the right rules, practicing repetition or drilling, However, the learner's skills are also influencing the accuracy of pronunciation. The teacher usually tries to teach it the best way he can yet these skills are beyond anyone's control (Suter, 1976).

6.3 INTONATION

After birth, the size of a baby's brain is approximately quarter of its full adult size. Also, the larynx is positioned significantly higher. After a period of time, the larynx settle in the correct position, the vocal cords develop and the child starts talking (Yule, 2017).

The difference in women's and men's pitch of voice is the most evident one. The initial reason that comes to everyone's mind is the influence of puberty. Puberty certainly is, to some

extent, one of the most evident and logical explanations. It is natural that the voice of a young boy becomes significantly deeper at the peak of his pubertal stage of life. There are a few explanations for stated fact. Men's vocal cords are able to develop sooner and into a bigger size than women's do. Also, their heads and lungs can resonate the sound better due to the larger size. However, mentioned physical differences are not the only ones. Holmes (2013) further states that social aspects fairly widen the gap as well. According to her, young boys develop lower pitch of their voice way sooner than at the peak of puberty. The reasoning behind said statement describes their ability to adapt to their male social roles at very young age alongside with additional linguistic and behavioural aspects. The lower the pitch of the voice is, the more masculine and powerful a person appears to be. As a consequence, many female politicians try to deepen their voices in order to be taken more seriously. The best-known example is former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher.

Generally, the rest of women tend to speak in a high-pitched voice. Said fact is very much related back to their social status. Women's behaviour is overall more submissive and with their higher-pitched voice, they often show emotions such as kindness or generosity. In some cases, it could even be an indicator for lack of confidence. Men, on the other hand, use their voice to express power and they sound very monotonous. Similar patterns occurs when both genders are asking questions. Women are known for asking questions with rising intonation, an ordinary man will use rather a falling intonation (Wood, 2001).

6.4 VOCABULARY

As culturally and socially set, men and women often choose different vocabulary items during their speech.

When expressing the **feelings**, Lakoff (1975) stated that women are more demonstrative than men. Sentence *"I am frightened to death!"* is typical for women alongside with quiet or trembling voice and tears. Since men would feel weak and less of a male, they will use rather loud voice or a swear word. Women also use specific verbs to describe their psychological state such as *I feel, I think* or *I hope* (Flotow, 2004).

Names of colours are another representative example of choosing different vocabulary nature. Words such as *mauve, beige, ecru, lavender* and *aquamarine* or *bone, persimmon* and *ebony* usually belong into women's regular lexicon. These items are missing in the vocabulary of a man since men often consider such terms as insignificant or unrelated to the real world. A man who is not an interior designer and still would use previously mentioned colour names could be nowadays seen as a homosexual or rude for making fun out of a woman. This seemingly unimportant process of naming colours roots in history, where men spent their time making crucial decisions. Women did not have anything more important to do, thus were allowed to occupy themselves with such irrelevant activities (Lakoff, 1975). Women are naturally able to notice such small details and guess people's feelings according to their body language or facial expressions. Women become empathetic in early stages of their lives and they carry this feature throughout their whole life. With an attention to details, women are proven to be way more descriptive in their conversations than men. This results in lengthy monologues often not related at all to the original topic. Glass (1993) confirmed this in her study done for a book called *He Says, She Says: Closing the Communication Gap Between the Sexes*. Men were found to be irritated when women were not able to come to the point straight away.

Diminutives are defined as utterances which often symbolize smallness. They are formed by adding prefixes or suffixes. Also, they are usually connected to positive connotation and they could have a meaning on their own - negative, positive and emotional. This group of diminutives contains of words such as *tiny, little* or *small.* As a result of women showing their emotion in greater way, they are more frequent users of diminutives. If expressing affections, women would use words as *dearie* or *sweetie.* Other diminutives repeatedly used in every day conversations could be words such as *duckling, auntie, mommy, booklet, cuddle* or many others (Schneider, 2003). Fárová (2013) contributed to this statement with her research done in Plzeň. She found out that students from local high school feel like men should definitely not use too many diminutives. For male students, diminutives are an unnecessary sign of emotions.

By the end of the twentieth century, the cultural barrier between men only jobs and women only jobs started to slowly collapse. Women were eager to take over work positions which previously occupied men only. However, men had no interest in becoming a charlady or a secretary. Having said that, the less powerful group, in this case women, tends to slowly adopt the behaviour and language patterns of the preferred group, men. Several vocabulary items and language patterns started to appear in women's language. See the example below:

a) *"Oh dear, you spilled the tea again."*
b) *"Shit, you spilled the tea again!"*

These two seemingly identical sentences differ in the choice of a **particle** only. Any person would say that (a) is a sentence coming from a woman and (b) is definitely a sentence coming from men's language. As it may be correct and according to previous paragraph, sentence (b) could easily appear in women's language as well (Karlsson, 2007). Other words, for the most part **adjectives**, mainly belonging to women's vocabulary are mentioned by Lakoff (1975) in her work *Language and Women's Place*. She pointed out words, such as *lovely, adorable, sweet, divine or charming.* When a woman leaves the theatre, she would say "*It was a gorgeous play!*". If a man would have to show the same feeling, he would use rather "It was a good play." The same author also mentions that the only group of men who would actually use such words on a daily basis are academic men. They are living in their own world and they do not have the enormous need to hold power or possess money. As a result, they are often seen as snobs by less educated society members. So far, women seem to have more extensive vocabulary register. However, there is one category of vocabulary items where men are more frequent users. This category contains fillers. **Fillers** are short and utterly meaningless words which are used to fill out a pause in one's speech. Words such as *like, uh* or *ehm* are often used by men (Hudson, 2000). Also, due to women's nature of being invested in the conversation more or their emotions, women are known for the usage of **intensifiers.** These words increase the emotional intensity of adjectives or adverbs. Typical examples are *so, very, really, extremely, absolutely* or *totally* (Meyerhoff, 2006).

Example: "*You have a good chance of getting the job.*" - about 85% emotional

"*You have **really** good chance of getting the job.*" - about 98% emotional

Jespersen (1992) studied the usage of certain adverbs. He states that women were found to be using *so* in their speech more frequently in contrast to men. "*This is so awesome*" is an utterance which would certainly occur in women's speech. The topic of **swear words** is one of the most controversial. Holmes (2013) believes that the usage of swear words has the most significant frequency during teenage years. As women are taught to be nice and polite, there are not many swear words in their vocabulary. They also believe that swear words would make them and others very uncomfortable. As both genders grow older, have children and families, men regulate the number of swear words. They usually tend to limit them to male circles only. Women's swear words vocabulary often disappears in the adulthood no matter the environment.

In Fárová's (2013) research, 71% of studied students claimed that the usage of swear words is typical for men rather than women. Alongside with swear words, men's vocabulary usually contains more **tabooed** and **slang** words as well.

When learning vocabulary items, women shown better ability of memorizing words. This ability is called declarative memory. They remember various vocabulary items via "mental lexicon" (Ullman, 2007).

6.5 GRAMMAR

Generally, no syntactic rule dictate who are the most common users of it. However, as for most of the linguistic categories, an extensive amount of these rules is used by one gender or another more frequently. This is mostly due to the social context.

One of the most evident gender differences in grammar are **tag questions.** Tag questions had rapidly become a part of a conversation between linguists. A tag question consist of an auxiliary *don't, isn't* and a pronoun *it* or *you.* According to the Oxford English Dictionary (1884-), a tag question is a phrase added to a statement in order to check the correctness of another statement. Example: "*You like oranges, don't you*?". In other words, a tag question is a golden mean between a statement and a yes/no question. They are used in certain situations where the speaker states something but is uncertain of the actual truth. This is generally characteristic for women. Fishman (1980) conducted a research where he taped conversations of various couples. The result was obvious. From 370 interrogative questions, only 107 were used by men as well as hardly 1/3 of tag questions. Women would say something such as "*The weather is lovely, isn't it?*" while men would straightforwardly and without any emotion say: "*The weather is good".* Actually, the sentence "*The weather is lovely, isn't it?*" is often used by women as a "small talk". She knows the answer as well as the other speaker does so she does not need any verification. She is only trying to prolongate the conversation. However, tag questions are not usually used when speaking about personal feelings. A sentence "*I feel tired, don't I?*" is not logical and a person with good knowledge of English probably would not use it (Lakoff, 1975).

In relation to tag questions, **hedges** are linguistic forms which are used to show if the speaker is certain or not certain about the discussed matter. Hedges such as *I think, I'm sure, you know* and *perhaps* are most commonly used during conversations. Younger generation of speakers added *like* to their linguistic register. According to Cameron (2003), women are more frequent users of hedges. Lakoff (1975) added that the reasoning behind said fact is women's lack of confidence. Holmes (1987) questioned Lakoff's statement with her own study. She found out that women use *you know* more when expressing confidence while men use the same hedge when expressing uncertainty. Holmes's study shows that, according to her, hedges are a multifunctional tool used by both genders, however in different situations.

Women also tend to be more precise when speaking. They are aware of correct grammatical rules and they are able to apply them better than men. Example:

Women: "*I want to travel to Japan.*"

Men: "*I wanna go Japan.*" (Jespersen, 1992).

6.6 PREFFERED TOPICS

A research done in a typical English family by Klein (1965) describes that women tend to talk mainly about family, home, their children, holidays, diet or personal appearance. Men, on the other hand, were found to be talking about topics related to their work, sports, technology or music and movies. These topics were found to be "*trivial*" for women and "*serious*" for men by Meunier (1996). However, with relation to the ability of men to interrupt the conversations more, as mentioned in the next chapters below, they can easily take control over the topics chosen by women. Fishman (1978) explored the frequency of women selected topics. She discovered that women chose over 60% of the conversational topics. However, over a half of them were rapidly took over and changed by men.

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), an Anglo-Irish writer, essayist and poet, was said to enjoy observing conversations of other people as an inspiration for his essays on conversation. Key (1975) stated that he felt more comfortable participating in women's conversations rather than men's. He would even leave a company of men to join the women. The dialogue men led, according to him, *"degenerated into smart sayings of their own invention…"*. This shows that

everything is relative. A topic which is supposed to be typical for all men does not necessarily mean it truly is.

"Speaking like a woman, or a man, is not just the automatic consequence of being one." (Cameron, 2007)

6.7 MISSUNDERSTANDINGS

From previous chapters it is very clear that women and men use language in different ways. What a speech could be for one it does not mean that it is the same for the other one. Tannen (1991), in her notable work *How to close the communication gap between men and women*, mentions two typical examples of a communication confusion between genders:

1. A female bookshop owner asked the male manager to do something for her. He agreed. But as the days gone by, there was no effort of doing anything from the manager. Why?

   The woman said: *"The bookkeeper needs help with some paperwork, what would you think about helping her out?"*

   The man said: *"Okay"*, by which he meant *"Okay, I will think about it."*

The conclusion is that the manager heard a proposal he was free to reject. He had thought about it and decided not to do it. The woman thought she gave the manager very clear instructions and considered the deal to be settled.

2. A mother asked her son to help her with the rent since he was still living at home with her and had a good job. Few days later, he did not provide any money and looked like nothing happened.

   The woman said: "*I think it would be fair for you to pay rent now."*

   He answered: *"I'm leaving soon anyway."*

The verdict is that the son interpreted her question like an opinion, not a request for money. He left the previous conversation with a feeling that his mother thought about it out loud but is not really expecting any money.

Talbot (1998) agreed with Tannen's research where she pointed out that it is not a coincidence that in both cases, the ones who misread the situation and left the other side without

any reply are men. They often have problems with understanding their opposites which repeatedly results in irritation at women's side. According to Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015), women get irritated with men frequently. They mention an example of women using "*mhmm*" in a situation where it, from her point of view, expresses an active participation in the conversation by listening to the speaker. These sounds or words as "Really?" and "Yeah" are called **back-channels**. Men, on the other hand, would use the same "*mhmm*" as an expression of an agreement. As a result, men assume that women are agreeing with them every time, therefore it is hard to understand women's thoughts.

Glass (1993) adds that common source of miscommunication between men and women is also women's ability of "reading between the lines" of men's speech and overall behaviour. They are way more sensitive to various features of nonverbal communication which men frequently do not even notice and which can easily result in a misunderstanding. A typical example is the topic of problems. Tannen (2017) describe that when a woman is sharing a problem with her male opposite, she is looking for sympathy and words of encouragement, not a solution. However, any kind of solution is the first answer that comes to male's mind as men are naturally straightforward. She was expecting one of these answers: "*The same thing happened to me"* or "*I know how you feel, I would feel the same way*". Later, the conversation would follow with "*And then what happened?", "What did you say?"* or "*How did you feel*?". However, when the man provided her with the solution, he unknowingly shut the conversation down. As a result, both parties are disappointed. The woman is upset as she did not receive the sympathy, the man is frustrated as he delivered the solution but got rejected. All of this is tied back to the "reading between the lines" issue. The man understood the initial message nonetheless he completely missed the underlying meaning of the utterance.

Recurrent and natural result of a miscommunication or any other conflict is certainly an apology. According to Key (1975), an apology appears to belong to lives of most women. From apologizing for a heavy conflict to apologizing for bad weather conditions. Even though not always are women able to control the situation, they still apologize. Being able to apologize is a very honourable feature, however it could easily backfire. Women are then taken as weak or not confident. Hinshaw (2009) explains the possible reasoning. Due to social norms, young girls are taught to exceed in every social standard possible yet remain inferior to boys. "Be confident, but not vain. Smart, but not braggart…." Therefore, every time an inconvenience appears, they tend to shape it into their fault and apologize. Even if the situation could have not been prevented in any way.

6.8 CONVERSATIONAL STYLES

Conversational styles are learned in the early childhood. The moment a baby learns how to talk, the ones who are talking to him are influencing his future speech. All of the social surroundings, ethnic and regional aspects do have an impact on a language performance. Here are multiple examples. Darker coloured and city people are often viewed as loud or egocentric, people with white skin and country people are perceived as not interesting or stupid. When a person comes from a region where people speak fast, they are seen as aggressive or excessively confrontational. On the other hand, people from slower-speaking areas are recognised as not intelligent (Tannen, 2000).

Conversational styles between genders differ in a significant way. Goodwin (2006) stated that when a woman is deciding what to do, she tends to suggest the activity to others: *"Let's go get more bottles."* They give a suggestion because they believe that their idea is good and will benefit the whole group. However, men will more likely use commands: "*Go and get more bottles!*" If a woman has to use a command, she will more likely use something like "*Honey, would you mind getting me more bottles, please*?" (Glass, 1993). This behaviour of both groups follows them through their whole life, from childhood to adulthood. Maltz and Borker (1983) proved said statement in their study *The Cultural Approach of Male-Female Miscommunication.* Maccoby (1998) follows with a statement that women generally feel uncomfortable when men give them commands. It is the reason why they appreciate polite female co-workers more. Men use rather direct type of behaviour when asking for tasks. They lean towards straightforward assignments rather than polite inquiries because they feel under the pressure of making the right decision. When asked directly, they know there is no other choice other than completing the task. Going back to example one in previous chapter, the female owner would have never said: "*Help the bookkeeper with the paperwork"* because it would make her anxious (Tannen, 1991).

Tannen (1991) also mentions the problem of common misconception that being polite and indirect is actually a sign of deception. Indirect communication is flawlessly only understood when acknowledged by both speakers. Indirect style of communication is familiar to most countries in the world. One exception is the USA. Americans are naturally more direct speakers so they could easily have difficulties with people from other countries, who are

generally indirect. The solution for this situation is usually some sort of compromise between those two opposite conversational styles.

Women are generally more sensitive than men. It reflects in one of the main points of conversational style differences between genders. Women tend to blend their personal and work speech. Female bosses are likely to be more interested in personal lives of her employees. As they are intrigued in the relationships and family situations of workers, they spend only less than a half of the meeting time discussing the actual business. It is very clear that female workers would appreciate the situation while men could find it irritating or misinterpret it as a romantic behaviour (Crawford, 1995). Similar pattern occurs earlier, during their childhood. At school, girls tend to speak to their female friends mostly in private. They are resolving problems in small groups. If any of the problems somehow get out, other girls are usually gossiping about it. Boys are typically discussing their problems out loud and in front of the others. They actually like the audience and the feeling of being powerful (Tannen, 1998). Jarkovská (2009) adds that this pattern could be seen later in relationships as well. Men are usually very outgoing and the centre of attention in public. Women are more reserved and often stay away from the spotlight. However, at home, these roles are changing to the opposite. Men are the ones who limit their conversation to a minimum while women actively communicate with the desire to share everything.

In the terms of questions, Lakoff (1975) believe that women are using these utterances to prolongate the conversation and show an interest in the other speaker. Men treat questions as simple demands for information. A research done by Hirshman (1974) partially agrees with Lakoff's statement. She stated that women really do tend to ask more questions yet added that men are the ones who deliver lengthier answers in order to demonstrate their absolute knowledge of the topic. Zimmerman and West (1975) led a study in California where they even added that men tend to answer questions which are not directed to them just to show power over the situation. However, in case they are not interested in the topic of conversation, they answer with simple *yes* or no. Furthermore, they were also interested in how much women and men interrupt conversations. Men were found to be more interruptive than women in almost 93% of all studied conversations. Interjections such as *"Hey!", "By the way!"* or *"Listen!"* are the most common ones. The habit of a woman is then to step away from the conversation or become significantly quiet and pause the conversation for a short period of time (Glass, 1993). These pauses are crucial for a comfortable flow of the conversation. In one of her scholarly articles, Tannen (2000) stated that when two people do not have identical beliefs of how long a

"natural" pause should be, the conversation quickly loses the right balance. Resulting in an unnecessary misunderstanding.

Despite the social norms, Key (1975) mentions a phrase "baby talk". According to her, baby talk is a style of conversation which is used to show power over another person involved in the dialogue. Women were found to use this style of speech repeatedly, more than men. However, since these dialogues are not often seen in public, there is very little evidence on this fact. Although, it seems like an intriguing topic, it definitely needs further research. On the other hand, patronizing could occur in public on daily basis during conversations with children, strangers, mentally disabled people, patients or females. Key pointed out an example where male reporter related to his co-worker as "*Lovely Erika*". A loud and clear evidence that this particular style of speech is used rather by men than women.

6.9 CAUSES OF THESE DIFFERENCES

To summarize the chapters above, each of the mentioned differences have particular causes. These causes are often similar, and they overlap as they are tied to each other.

Women and men differ from each other since the day they are born. As they get older, the interactions between them are inevitable. These interactions start to occur in the early childhood, by the age of three, mostly at the playground. Girls form small and intimate groups which are talk focused. Boys are known for forming larger activity-based groups with obvious hierarchy. This is a result of different social expectations of both genders. Girls form smaller groups as they are taught to be cooperative, trustful, polite and well behaved. Boys are taught to show the dominance and compete with others. The nature of their conversational styles and attitudes starts to develop right there (Tannen, 2001). In other words, women are expected to stay unconfrontational in every situation while men are supposed to always show their opinion and push it to the centre of attention. The general culture expectations forbid either gender to show even a little bit of the features typical for the other one (Klorokke, 2001).

Women are generally more emotional and sensitive to various life events. They tend to show their feelings and emotions in greatly expressive way, opposite to men. Men are taught to be strong and do not show their sensitive side to anyone (Cameron, 2009).

To sum up, gender differences in language use are, for the most part, not based on the biological sex. They mirror the social statuses of both genders. Elements such as social class, norms, expectations, occupation and experiences have major influence on linguistic choices made by women and men (Jarkovská, 2004). However, there is a sign of a convergence of general gender characteristics in modern society. Thorne (2002) believes that both of these polarised groups and their social features are slowly starting to overlap. Women's position in society is slowly ascend while men's position stays the same or have a descending trend.

"People are judged by language. You can dress in an indeterminate way, but once you open your mouth to speak, you have stated who you are and what you want." (Key, 1975)

PRACTICAL PART

7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter carries a research methodology concerning gender differences between female and male students of 1.ZŠ in Šumperk.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Human language is a specific characteristic dividing human race from any other species. For decades, the language has been thoroughly studied via linguistics. In the second half of the twentieth century, numerous scientists desired to study language from a social point of view. *Language and Women's Place* by Robin Lakoff (1975) became a pivotal study regarding gender differences in language use. She believed that women and men speak in an unlike way which could be derived from their position in society.

Linguists tend to prioritize spoken language over the written one. However, this does not mean that the written language should be ignored. Therefore, this study is focused on the said written structure of language. The form which is used by young learners of English at school every day. Chosen topics, length, vocabulary such as adjectives, particles, fillers, diminutives, intensifiers and other words related to one of the genders, and attitudes towards language are the objects of this study. The combination of all said features usually reveals certain differences between genders (Coates, 2004).

7.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

This research is constructed to combine qualitative and small-scale quantitative study which focus on the effect of gender differences and attitudes when using English.

7.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research is to discover gender differences in English language use and attitudes amongst students of 1. ZŠ elementary school in Šumperk.

7.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Do female and male students use English differently?

What are the most common differences?

Do primary and secondary levels have an impact on frequency of these differences?

Do students have positive or negative attitude towards English?

What are the differences in attitudes towards English between female and male students?

7.5 PARTICIPANTS

The participants of this research were 51 students from 1. ZŠ elementary school in Šumperk. The subjects were chosen as the oldest representatives of primary and lower secondary levels. Among total 50 students, 23 students were members of 5th grade and 27 students were members of 9th grade. As for gender structure, there were 13 females and 11 males in 5th grade and 13 females and 14 males in 9th grade. The age of the students ranged from 10 to 15 years. 10-11 for primary level class, 14-15 for lower secondary level class.

7.6 INSTRUMENTS

In the first part, which was focused on particular differences in language use, the students were given a task to write a story of their choice in English. They were given a free hand in terms of the length of the story and the topic as well. Textual analysis is a common research method used to gain certain information from a piece of written language. This kind of language provides various important indications of how people, in this case men and women, use their linguistic knowledge. Textual analysis is usually characterized as a qualitative method which is used to understand and interpret texts from different points of views (Allen, 2017).

In the second part, all of the students were given a questionnaire focusing on their attitude towards English language. Questionnaires are an exceptional way how to collect certain volume of information from a sizeable amount of people. These materials include information about the knowledge, behaviour or attitude of said group of people. Questionnaires could be used as devices to analyse almost all areas of concern (Oppenheim, 1992). This particular questionnaire

is compounded from 11 questions with multiple choice answers with a five-point scale (Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly disagree). Questions 1-6 were designed to analyse student's emotional aspects towards English language. Questions 7-9 are supposed to outline their personal stance towards English. Question 10 examine if they are interested in English outside the school. The last question, number 11, helps the students to try and connect the language to their future lives. Both of the tasks were anonymous, the centre of attention was only the gender.

7.7 LIMITATIONS

The research was conducted among students of one elementary school in Šumperk during 2020-2021 academic year. There are 4 other elementary schools in Šumperk. However, to study all of the students would consume far more time. The research was also limited to written forms of texts and a questionnaire only. This was due to the current pandemic situation. Also, due to online teaching and using video conference calls, it was not possible to conduct a spoken research as the quality of these video calls was very poor and not suitable for the analysis of pronunciation and intonation.

8 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, all of the data are collected, analysed and discussed from different point of views by various authors.

There are two parts. The first part deals with the actual linguistic differences between genders. The second part contains all of the information collected from a questionnaire studying student's attitudes towards language.

8.1 LINGUISTIC DIFFERENCES

This part contains information collected from 51 texts by students of 5th and 9th grades at 1.ZŠ elementary school in Šumperk. All of the texts were analysed in terms of the length, selected topic, various vocabulary items and grammar.

The study of discourse had been interested in techniques of how women and men use language for a long period of time. The general belief is that women and men truly do not speak the same way. The are many differences that can be found in their spoken and written performance (Crawford, 1995).

The length of studied texts was the first difference of interest. When Guo (2011) was analysing newspaper articles written by male and female writers, he noticed that articles written by females had been significantly longer. An evidence found in Halliday's (1985) previous research supported the statement.

Table 1: Gender differences in word count

	N	Wordcount	Mean	Total	Mean
Female 5th grade	13	952	73,23	2262	87
Female 9th grade	13	1310	100,77		
Male 5th grade	11	449	40,82	1280	53,33
Male 9th grade	13	831	73,23		

Table 1 indicate the differences in the length of studied texts. The total wordcount of 5th grade females is 952 words with mean 73,23. The full number of words by female 9th students is 1310 with mean 100,77 which is the highest number. The total of male 9th grade students is 831 word with mean 73,23. The lowest number of words belongs to male 5th garde students. Their wordcount is only 449 words with mean 40,82. The highest wordcount show 9th grade females. Their wordcount is two times bigger as is the wordcount of their male opposites from 5th grade. The total wordcount in both groups proves that female tend to produce longer texts which is at unity with previous result of mentioned researchers. The overall wordcount of female texts is about 43,4% higher than is the wordcount of male students. The lowest number of words produced by a male student from 5th grade. The number was 7. On the other hand, the highest number of words was produced by 9th grade female student. Her number was 193 words. The results also proved that the number of words appears to be directly proportional to the age and the gender of the author.

The second most obvious difference could be seen from a topic point of view. The selection of topics for spoken and written language is often differentiated by the gender as well. As Lakoff (1975), Tannen (1991,1998, 2000 and 2017), Key (1975), Jespersen (1992), Shuy (1969) and other suggest, women tend to talk about more personal related topics. They often mention family, children or personal appearance. Younger females are often interested in fairy tales as well. However, men usually start conversations about sports, cars, work or technology. Younger generation of males appear to be interested in war/fight topics as well as movies. The topics discovered during this research almost completely correspond with the statements above.

For the most part, both female and male students chose topics of fairy tales. However, there were different kinds of fairy tales. The characters in fairy tales written by female students were princesses, unicorns, dolphins, rabbits, bunnies and kittens. Characters in male's stories were bears, monsters, pirates and heroes.

One of female students mentioned a crime story with a heroine character. Two of male students wrote a story about a crime as well. However, their stories were about guns and violence.

Female students mentioned their pets in the stories several times. They wrote about hamsters, cats, dogs, frogs and horses. None of the male students wrote about any kinds of pets.

Other female students wrote mostly about friends, school, family, holidays and personal appearance including shopping. Only three male students mentioned the topic of holidays and

only one mentioned family in his story. The rest of male students chose topics such as movies (particularly Spiderman), sports or personal experiences. There were eight sports mentioned in one story. However, their personal experiences did not include for example shopping as in female stories. Their personal experiences were used to describe many of their accidents that had happened to them.

"I fell over my handlebars and hit my stomach."

"I cut myself in the face with a piece of glass."

"I smashed my head against a metal plate."

"I broke my toe and went to the hospital."

Surprisingly, none of the male students mentioned any technology related topic. One male student wrote about school. Although his female classmate wrote about positive experience in school, his character was not positive towards the school.

"He had to do homework to school, but he didn't care so he was chilling anyway."

The reasoning behind this sentence and the seemingly negative attitude towards school is rather simple. Large percentage of male students believe that school is a waste of time. They also spend on average about 4 hours a week doing homework. Female students spend about 7 hours on a homework weekly (OECD, 2015).

To sum up, two of the male students wrote about COVID-19. This is not shocking as the Corona virus affected all of the people on the planet Earth. The pandemic closed schools in many countries which had an enormous impact on education and student's mental health (Burgess, 2020).

As for the length of the sentences, female students showed a higher frequency in their stories. Their sentences are usually longer, logically organized and grammatically correct. This is due to the fact that since childhood, women's vocabulary is more complete than men's is. Also, their written or spoken language is complex and longer in the length of the sentences (Brown, 1973). Here are example sentences produced by female students:

"The rabbit got to the halfway point and could not see the turtle anywhere."

"He went at full speed to the finish line and found the turtle waiting for him there."

"My favourite memory of last summer is a meeting with my favourite youtuber."

To demonstrate the contrast, following sentences are created by male students from both 5th and 9th grades.

"We grilled meat."

"It was fine."

"He is sleeping."

"He is happy."

"I fell in kinder-garden."

Needless to say, not all of the male student's had such a limited length of used sentences. There were a few cases where the language performances of male students were exceptionally good. However, the topics were not as positive as with the female students.

"Chinese people are in the quarantine due to the 4th COVID-19 war."

"One day I was training shooting an air rifle and I accidentally shot down a bird."

As previously mentioned in the literature review, women's vocabulary usually contains a considerable amount of vocabulary which is often missing in the vocabulary of men. Women are naturally able to notice the smallest details and they are very descriptive when talking about them. They use adjectives or several descriptive nouns in one sentence (Lakoff, 1975).

"*His full, brown hair with white bald spots."*

"Bertík is small, black and white and he barks a lot."

"I ate ice cream, pancakes, eggs, steaks and cakes."

"A scorpion lived in a dark, wet and scary cave."

"I was dreaming about pink, fluffy unicorn."

Men's vocabulary is often limited to certain words, mostly adjectives, which they use frequently.

"It was a beautiful beach."

"We stayed in a beautiful hotel."

Again, one exception was found amongst the texts produces by male students. This student showed a fine range of vocabulary and his words were surprisingly descriptive.

"*That bite gave me all sorts of powers. Super strength, better agility, I could stick to the walls and I have this alarm inside my brain that warns me about incoming danger.*"

When it comes to the descriptiveness and attention to detail, women often tend to make their speech and written texts more intense and understandable for strangers who may not know all the details. Women want the receiver of the information to know all the details in the form of their exact words. This may be why dialogues are more commonly found in their written texts (Coates, 2013). Here are examples from female student's stories.

I called him: "Hello dog, where is your owner?"

"I don't trust scorpions", replied the frog.

Snowman said: "Hello, how are you?"

The fox said: "What are you looking for?"

Another vocabulary feature nearly missing in men's vocabulary but widely spread across the speech of women are diminutives. These words are created by using prefixes or affixes. They usually symbolize something small or diminished (Schneider, 2003). A handful of examples were identified in this research. Female students used words related to the names of other characters such as *Micinka, Maxík* or *Bertík*.

Generally, women are not afraid to express their feelings and emotions. They are fairly sensitive and even the smallest event can affect their mood. With a sensitivity come feelings of appreciation, validation and thankfulness. Men usually do not favour to express any emotional features to the others. The perception is that they would look weak and ashamed (Flotow, 2004). An example below written by a female student follow this statement.

"I realised that I should appreciate that all of my family members are happy and healthy."

"Looking back at this I realised that I should listen to my mum because she is right all the time."

Also, due to women's nature of being invested in the conversation more or their emotions, women are known for the usage of intensifiers**.** These words increase the emotional intensity of adjectives or adverbs (Meyerhoff, 2006). There is little to no evidence on including intensifiers in the texts of male students. However, female students used these adverbs frequently.

"The river was very deep."

"He was very, very happy."

"I really liked it."

"I was really glad."

"I was really worried."

"My stomach terribly ached."

Glass (1993) points out that language of women is generally more polite. They use less direct and straightforward style of expressing their point. They do not choose to use commands as a suggestion kind of question is more acceptable.

"Would you carry me to the other side, please?"

In contrast to women's politeness, some female students showed the exact opposite in their stories. The overall topic was usually concentrated around typical female features as pets or family. However, as the story was coming to an end, it escaladed fast and turner into a story not so typical for women.

"I was really hungry, and the fridge was empty, so I ate the cat. She was really good."

"The fox responded and ate the bunny."

"Suddenly, the snowman stood behind me and killed everyone."

"But then the dog owner came, and we ate him too."

As for the grammatical correctness, the differences between female and male students were not so obvious. 9th grade female students did use appropriate and correct grammar frequently. The other students, female and male, struggled with the right grammar to some extent.

"Last summer, my family went the Tatry."

"We go the restaurant."

"And his died."

"I go to the home."

"I went in outside."

"When we arrived, we just skiing."

"I went Olomouc with my friend."

"My brother began to draw me."

During Ullman's (2007) research, the majority of females used the regular and irregular verbs incorrectly. This study proved no such fact. Both male and female students did not seem to have any problems with recognizing the regularity or irregularity of verb. All of the studied verbs were used correctly for the most part.

As an addition to previous findings of Cameron (2009) or Labov (1990),in this study, the older female students used overall more standard English with less grammatical mistakes than their younger acquaintances. Some of the same aged male students tried to approach their level however, the language performance of 9th grade female students was outstanding and above the rest of them. As for the examples, some of them were already mentioned in earlier paragraphs.

"*Would you carry me to the other side, please?"*

"When I came home, my family told me that he's still at the hospital but he's going to be okay."

Only one of the 9th grade male students used exceptionally substandard grammar.

"It hapennd since 2-3 years, it's an accient in Austria."

Other male students from 9th grade tend to use less standard language such as "*u know", "idk"* or "*nvm*".

"I wanna tell u my story."

There were definitely several notable differences in language performance of females and males. Also, both of the grades used language somewhat differently. However, this could be due to their individual level of English. 9th grade students are logically more educated than the 5th grade students.

8.2 ATTITUDES TOWARDS LANGUAGE

In this part, all of the data collected from the "Attitude towards language" questionnaire are analysed and discussed.

Attitude towards language is considered to be one of the crucial elements having enormous influence on learner's language performance. Attitude is described as a collection of feelings and emotions towards language. These feelings can be positive, negative or neutral. In the learning process, positive feelings can easily support the motivation and willingness to learn the language. Negative emotions can often build obstacles between the students and language which could have serious impact on their linguistic performance (Gardner and Lambert, 1972).

Tables 2 to 13 show 5th and 9th grade student's feelings and emotions towards English.

Table 2: 5th grade student attitude towards question 1

5th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
1. I enjoy studying English						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	2	3	**6**	2	0
	Percentage	15,4%	23,1%	**46,2%**	15,4%	0%
Male (N=11)	Number of S	2	**4**	**4**	0	1
	Percentage	18,2%	**36,4%**	**36,4%**	0%	9,1%
Total	Number of S	4	7	**10**	2	1
	Percentage	16,7%	29,2%	**41,7%**	8,3%	4,2%

Table 3: 9th grade student attitude towards question 1

9th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
1. I enjoy studying English						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	3	**5**	3	2	0
	Percentage	23,1%	**38,5%**	23,1%	15,4%	0%
Male (N=14)	Number of S	4	**6**	3	1	0
	Percentage	28,6%	**42,9%**	21,4%	7,1%	0%
Total	Number of S	7	**11**	6	3	0
	Percentage	25,9%	**40,7%**	22,1%	11,1%	0%

The comparison of tables 2 and 3 shows that 5th grade students are more hesitant when it comes to enjoying English. However, 9th grade students have overall positive feelings towards studying English. The possible reasoning could be as the students grow older, they become more familiar with the language and they accept the language as something they do not have to learn because they are told to. They start to actually enjoy the process.

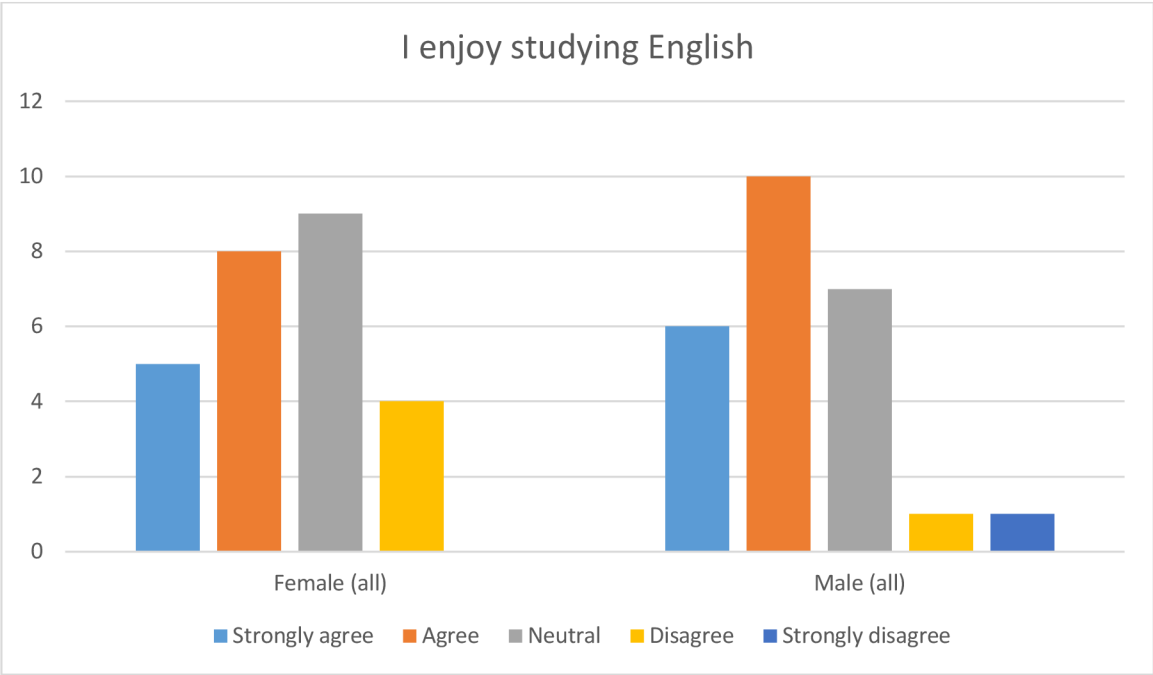

Figure 1: I enjoy studying English gender results

As for the gender differences, male students from both grades enjoy studying English more than their female classmates. However, this does not necessarily mean male students are better at English. As Tannen (2001), Jespersen (1992) or Key (1975) amongst with others stated, women are generally better and more precise when using English. Men, on the other hand, are driven by their dominant selves. They try to outperform other which could result in more engagement and enjoyment in this particular area. Weinburgh's research (1998) supports these results as she states that women enjoy the process of learning while men enjoy the subject more.

Table 4: 5th grade student attitude towards question 2

5th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
2. I feel like studying English is important						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	6	**7**	0	0	0
	Percentage	46,2%	**53,8%**	0%	0%	0%
Male (N=11)	Number of S	4	**7**	0	0	0
	Percentage	36,4%	**63,6%**	0%	0%	0%
Total	Number of S	10	**14**	0	0	0
	Percentage	41,7%	**58,3%**	0%	0%	0%

Table 5: 9th grade student attitude towards question 2

9th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
2. I feel like studying English is important						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	**6**	**6**	1	0	0
	Percentage	**46,2%**	**46,2%**	7,6%	0%	0%
Male (N=14)	Number of S	6	**7**	1	0	0
	Percentage	42,9%	**50%**	7,1%	0%	0%
Total	Number of S	12	**13**	2	0	0
	Percentage	44,4%	**48,1%**	7,5%	0%	0%

In question two, the results did not show any significant differences. Both grades feel the same about English being important. 9th grade students have slightly higher percentage regarding the "Strongly agree" answer suggesting that the importance of English is directly proportional to the increasing age of the students. As for the "Disagree" and "Strongly disagree" answers, both groups show 0%. Over 92,2% of the students do think that studying English is important.

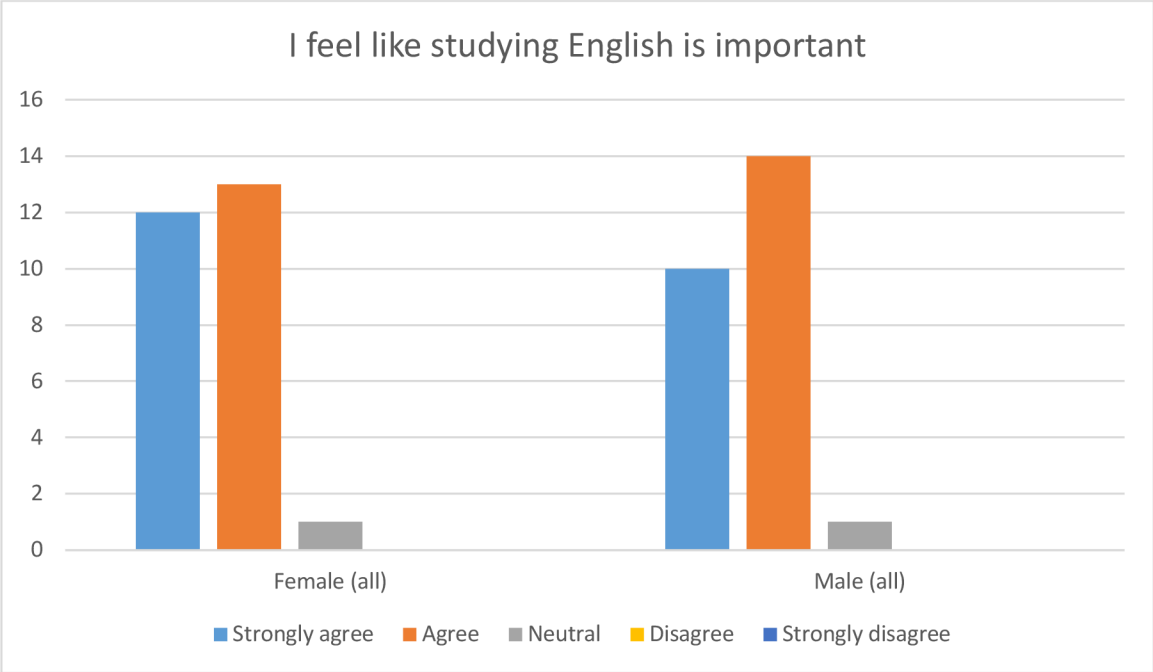

Figure 2: I feel like studying English is important gender results

As for the gender differences regarding question 2, the results are rather not surprising. Glass (1993) or Talbot (1998) both described that women are generally more sensitive and responsible. According to this statement, women's column should be obviously higher. Even though it does not seem like it, more of the female students responded with "strongly agree" which balances out the average correctly towards females.

Table 6: 5th grade student attitude towards question 3

5th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
3. I feel good when I'm learning English						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	0	5	**6**	1	1
	Percentage	0%	38,5%	**46,2%**	7,7%	7,7%
Male (N=11)	Number of S	1	**5**	3	2	0
	Percentage	9,1%	**45,5%**	27,3%	18,2%	0%
Total	Number of S	1	**10**	9	3	1
	Percentage	4,2%	**41,7%**	37,5%	12,5%	4,2%

Table 7: 9th grade student attitude towards question 3

9th GRADE		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
3. I feel good when I'm learning English						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	2	4	**6**	1	0
	Percentage	15,4%	30,8%	**46,2%**	7,7%	0%
Male (N=14)	Number of S	2	2	**5**	4	1
	Percentage	14,3%	14,3%	**35,7%**	28,6%	7,1%
Total	Number of S	4	6	**11**	5	1
	Percentage	14,8%	22,2%	**40,7%**	18,5%	3,7%

Question 3 found out that younger students feel better when learning English. This could be due to a fact that younger students are very much beginners and they are still very enthusiastic when it comes to the process of learning English. Also, the teaching strategies teachers use are different in both groups (Oxford, 1989). 9th grade students shown undoubtedly neutral emotions towards this question.

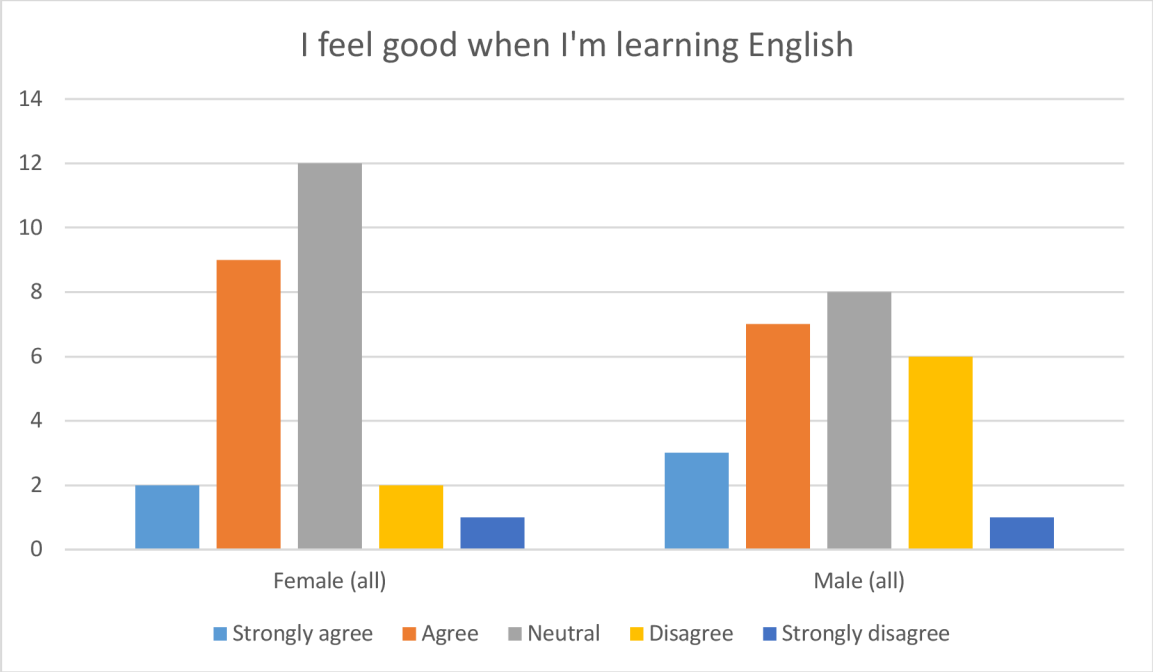

Figure 3: I feel good when I'm learning English gender results

Concerning the gender differences, female students expressed better attitude towards feeling good when learning English. Only 7,7% of them disagreed with the question while 28% of male students do not feel good when they are learning English. The majority of them feel neutral. Again, this is probably connected to the fact that women feel good and actually enjoy the process of learning English while men enjoy the subject more as a complex (Weinburgh, 1998).

Table 8: 5th grade student attitude towards question 4

5th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
4. I am excited for English classes						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	1	3	**4**	**4**	1
	Percentage	7,7%	23,1%	**30,8%**	**30,8%**	7,7%
Male (N=11)	Number of S	2	2	**7**	0	0
	Percentage	18,2%	18,2%	**63,6%**	0%	0%
Total	Number of S	3	5	**11**	4	1
	Percentage	12,5%	20,8%	**45,8%**	16,7%	4,2%

Table 9: 9th grade student attitude towards question 4

9th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
4. I am excited for English classes						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	0	5	**6**	1	1
	Percentage	0%	38,5%	**46,2%**	7,7%	7,7%
Male (N=14)	Number of S	1	4	**7**	0	2
	Percentage	7,1%	28,6%	**50%**	0%	14,3%
Total	Number of S	1	9	**13**	1	3
	Percentage	3,7%	33,3%	**48,1%**	3,7%	11,1%

Regarding the question number 4, both grades shown nearly equal results. The answer "neutral" reported the highest percentage across all students. They are neither excited nor not excited for their English classes. In contrast to previous questions, the level of student excitement can be tremendously influenced by the teacher. A good teacher creates cheerful and safe environment for students. He/she is seen as a role model by many students. When he/she fails, it could have an impact on the student's motivation for English classes (Lanier, 1997).

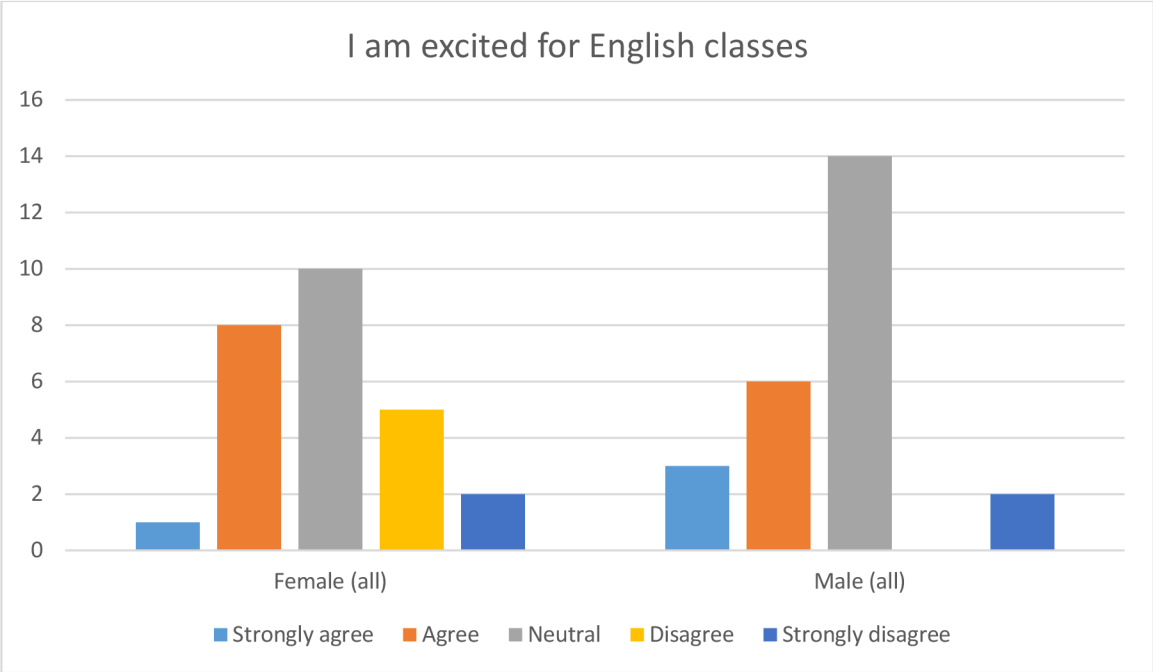

Figure 4: I am excited for English classes gender results

As previously said, both grades have rather neutral attitude towards their excitement for English classes. However, from a gender point of view, male students are the more hesitant ones. They have shown an increase regarding the "neutral" answers. Female students are rather neutral as well. Yet, 34,6% of female students agree, opposite the 24% of male students. This could be due to two facts mentioned by Weingurgh (1998) and Tannen (2001). They claim that females are raised to be kind and respectful towards others which usually leads to a better relationship with an authority, the teacher.

Table 10: 5th grade student attitude towards question 5

5th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
5. I am comfortable when I'm speaking English with my friends						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	1	4	0	**5**	3
	Percentage	7,7%	30,8%	0%	**38,5%**	23,1%
Male (N=11)	Number of S	0	**3**	**3**	**3**	2
	Percentage	0%	**27,3%**	**27,3%**	**27,3%**	18,2%
Total	Number of S	1	7	3	**8**	5
	Percentage	4,2%	29,2%	12,5%	**33,3%**	20,8

Table 11: 9th grade student attitude towards question 5

9th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
5. I am comfortable when I'm speaking English with my friends						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	1	**4**	2	**4**	2
	Percentage	7,7%	**30,8%**	15,4%	**30,8%**	15,4%
Male (N=14)	Number of S	**4**	2	2	**4**	2
	Percentage	**28,6%**	14,3%	14,3%	**28,6%**	14,3%
Total	Number of S	5	6	4	**8**	4
	Percentage	18,5%	22,2%	14,8%	**29,6%**	14,8%

Tannen (2001) described that females tend to form smaller groups of friends which are more talk oriented. This fact is partially proved here. Although, the overall results from question 5 show predominant incline to the "disagree" answer for both grades, with a closer look at the "Agree" and "Strongly agree" options, there is only a slight difference for the 5th graders and none for the 9th graders. There seem to be two extremes regarding question 5. Students either agree or they do not. The only exception can be seen within 5th grade males. Their answers are equally spread.

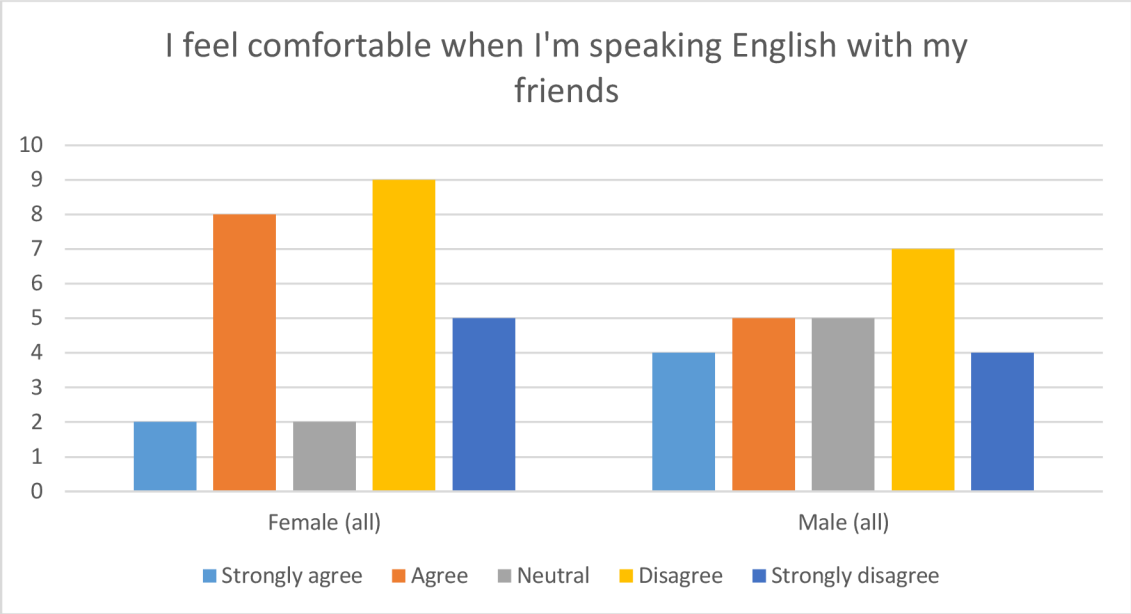

Figure 5: I feel comfortable when I'm speaking English with my friends gender results

From a gender point of view, both groups feel rather uncomfortable when speaking English with their friends. Female students show relatively opposite results. The answers of male students are more even. However, the fact that all of them feel this negative regarding speaking amongst friends supports a statement by Begley (2004). She stated that the real face to face communication starts to slowly disappear between younger generations of people. The technology takes over and people get more comfortable speaking through text messages rather than in person.

Table 12: 5th grade student attitude towards question 6

5th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
6. I get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English class						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	**4**	**4**	1	2	2
	Percentage	**30,8%**	**30,8%**	7,7%	15,4%	15,4%
Male (N=11)	Number of S	2	0	**5**	3	1
	Percentage	18,2%	0%	**45,5%**	27,3%	9,1%
Total	Number of S	**6**	4	**6**	5	3
	Percentage	**25%**	16,7%	**25%**	20,8%	12,5%

Table 13: 9th grade student attitude towards question 6

9th GRADE		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
6. I get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English class						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	1	**4**	**4**	**4**	0
	Percentage	7,7%	**30,8%**	**30,8%**	**30,8%**	0%
Male (N=14)	Number of S	2	0	5	**6**	1
	Percentage	14,3%	0%	35,7%	**42,9%**	7,1%
Total	Number of S	3	4	9	**10**	1
	Percentage	11,1%	14,8%	33,3%	**37%**	3,7%

Regarding question number 6, the overall look on if students get anxious when they have to answer a question in English classes is positive to slightly negative. 5th graders show higher percentage of negative attitude while 9th grade students seem to be comfortable with speaking in front of their class. As children grow older and get more used to speaking foreign language, their barriers in communication in front of the audience start to slowly vanish (Horton and Spieler, 2007). The difference in percentage between 5th and 9th grade clearly proves said statement.

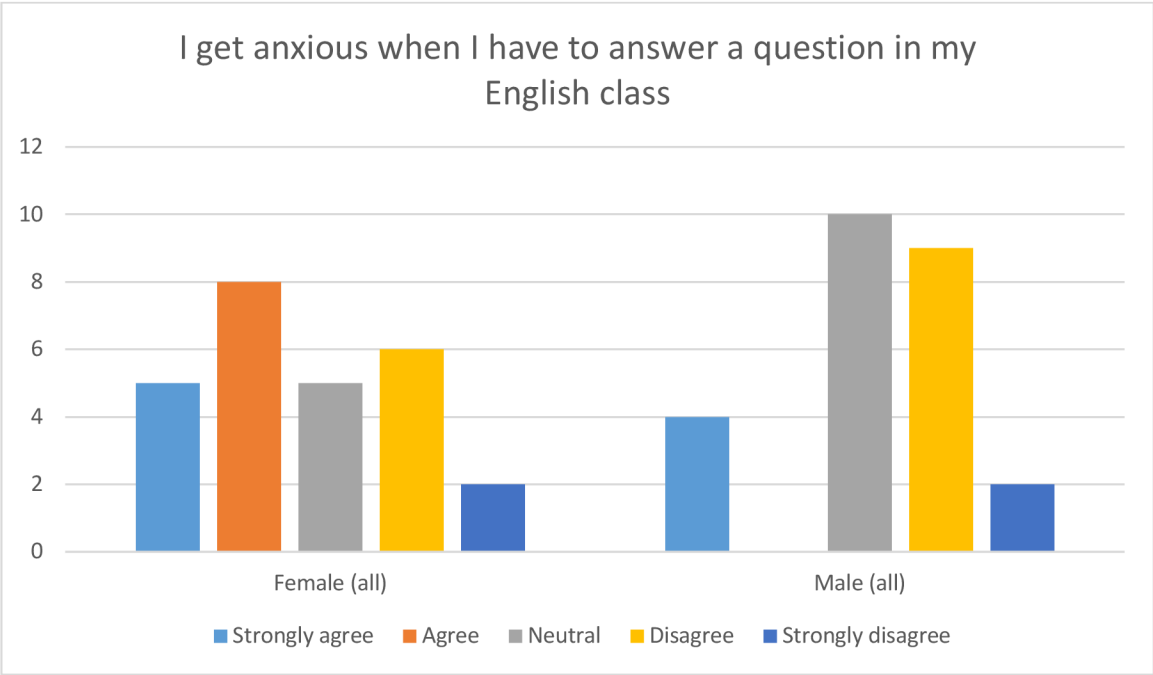

Figure 6: I get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English class gender results

According to the gender related differences, 5th grade females are the most anxious when speaking in front of others. This is strongly related to their age, as previously stated, and the fact that females are more shy and fairly sensitive in various life events, including communication (Cameron, 2009). As female students grow older, the layout of dominant percentages gets even. Males are significantly more comfortable with speaking in front of the class as men generally like to speak in front of audience to feel dominant and powerful (Tannen, 1998).

Table 14: 5th grade student attitude towards question 7

5th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
7. I study English only because I have to pass my exams						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	1	3	3	**4**	2
	Percentage	7,7%	23,1%	23,1%	**30,8%**	15,4%
Male (N=11)	Number of S	1	0	**4**	**4**	2
	Percentage	9,1%	0%	**36,4%**	**36,4%**	18,2%
Total	Number of S	2	3	7	**8**	2
	Percentage	8,3%	12,5%	29,2%	**33,3%**	8,3%

Table 15: 9th grade student attitude towards question 7

9th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
7. I study English only because I have to pass my exams						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	1	1	0	**7**	4
	Percentage	7,7%	7,7%	0%	**53,8%**	30,8%
Male (N=14)	Number of S	4	0	3	2	**5**
	Percentage	28,6%	0%	21,4%	14,3%	**35,7%**
Total	Number of S	5	1	3	**9**	**9**
	Percentage	18,5%	3,7%	11,1%	**33,3%**	**33,3%**

Instrumental motivation is the main focus of question 7. Students driven by instrumental motivation are studying the language in order to pass an exam or have higher chances of getting

into a better school. As tables 14 and 15 show, the majority of asked students seem to be rather integratively motivated. 5th grade students show "disagree" to "neutral" results while 9th graders are more certain with the "disagree" to "strongly disagree" answers.

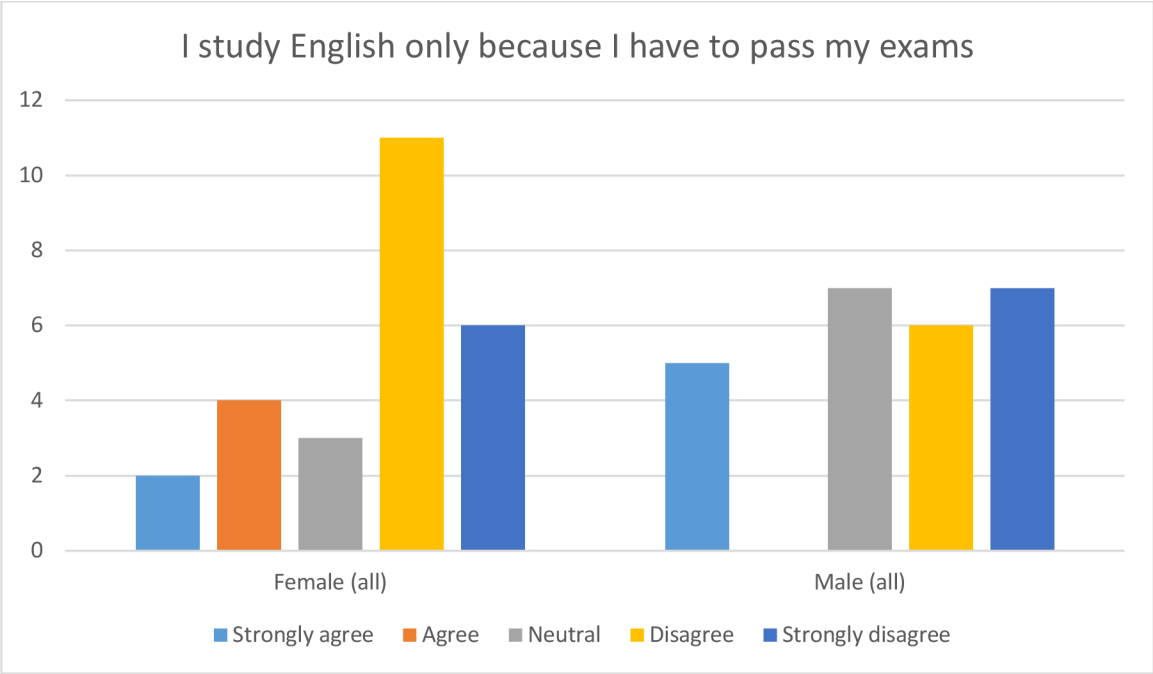

Figure 7: I study English only because I have to pass my exams gender results

According to Ludwig (1983) and Henry (2011), instrumental motivation is mostly common amongst men. Answers of this question support said statement. Although male students do not show direct signs of instrumental motivation, their answers are more evenly spread and 1/5 of them actually confessed to being motivated by the material aspects. 65,4% of female students seem to be integratively motivated.

Table 16: 5th grade student attitude towards question 8

5th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
8. English is difficult for me to learn						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	3	2	3	**4**	1
	Percentage	23,1%	15,4%	23,1%	**30,8%**	7,7%
Male (N=11)	Number of S	0	2	**4**	**4**	1
	Percentage	0%	18,2%	**36,4%**	**36,4%**	9,1%
Total	Number of S	3	4	7	**8**	2
	Percentage	12,5%	16,7%	29,2%	**33,3%**	8,3%

Table 17: 9th grade student attitude towards question 8

9th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
8. English is difficult for me to learn						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	0	**6**	2	5	0
	Percentage	0%	**46,2%**	15,4%	38,5%	0%
Male (N=14)	Number of S	1	0	4	4	**5**
	Percentage	7,1%	0%	28,6%	28,6%	**35,7%**
Total	Number of S	1	6	6	**11**	5
	Percentage	3,7%	22,2%	22,2%	**40,7%**	18,5%

As Cameron (2009) mentioned, women tend to use more standard language with a great amount of precision. Men, on the other hand, do not care about the rules as much. However, by the cause of, supposedly, having dominant a different part of brain, they are often faster learners. Said statement is not as evident amongst 5th grade students as it is between 9th graders.

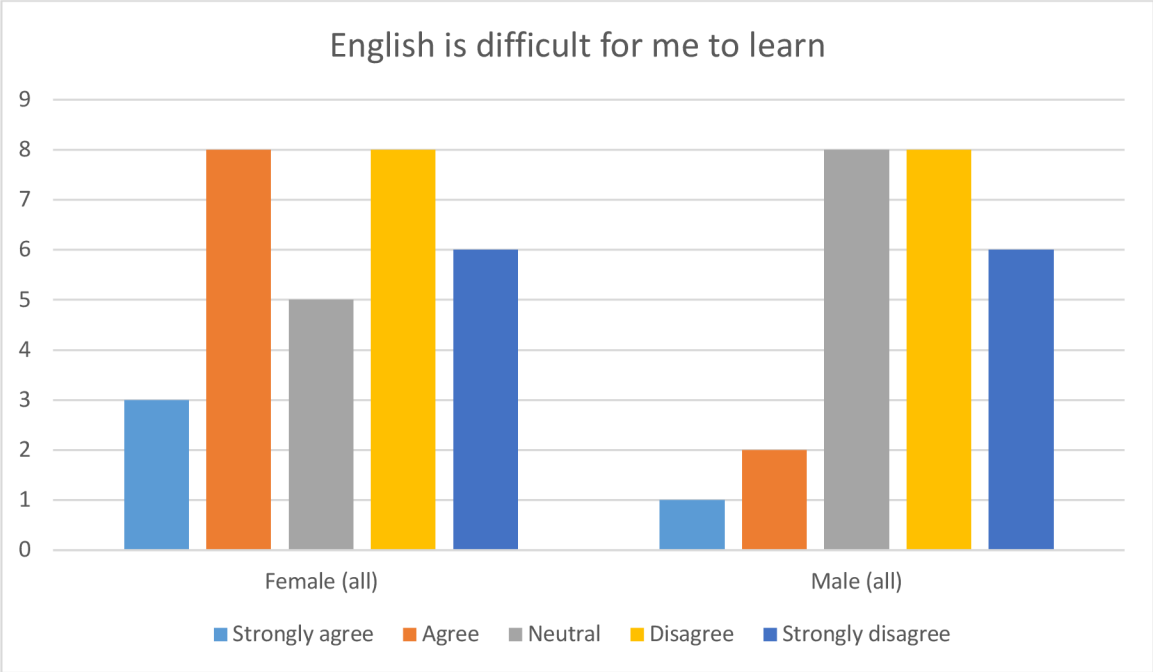

Figure 8: English is difficult for me to learn gender results

The difference in the difficulty of learning English between female and male students is more evident from a perspective of gender variation. Male students seem to have less problems when learning English than female students. 42,3% of female students admitted to having a hard time with studying English.

Table 18: 5th grade student attitude towards question 9

5th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
9. Knowing English is not important for me						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	0	2	2	**5**	4
	Percentage	0%	15,4%	15,4%	**38,5%**	30,8%
Male (N=11)	Number of S	0	1	1	**5**	4
	Percentage	0%	9,1%	9,1%	**45,5%**	36,4%
Total	Number of S	0	3	3	**10**	8
	Percentage	0%	12,5%	12,5%	**41,7%**	33,3%

Table 19: 9th grade student attitude towards question 9

9th GRADE		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9. Knowing English in not important for me						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	0	0	3	**5**	**5**
	Percentage	0%	0%	23,1%	**38,5%**	**38,5%**
Male (N=14)	Number of S	0	0	2	4	**8**
	Percentage	0%	0%	14,3%	28,6%	**57,1%**
Total	Number of S	0	0	5	9	**13**
	Percentage	0%	0%	18,5%	33,3%	**48,1%**

Without any doubt, English is a global, worldwide known language. The importance of knowing English has become significantly higher during the last few decades. English is the universal language of many areas including business, medicine, science and others (Crystal, 1997). According to the answers to question 9, the majority of the students from both 5th and 9th grades agree with said statement. 87,5% of the students feel like English is important.

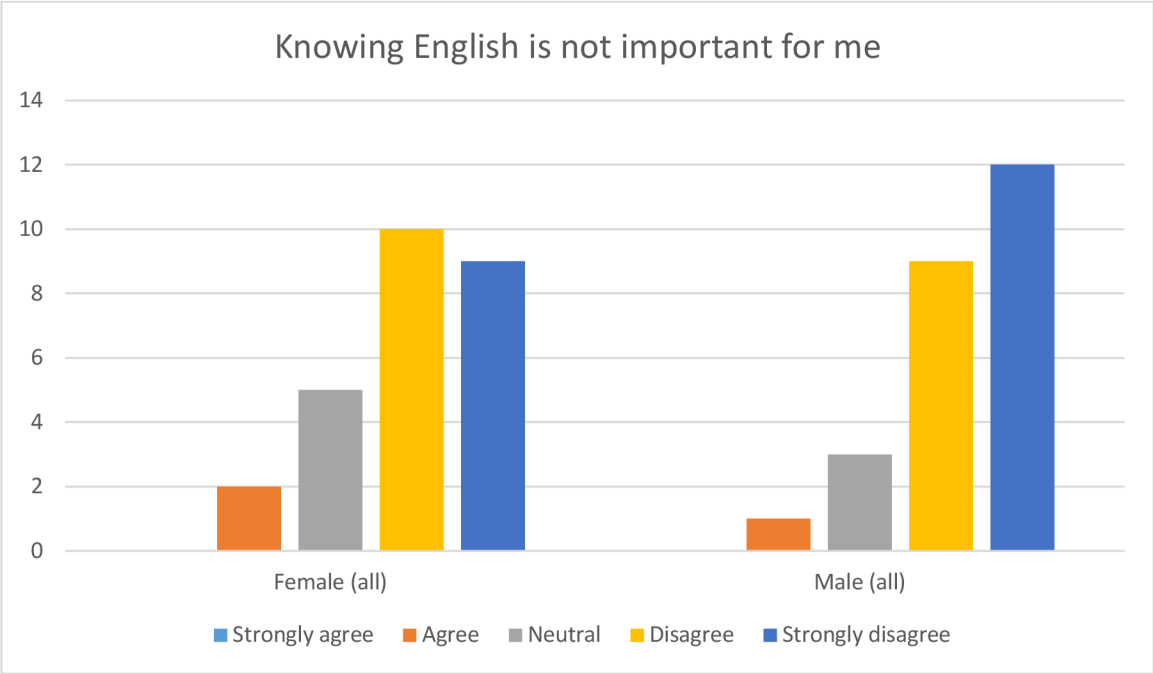

Figure 9: Knowing English is not important for me gender results

In question 2, majority of female students felt like studying English is important. In question 9, more male students showed the disagreement with the question. Even though female feel the same as male students, the majority of men were more dominant and strictly rejected the statement. This is a result of men's natural superior position (Crawford, 1995).

Table 20: 5th grade student attitude towards question 10

5th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
10. I practice English outside the school as well						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	3	**9**	0	1	0
	Percentage	23,1%	**69,2%**	0%	7,7%	0%
Male (N=11)	Number of S	3	**4**	1	2	1
	Percentage	27,3%	**36,4%**	9,1%	18,2%	9,1%
Total	Number of S	6	**13**	1	3	1
	Percentage	25%	**54,2%**	4,2%	12,5	4,2%

Table 21: 9th grade student attitude towards question 10

9th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
10. I practice English outside the school as well						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	1	**8**	1	3	0
	Percentage	7,7%	**61,5%**	7,7%	23,1%	0%
Male (N=14)	Number of S	**5**	**5**	3	0	1
	Percentage	**35,7%**	**35,7%**	21,4%	0%	7,1%
Total	Number of S	6	**13**	4	3	1
	Percentage	22,2%	**48,1%**	14,8%	11,1%	3,7%

Question 10 is a perfect example of uniformity amongst all students. Both 5th and 9th grades stated that they practice English outside the school as well. Regarding the current worlds full of technology, there are countless numbers of ways how to practice English. From simple

foreign books to TV shows and computer games. In contrast to older generations, these opportunities are now easily accessible (Begley, 2004). Almost a ½ of both grades encounter English outside the school.

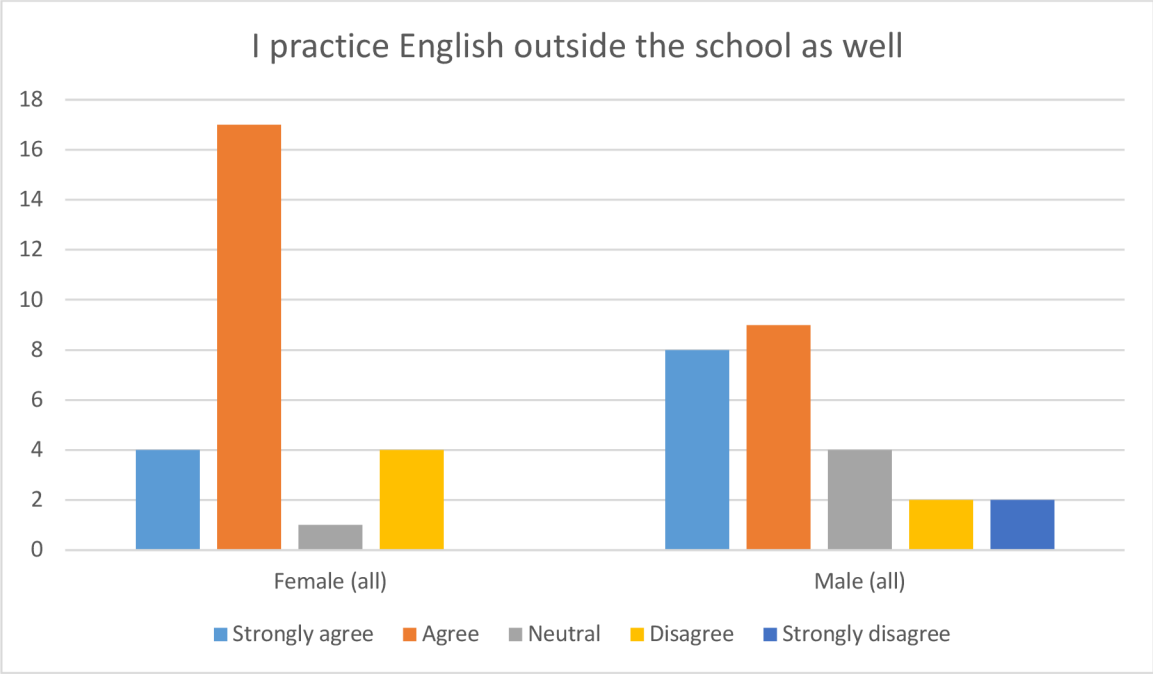

Figure 10: I practice English outside the school as well gender results

Table 22: 5th grade student attitude towards question 11

5th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
11. I think that being good at English is important for my future						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	3	**9**	1	0	0
	Percentage	23,1%	**69,2%**	7,7%	0%	0%
Male (N=11)	Number of S	**5**	**5**	1	0	0
	Percentage	**45,5%**	**45,5%**	9%	0%	0%
Total	Number of S	8	**14**	2	0	0
	Percentage	33,3%	**58,3%**	8,4%	0%	0%

Table 23: 9th grade student attitude towards question 11

9th GRADE		**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**

11. I think that being good at English is important for my future						
Female (N=13)	Number of S	**9**	2	1	1	0
	Percentage	**69,2%**	15,4%	7,7%	7,7%	0%
Male (N=14)	Number of S	**6**	**6**	2	0	0
	Percentage	**42,9%**	**42,9%**	14,2%	0%	0%
Total	Number of S	**15**	8	3	1	0
	Percentage	**55,6%**	29,6%	11,1%	3,7%	0%

Another question with rather uniform answers is the last question, number 11. Over a ½ of students from both grades do think that English will play a somewhat valuable part in their future. Therefore, they think that being good at English is essential. 9th grade students show more emphasis on the "strongly agree" answer.

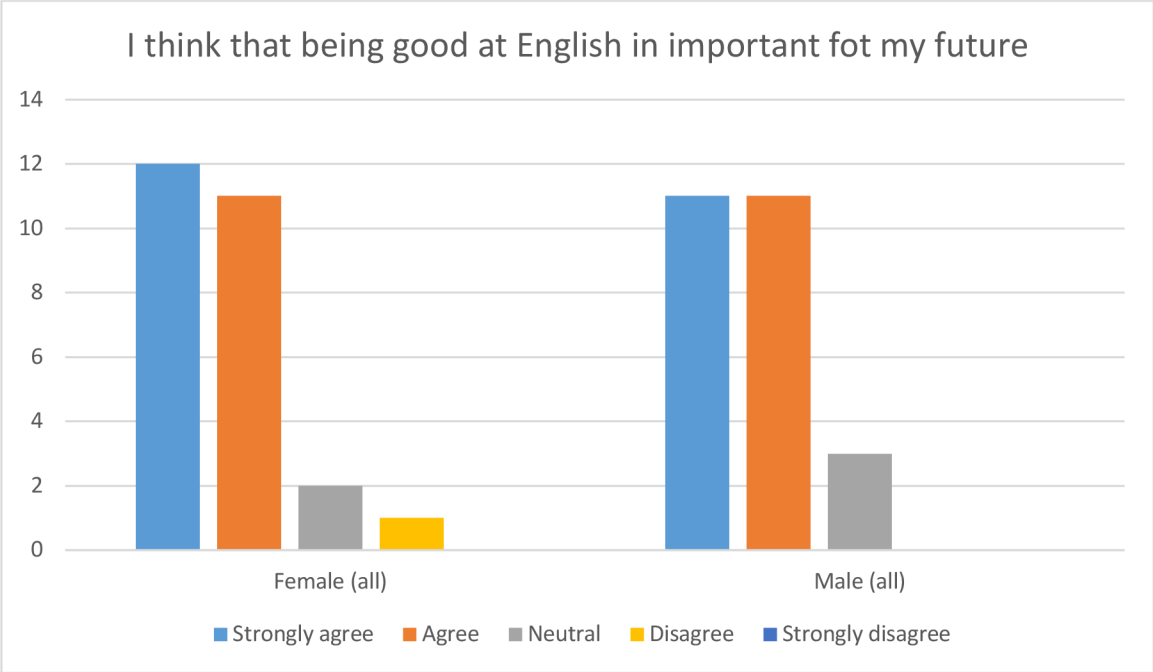

Figure 11: I think that being good at English is important for my future gender results

Out of the three questions focusing on the importance of English in student's lives, question 11 is the most even one. With regards to the number of respondents, the results show equal stress on the significance of English by 5th and 9th grade students altogether.

Table 24: The atitude towards language questionnaire results

	Strongly agree /Agree	**Strongly disagree/disagree**	**Neutral**	**Prevailing gender**	**Final outcome**
Question 1	29	6	16	Male	Positive
Question 2	49	0	2	Female	Positive
Question 3	21	10	20	Female	Positive
Question 4	18	10	24	Female	Neutral
Question 5	19	25	7	Female	Negative
Question 6	17	19	15	Male	Positive
Question 7	11	28	10	Female	Positive
Question 8	14	28	13	Even	Positive
Question 9	3	40	8	Male	Positive
Question 10	38	8	5	Female	Positive
Question 11	45	1	5	Female	Positive
					POSITIVE

The final result of the attitude towards language questionnaire is positive. Students from 1.ZŠ in Šumperk have positive attitude towards English. Only one questions out of eleven was considered as negative attitude towards language. This question is:

5. I am comfortable when I'm speaking English with my friends

According to the table above, mostly female students have positive attitude towards English. This outcome is corresponding with the theories by Baker (1992), Gardner and Lambert (1972), Henry (2011), Ludwig (1983) and Weinburgh (1998).

9 CONCLUSION

In its theoretical part, this diploma thesis was focused on sociolinguistic foundations, general gender differences and historical background of gender issues. The second part of literature review was heavily based on particular gender differences in language use. Literature and various studies by many authors were analysed and interpreted.

The aim of the practical part of this diploma thesis was to investigate, study and evaluate particular gender differences amongst students of 1.ZŠ in Šumperk. The practical part contained a textual analysis of gender differences in language use and a questionnaire exploring student's attitudes towards language, in particular English.

The study undoubtedly demonstrated that there are differences in various areas of student's linguistic performances which are closely related to gender. The most common differences were the most visible in the parts of linguistic performances related length of their written language, selected topics, vocabulary and grammar. The study also proved that the frequency of these differences between students of 5th and 9th grades varied slightly. There were no major contrasts. The questionnaire studying student's attitude towards English revealed that the students of 1.ZŠ in Šumperk have overall positive attitude towards the language. It also indicated that female students have significantly higher positive attitude towards the language. They demonstrated positive attitude in nearly all of the given questions.

The research of the diploma thesis was successful and fulfilled all expectations.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

As an addition to the findings and results of the current study, further pedagogical, psychological and gender research is recommended.

Current and future teachers are welcomed along with curriculum creators to conduct further research in discussed topic. Findings of this study could provide valuable information about student's characteristics, preferences, though processes or behaviour which could help and teachers to develop or improve certain methods and teaching strategies.

Further research is definitely essential in the area of attitudes towards language and gender differences in language use. Additional research in both of these spheres will certainly inspire current and future teachers to create new and interesting teaching techniques which would hopefully meet student's needs.

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12 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Textual analysis task

Appendix 2: Attitude towards language questionnaire

APPENDIX 1: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS TASK

DIFFERENCES IN LANGUAGE USE **Gender:** Female/Male

This part is designed to find out if and how female and male students from 6th and 9th grades at 1.ZŠ Šumperk elementary school use English differently.

Imagine that you are a famous story writer and you just got an idea for a new story which will be published in a magazine. Write it on this page. You can choose any topic you like. For example, it could be a fairy tale, a crime story, sci-fi, true story that had happened to you or anything else.

APPENDIX 2: ATTITUDE TOWARDS LANGUAGE QUESTIONNAIRE

ATTITUDE TOWARDS LANGUAGE QUESTIONNAIRE **Gender:** Female/Male

This questionnaire is designed to study the attitude towards English language of female and male students from 6th and 9th grades at 1.ZŠ Šumperk elementary school.

Answer the following questions by circling the most appropriate answer:

1. **I enjoy studying English**

   Strongly agree *Agree* *Neutral* *Disagree* *Strongly disagree*

2. **I feel like studying English is important**

   Strongly agree *Agree* *Neutral* *Disagree* *Strongly disagree*

3. **I feel good when I'm learning English**

   Strongly agree *Agree* *Neutral* *Disagree* *Strongly disagree*

4. **I am excited for English classes**

   Strongly agree *Agree* *Neutral* *Disagree* *Strongly disagree*

5. **I am comfortable when I'm speaking English with my friends**

   Strongly agree *Agree* *Neutral* *Disagree* *Strongly disagree*

6. **I get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English class**

   Strongly agree *Agree* *Neutral* *Disagree* *Strongly disagree*

7. **I study English only because I have to pass my exams**

   Strongly agree *Agree* *Neutral* *Disagree* *Strongly disagree*

8. **English is difficult for me to learn**

   Strongly agree *Agree* *Neutral* *Disagree* *Strongly disagree*

9. **Knowing English is not important for me**

Strongly agree *Agree* *Neutral* *Disagree* *Strongly disagree*

10. I practice English outside the school as well

Strongly agree *Agree* *Neutral* *Disagree* *Strongly disagree*

11. I think that being good at English is important for my future

Strongly agree *Agree* *Neutral* *Disagree* *Strongly disagree*

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14 ANNOTATION

Jméno a příjmení:	Bc. Darina Suchomelová
Katedra:	Ústav cizích jazyků
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Ondřej Duda
Rok obhajoby:	2021

Název práce:	Genderové rozdíly v užívání jazyka ve škole
Název v angličtině:	Gender differences in language use in school
Anotace práce:	Ve své teoretické části je diplomová práce zaměřena na genderové rozdíly v užívání jazyka. Zabývá se sociolingvistickými a sociologickými aspekty užívání jazyka a jazykových aktů mezi zástupci jednotlivých pohlaví. Analyzuje kontrast bývalého a nynějšího přístupu k problematice pohlaví, základní sociální normy, konvence a očekávání v používání jazyka daným pohlavím. V praktické části práce je ukázáno, jak moc jsou tahle pravidla a normy viditelná ve školním prostředí.
Klíčová slova:	pohlaví, genderové rozdíly, jazyk, užívání jazyka
Anotace v angličtině:	This diploma thesis is in its theoretical part focused on gender differences in language use. It deals with sociolinguistic and sociologic aspects of language use and speech acts amongst gender representatives. It analyses the contrast of former and actual approach to gender problematics along with social and cultural norms, conventions and expectations of the way that language is used by particular genders. The practical part of the thesis shows us how much these gender differences in language use are visible in the school area.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	gender, gender differences, language, language use

Přílohy vázané v práci:	Zadání textové analýzy Dotazník
Rozsah práce:	78 stran
Jazyk práce:	AJ

15 RESUMÉ

Závěrečná práce je zaměřena na genderové rozdíly v užívání jazyka mezi žáky pátých a devátých tříd na 1.základní škole v Šumperku. Analýzou zadaného textu a vyhodnocením daného dotazníku bylo zjištěno, že žáci naplňují většinu z genderových rozdílů daných na základě literárního průzkumu. Bylo take žjištěno, že žáci z obou tříd mají pozitivní přístup ke studiu anglického jazyka. Navrženy byly vhodné metody dalšího výzkumu.