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TUULI SAKSA

SUPERVISOR: Prof. RAILI MARLING

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ABSTRACT

One of the aims of learning a foreign language is to be able to communicate both in written and spoken language. In order to develop this skill, all students need opportunities to speak in the lessons as it might be the only opportunity for monitored practice. However, studies have shown that boys and girls do not have equal opportunities for speaking in classroom. The aim of the present study is to find out how equal is the amount of foreign language classroom talk of boys and girls, in terms of the number of turns taken and the time of talk, and whether boys or girls dominate the class. Additionally, the aim is to find out if and how teacher approval affects the classroom interaction.

The thesis consists of an introduction, two chapters and a conclusion. The introduction provides the rationale for the research, the aims of the thesis and its structure. Chapter I gives an overview of the studies that have been carried out in the field of language and gender. It provides a brief overview of the linguistic differences between women's and men's speech and focuses on the studies about gender in the classroom. The second chapter is about gender and language in use in English lessons. The choice of the participants, the setting and the methodology are described first, followed by the results of the case study that was conducted among the year nine students of a secondary school. In the discussion the findings are examined more closely. The conclusion summarises the paper, presents the main findings, discusses their significance and brings out the shortcomings of the study. It is followed by a list of sources, appendices and resümee (in Estonian).

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INTRODUCTION

The topic of gendered speech has been studied thoroughly over the years (Graddol and Swann 1991; Holmes 1995; Baxter 2003; Coates 2004). In general, studies have shown that women use a more cooperative communication style as they provide a supportive audience and do not interrupt the speaker; instead they use different linguistic variables, such as tag questions and minimal responses, to show that they are listening and to give positive feedback to the speaker. Men, however, tend to interrupt people who are speaking, so as to achieve dominance over the situation.

Over the years several studies that have been conducted on the topic of gender in the classroom have shown inequality in the amount of talk by male and female students in the classroom setting. Although there are some studies (Leaper and Smith 2004; Zhang 2010; Hu 2012) that have indicated that girls speak more, most of the studies (Spender 1980; Holmes 1995; Julé 2002; Coates 2004) have concluded that boys dominate the classroom as they get more turns and time to speak.

It is claimed that boys' dominance is achieved mainly through cooperation with the teacher because teachers give most of their attention to boys (Stalling 1979; Younger et al 1999). Girls are generally considered to be quiet and conscientious, whereas boys tend to be loud and disruptive which forces teachers to pay more attention to them so as to maintain order in the classroom. Other studies (Younger et al 1999; Beaman et al 2006) have indicated that teachers favour girls due to them being compliant. This leads to girls being treated more positively and receiving less disciplinary attention.

According to the National Curriculum for Basic Schools (2011) one of the aims of learning a foreign language is for a student to be able to communicate both in writing and in

speech. By the end of the basic school the student should be able to participate in oral communication on a familiar topic, without prior preparation and be able to express oneself relatively fluently. In order to achieve this skill in the learned language, it is necessary for the students not only to learn the words and grammar rules, but also to have the opportunity to practise speaking. A study by Sedova et al (2019) showed that being active in the lesson and participating in discussions also improves the results in other areas, such as reading.

It is believed that learners benefit from using the learned language in the classroom setting as it provides opportunities for monitored practice (Zhang 2010). For some students learning and using a foreign language only takes place in the classroom and for most students it is the only opportunity for monitored practice. Therefore, it is important to have a gender balance in the classroom speaking opportunities, to give students of both genders the opportunity to speak and practise. However, it seems that it is not so, as several authors (Holmes 1995; Younger et al 1999; Blair 2000; Julé 2002; Zhang 2010) claim that male and female students do not get an equal amount of talking time and equal opportunities for monitored practice.

Even though the topic of gender and language use in classroom has interested researchers over the world for a long time, it has not been widely researched in Estonia and so it is important to study and assess the situation in Estonia. The present thesis focuses on a case study that was carried out in a school in the rural part of Estonia to find answers to the following research questions: Is the amount of foreign language classroom talk of boys and girls unequal, in terms of the number of turns taken and the time of talk? Is there gender dominance in classroom talk, and if yes, do boys or girls dominate in the class? Does teacher approval affect the discourse and if yes, how?

The thesis has been organised in the following way: it starts with an introduction which provides the rationale for the research and the aims and structure of the thesis. This is followed by chapter I which gives a brief overview of the research that has been carried out in the field of language and gender: linguistic differences between men's and women's speech and gender in the classroom. Chapter II deals with the methodology of the case study that was conducted among the year nine students of a secondary school: the procedure of the data collection, the results of the case study and the discussion of findings. The conclusion summarises the main findings and draws some conclusions on the basis of the results. The thesis includes three appendices and a list of references.

1 LANGUAGE AND GENDER: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Linguistic differences between women's and men's speech

There are many widely-held stereotypes regarding the differences between women's and men's speech, such as that women gossip more, men swear more, women are politer and so on, that often turn out to be false (Coates 2004:86) and rarely favour women (Graddol and Swann 1991:2). An English proverb *many women, many words; many geese, many turds* nicely describes one of the general beliefs - women talk more than men, whereas men are calmer and more independent. Additionally, Toohey and Scholefield (1994) bring out a saying that a participant in their study used when asked whether men or women spoke more – *girls' mouths are like chickens' because they cannot stop talking*. However, a study that was conducted between 1998 and 2004 showed that this belief is just a myth as the results suggested that women spoke on average 16,215 words during the waking hours and men 15,669 (Mehl et al 2007). It can be concluded that Spender (1978:19) was right when she claimed that “a talkative female is one who talks about as often as a man”. The world expects women to be silent and when a woman says something, it leaves the impression that she speaks too much, although she actually might speak less than a man.

The topic of gendered speech has been studied for many years and researchers have addressed several questions regarding linguistic variables (e.g. tag questions, vocabulary) and interactional patterns (e.g. politeness, interrupting others, topics) to describe women's and men's speech (Graddol and Swann 1991; Holmes 1995; Baxter 2003; Coates 2004). Minimal responses, such as *yeah*, *right* or *mhm*, are a way of indicating the listeners' positive attention to the speaker (Andersen 1999). Research has shown that women tend to use minimal responses more than men, to give positive feedback, to indicate the listener's support for the current

speaker and to express interest in the topic (Coates 2004; Zhang 2010). Zhang's (2010) results showed that 85.7% of the minimal responses given during the observed interaction came from the girls.

According to Holmes (1992) and Hepburn and Potter (2010, cited in Speer and Stokoe 2011:135) women use more tag questions than men. Holmes (1992) claims that men use tag questions to express uncertainty whereas women use them to show support. It makes their speech politer as they do not impose their views. Tag questions, like minimal responses, are a way of showing that you are listening to the speaker and women are often described as attentive communicators who show interest in the conversation.

Another general belief is that men use more foul language than women. Recent studies, that Coates (2021) describes in his article, have shown that although women are more likely to use mild swear words, like *damn*, in general, men's use of swear words is higher. This is confirmed by Mehl and Pennebaker (2003) and Beers Fägersten (2007) who studied spoken language of university students and discovered a much higher use of swear words by males. Coates (2003:46) claims that men swear and use taboo language in the company of other men as a sign of their toughness and manhood. Coates (2004) brings out studies by Kramer that confirmed the existence of the stereotype (cartoonists made their male characters swear more freely) but provided no evidence whether it was true in real life. She also describes a study by Gomm where fourteen conversations between young British speakers were recorded and where the results showed that male speakers swear more often and both genders swear more in the company of their own sex. However, Gomm carried the research out in 1981, so one might guess that the situation has changed tremendously since then as one of the participants in Hughes' (1992) research on working-class women's speech stated that using taboo words was not swearing to them, but part of their everyday talking.

Interruptions are one of the linguistic strategies that are used to achieve dominance (Coates 2004:111) because by interrupting a person one deprives or attempts to deprive him/her of the right to speak and signals or possibly increases the status of the speaker (Holmes 1992:134). Coates (2004) describes several studies (Zimmerman and West 1975; Winter 1993; Holmes 1995) which showed that the majority of the interruptions in the recorded conversations were caused by male speakers who interrupted others, including the teacher, to get the opportunity to speak. Sadker and Sadker (1994) point out that in discussions boys are eight times more likely to take the floor without the teacher's permission than girls. Furthermore, Baxter (2002a, 2003) and Leaper and Smith (2004) claim that girls provide a supportive audience for the more entertaining boys as they listen without interrupting or laughing at boys' jokes and use more cooperative speech (agreement, responsiveness, praise). According to Leaper and Smith (2004:994), girls use language to make a connection with others while boys use assertive language to establish dominance.

Women using language for making a connection might be the reason for male dominance in public contexts as "men are more interested in status and being one up" (Holmes 1992:133). Holmes calls male dominance "display talk" (Holmes 1992:134) as it gives the speaker a chance to show what he knows and to enhance his status. While studying speaking in public contexts, Holmes (1992) found out that men participate more in formal and public discussions. Her study showed that generally men asked more questions (up to 75% of the questions were asked by males) in meetings and seminars, but women asked more questions when they considered the setting comfortable.

Although it is widely believed that women speak more than men, studies (Leaper and Ayers 2007; Mehl et al 2007) have shown that the number of words spoken by men and women in a day is relatively equal. What the studies have shown is that women are politer than men

(Coates 2004; Leaper and Smith 2004; Zhang 2010) – they listen to the speaker and give positive feedback, whereas men tend to interrupt others more to achieve dominance (Coates 2004:111).

1.2 Gender in the classroom

According to Coates (2004:25), an ideal woman is often described as being silent, so quiet behaviour, especially in girls, is encouraged by teachers. The combined results of 73 different studies among children in the US showed that although girls did speak more words than boys, the difference was small and was only evident while speaking to a parent and not while talking with friends and only until the age of two (Hammond 2013). This coincides with the results by Leaper and Smith (2004) who claim that younger girls, at least in the first two years of kindergarten, are more talkative and fluent which might be due to the fact that girls talk more in child-adult interactions and mothers are more talkative with their daughters than with their sons. The quantitative differences in the amount of speech disappear later, so there should be no distinctive gender differences in the classroom talk.

However, according to Coates (2004), gender becomes salient in school, being a highly visible source of individual and social identity, marked by dress and by language. She argues that boys dominate in classroom talk: they not only talk more than girls, but also call out names and interrupt others, something that is not allowed for girls in the classroom setting. Gass and Varnolis (1986) reached similar results when they studied gender differences in an English language classroom in Japan. Their study revealed that boys took the floor more often than girls and interrupted more in classroom talk. This difference might be caused by girls being worried about the quality of their language and preferring to be quiet so as not to embarrass themselves, whereas boys see it as a chance to show their knowledge and build up their status. Even if the

answer is incorrect or taking the floor ends in getting a disciplinary remark from the teacher, they can still show their classmates that they are cool and belong to the group.

Ali (2016), who studied gender differences in using language in foreign language lessons, argues that male students are often more active in using second language in general which might be the reason for their dominance. It might be connected to the fact that boys play more online games where they interact with other players all over world and are therefore more used to speaking in a foreign language. Warrington and Younger (2000) insist that although boys dominate in earlier years, girls start dominating later while there is “more interest in learning and a greater realisation of the importance of working hard” (Warrington and Younger 2000:500).

In addition, boys prefer a competitive style, girls a cooperative style. Girls use affiliative language to show support and agreement and to acknowledge others' contributions, while boys prefer to use directive statements and to criticize (Leaper and Smith 2004). This coincides with Spender's (1980) findings which showed male dominance in the classroom setting and the silencing of girls. Swann (2005) describes a study where a boy and a girl were paired up to co-write a story. The results in that case showed that although the girl tended to be more spontaneous and take the lead by encouraging the boy to contribute, the boy took a dominant role in the interaction and exercised more control over the writing process.

Boys are often considered the wittier, more entertaining sex (Baxter 2002a) who use humour to get what they want. In order to avoid being seen as a nerd or weak, and to get the attention of the teacher and the classmates, they tend to try to be cool and fool around and brag about how good they are (Baxter 2002b; Coates 2003:53). In addition, boys have the habit to groan and to make rude comments when girls ask questions or make suggestions (Nilan 2000; Warrington and Younger 2000; Coates 2004:191). It is possible that if studying and achieving

good results are not popular among the boys of a certain class, or one does not possess any other characteristics that make him popular among peers, some boys might feel the need to defensively display stereotypically masculine behaviour, such as joking, being loud and disruptive, to be popular and not to lose friends. As Davies (2003:246) puts it: “life membership among ‘real boys’ is not guaranteed; boys need continually to demonstrate that they deserve to be part of the male group”.

These differences also affect the way children of both genders are communicated with. Graddol and Swann (1991:72) claim that “teachers may reward the same behaviour in boys that they discourage in girls”. This coincides with Sadker and Sadker (1994) who found that teachers are less likely to reject boys’ behaviour, even if boys do not abide by the classroom rules. Younger et al (1999) describe the situation in the schools in the United Kingdom where their survey showed that the majority of the participating teachers admitted that they treated girls and boys differently. It was said that as girls are generally more conscientious and have all the necessary things with them, teachers overpraise girls for doing the things that boys should also be doing, such as bringing along textbooks or settling down in the classroom, whereas the level of noise caused by the boys, their misbehaviour, off-task activities and limited attention span result in receiving more attention as the teachers want to maintain control in the classroom. Davis and Kasama (2004) reached similar results in Japan where their study showed that boys’ dominance in preschools came through cooperation with the teacher. As Sadker and Sadker (1994) and Beaman et al (2006) state, girls are seen as compliant and inactive whereas boys are active and seen by teachers as potentially disruptive. According to teachers, boys’ tones and attitudes make teachers feel that they are obliged to respond and so they are frequently provided with the opportunities to respond as a method of maintaining classroom discipline.

However, Stalling (1979) points out that although boys get most of the teachers' attention, teachers' interaction with female students is more often positive as teachers smile and laugh more with girls than with boys. Julé's (2002) study in the second grade English as a second language classroom showed that although boys spoke most of time (88.3%), the teacher's interaction with the girls was more positive as they were given fewer negative responses and they received fewer direct orders and criticism. This also coincides with the results by Younger et al (1999:331) which showed that girls were more likely to get away with bad behaviour and teachers were harder on boys. One of the participating boys claimed that "when girls were talking, it would either be ignored or they would be told to stop talking, whereas boys were more likely to be shouted at, moved or sent out for talking" (Younger et al 1999:331). Therefore, it can be said that giving boys more attention than girls might be done intentionally with the aim of being in charge of the classroom and learning process.

Sunderland (2000) argues that male students get more attention usually because of a small group of boys. In her study one boy received ten times as much attention as the boy to whom the teacher turned the least and twice as much as the girl who got the most of the teacher's attention. Similar conclusions were drawn by Myhill (2002:341) who claims that statements like "boys are more willing to participate in class discussion" and "boys are more articulate than girls" need to be prefaced by the word *some* as in a classroom full of dominant boys there are always those who are more reserved and less confident in contributing to interaction.

Zhang (2010) claims that when it comes to learning a foreign language, students benefit a lot from using the language as often as possible in the classroom context and as one of the aims of language teaching is to enable the learner to communicate effectively and appropriately in real life situations, it would seem reasonable that all students have an equal opportunity to practise the language in the classroom. A study by Sedova et al (2019) showed that students

who spoke and argued in class achieved better results in a reading test than those who just listened to others speaking. Therefore, it is important that there are equal opportunities for both genders to speak. However, it seems that it is not so, as several authors (Holmes 1995; Younger et al 1999; Blair 2000; Julé 2002; Zhang 2010) claim that male and female students do not get an equal amount of talking time and equal opportunities for monitored practice.

In general, studies (Stalling 1979; Spender 1980; Becker 1981; Holmes 1995; Younger et al 1999; Francis 2000; Julé 2002) have shown boys being dominant in the class. Holmes (1992:132) suggests that it might be because “women tend to feel comfortable in private, informal contexts of talk whereas men are generally more willing to contribute in public or formal contexts”. Girls might be more comfortable in one-to-one or small group conversations and might not express their opinions in the classroom. Similar ideas were articulated by the participants of the studies by Toohey and Scholefield (1994), who claimed that girls were quiet in classes (public context) but talkative with their friends in private. It is possible that girls are more talkative with friends because then they do not have to worry about someone’s opinion and being assessed.

Boys talk more than girls in classroom contexts as they ask and are asked more questions. According to the results of the studies by Younger et al (1999) and Julé (2002), most of the teachers’ questions are directed to boys and most of the questions that are directed to the whole class get answered by boys. Girls do not get that many opportunities to speak as surveys by Sunderland (1998) and Julé (2002) showed that girls were more likely than boys to have their utterances ignored by the teacher. That too might be connected to maintaining control over the class. According to Clarricoates (1987, cited in Chapman 2002:67), boys talking more in the classroom might also be connected to the fact that the topics are chosen based on their interests:

teachers assume that girls will accept any topic and tend to choose topics that are more suitable for boys, so as to avoid boys loudly objecting and to maintain control over the situation.

All this, however, does not coincide with the results by Sunderland (1998), Leaper and Smith (2004), Zhang (2010) and Hu (2012) who claim that girls are more talkative than boys. Their studies showed that although an “average girl” produces shorter utterances in the lesson, she talks more than an “average boy”. As women’s role in society has changed over the years, it might be that the situation in the classroom has also changed and female students are given more opportunities to speak because in the 21st century society women and men are considered to be equal.

Zhang (2010) studied gender differences in an English classroom in a Swedish upper secondary school and concluded that girls are dominant in talking in the classroom. They were given more turns to speak by the teacher and held the floor longer than the boys. Zhang argues that the number of turns given might be the result of the teacher thinking that girls are shy to take the floor and speak up, and the boys’ choice to be silent and let the girls speak more may indicate that in boys’ opinion, being talkative means being feminine. It might also be that Swedish teachers give girls more opportunities to speak as “gender equality is a fundamental value in Sweden” (Walfridsson 2022).

Hu (2012) conducted a case study in a Chinese middle school where 14 lessons of an English class were observed and recorded. The findings showed that girls spoke more in the observed classes as the teacher asked more questions and, similarly to Zhang’s (2010) results, allocated more turns to the them. Moreover, when the teacher did not nominate a particular person to answer the question, the girls were more active to respond. Hu’s results also showed that although the teacher gave more feedback to the girls, the feedback given to the boys was more often positive and could have been used to encourage boys to be more active in the lesson.

On the other hand, Sunderland's (1998) results showed that the teacher paid more attention to the boys as she directed more questions to them, commented on their answers more often and gave boys more disciplinary remarks. It should have resulted in boys dominating the classroom talk, but the results proved that despite receiving less attention from the teacher, girls produced more utterances and therefore talked more.

One of the aims of learning languages is for students to be able to communicate in the learned language. In order to achieve it, students need equal opportunities for monitored practice in the classroom. Studies, however, have mainly shown that teachers do not treat boys and girls equally (Stalling 1979; Sadker and Sadker 1994; Younger et al 1999) as boys get more attention, much of which is given to maintain control in the classroom as boys are, according to Coates (2004), more disruptive than girls. Boys are said to dominate the class (Spender 1980; Becker 1981; Holmes 1995; Francis 2000) as they get more opportunities to speak – boys ask more questions, teachers allocate more speaking turns to them and boys answer the questions that are addressed to the whole class. There are some studies (Zhang 2010; Hu 2012), however, that have indicated the opposite.

To the author's best knowledge, the topic of micro processes, such as voice, behaviour expressing feelings, in the classroom has not been widely researched from the gender perspective in Estonia. However, according to Tiiu Kuurme (2010) there is no reason to think that the situation is different in Estonia as Estonian schools are still rather traditional. Leino (2008) claims that boys are, at least according to the teachers who participated in Leino's study, in general more active whereas girls are ready to accept their passive state and adapt to the situation. That results in teachers paying more attention to the boys so as to maintain classroom discipline. Tulviste et al (2010) conducted a comparative study in Estonian, Finnish and Swedish kindergartens to explore children's talkativeness, richness of vocabulary and communicative

intents. The results showed that Estonian children preferred to play in the company of a same sex child, which coincides with the findings of Maccoby (2000) and Khan and Ali (2020) who claim that boys and girls spend more time in the company of their own sex. In addition, girls were more talkative: they produced 8.29 utterances in a minute on average compared to the boys' 5.73. As they were playing with girls, it cannot be said whether the situation would have been the same if they had been playing with boys.

2 GENDER AND LANGUAGE IN USE IN ENGLISH LESSONS

The author carried out a case study by recording her lessons with the aim of finding out if there is an inequality in the amount of foreign language classroom talk of boys and girls, if there is gender dominance in classroom talk and whether teacher's approval affects it.

2.1 The students

The case study was carried out in a secondary school in the rural part of Estonia. There are 23 students in year 9 who are divided into two groups for language lessons based on their language skills. Group one, which participated in the study, has students with better results. The group has 13 students and an approximately even gender balance: seven girls and six boys.

This particular group was chosen due to the approximate gender balance. Additionally, the group has previously participated in recording lessons for the author's course work and has experience in being in a situation where their lessons are recorded. Therefore, it could be assumed that they do not change their behaviour significantly because of having cameras in the classroom.

To follow research ethics, the students were asked for their consent and informed about their role in the research. Prior to performing the study, the parents' (Appendix 1) and the school's (Appendix 2) written consent was asked for the children's participation in the research. The results are generalised so that none of the students can be identified.

2.2 The setting

The group has three 45-minute English lessons each week, in the same classroom. There are 27 single desks in the classroom in five rows and the students sit in the same place each lesson. The students could choose their place in the first lesson of the school year, on the condition that they did not leave the front seats empty. They chose their places so that almost

everyone sits next to someone of the same sex. Only two girls out of the seven have decided to sit in the “boys’ area”. In general, girls have chosen to sit in the two rows close to the windows, but those two girls are sitting on the other side of classroom, next to the wall.

2.3 The methodology

Two video cameras were used to collect the data – one was placed in front of the classroom and the other one on the side of the room, so that both the students’ and the teacher’s talk and gestures would be recorded. Video recording allowed the author not only to analyse the amount of speech but also enabled her to see non-verbal communication, such as putting up the hand and waiting for the permission to speak and facial expressions. For the recording to be as unobtrusive as possible and for the students to get used to having the cameras in the classroom, the two cameras were set up in the classroom but were not working in the first lessons.

A total of six lessons were recorded during the period of December 2022 and January 2023. The lessons were transcribed by using Jefferson’s transcription system that has been slightly adapted by Natalja Zagura (n.d) (Appendix 3). As the aim was to identify the more dominant gender in classroom talk and whether there were any differences in speech styles, such as interrupting others and using directives and attentive expressions, only those parts of the lessons were transcribed that included examples of students’ behavioural differences (interrupting others, raising their hand, making jokes) and of gendered differences in teacher-student interaction. In the transcription all students were given pseudonyms.

2.3 Results of the research

As one of the aims of the study was to find out whether boys or girls speak more in terms of the number of turns taken by the students themselves and given by the teacher and the amount of time, these characteristics were counted for each observed lesson. Additionally, behavioural

variables, such as raising one's hand, using minimal responses, interrupting others and using foul language, were also counted and, if present, added to the tables.

The seconds of students speaking were counted for the period between the 15th and the 30th minute in each lesson as it is the period of intense work. Prior to that students are still getting focused on the work and after that their attention might shift to waiting for the break.

2.3.1 The first lesson

All 13 students were present in the first lesson and the topic was conditional sentences. At the beginning of the lesson homework (workbook exercises) was checked, so that students read out the answers that they had written into their notebooks (the teacher chose the person who was going to answer). After that the teacher introduced a board game. The game was followed by frontal work (repeating some of the sentences that the students had said while playing the game) and then individual work with a workbook.

When students had to form groups of three, the teacher let them choose their partners. Without saying anything boys gave signals with their eyes to make sure that they could team up with boys and would not have to be in a group with a girl. Therefore, no mixed groups formed and it is not possible to say who would have dominated the work in a mixed group. Generally, it can be said that boys dominated the lesson slightly as, although the number of turns spoken was not very different, boys spoke longer than girls.

	Boys		Girls	
	Total	Average	Total	Average
Turns allocated by the teacher.	32	5.3	28	4
Turns taken without being given the permission to speak.	16	2.7	18	2.6
Time spoken (seconds)	150	25	120	17.1
Feedback (negative)	3	0.5	4	0.6
Swearing	1	0.2	0	0
Minimal responses	3	0.5	3	0.4
Interrupting somebody	3	0.5	0	0

Table 1. The results of the first lesson.

The results presented in Table 1 showed that boys spoke more in the first lesson, 25 seconds per lesson on average compared to girls' 17.1 as they were allocated more turns to speak by the teacher. The time of playing the board game was not taken into account as only one group chose the places close to the camera. It was clear that the teacher tried to treat the students equally and make sure that everybody could speak – for example, at one point during the individual work she asked who had not had a chance to answer yet. During the board game she monitored the work of the boys more (eight times compared to the six times she went to a girls' group). It might be that boys were louder while playing and the teacher felt that in order to control the situation, she had to pay them more attention. During the individual work she helped girls more (three girls, compared to one boy) as girls asked for help whereas boys remained silent and worked on their own.

Taking the floor without the teacher's permission was quite even, 2.7 and 2.6 times respectively. When girls took the floor, they either asked for the spelling of a word or for clarification regarding the task or answer. Once a girl snapped at a male classmate who tried to take the floor that it was not him who the teacher had asked. Boys, on the other hand, spoke

while giving answers when the teacher did not allocate a turn to them (once) or mainly just to get the teacher's or classmates' attention or approval. For example, when the teacher translated a sentence that one of the boys had just said, Mario interrupted her:

Mario: Sa jäädki tõlkima, kui sa sõnaraamatut kasutad (0.7) teksti jaoks

Teacher: mhh?

Mario: Kui sa teksti tõlgid sõnaraamatuga, sa jäädki tõlkima (0.3) Kui sa igat sõna otsid.

Teacher: .hhh ((rolls her eyes)) It doesn't mean that you look up EVERY word...you just have to look up SOME words ((turns to the next student))

In another situation the same boy once again tried to get everybody's attention:

Teacher: If you:: (2) did your homework the teacher would be happy but unfortunately you didn't (0.7) do your homework.

Mario: ((looks at this workbook)) I did it.

Teacher: hh I know

Mario then smiled at the teacher and looked around, but got no reactions from the classmates, so he focused on the task instead.

Another male student commented on an answer given by a female classmate:

Teacher: What would you do if you needed a lot of money very quickly (0.2) Mia?

Mia: ((giggles)) eee (0.2) if I needed a lot of money quickly, I would (.) aaa (.) aa (.) rob somebody.

Peeter: Issand jumal. ((the others giggle))

Juuli: ((smiles scornfully)) Mis sa siis ütleks?

Peeter: Ma ütleks, et ma müüks auto ((starts giggling)) maha või midagi

Mia giggles.

Juuli: ((giggles)) tal ((points her hand at Mia)) ei ole midagi maha müüa ju

Teacher: OKAY? ((Puts her finger on her mouth)) Shh! Shh!

To give positive feedback the teacher either used a minimal response *mhm* or repeated the sentence that the student had just said and the amount of positive feedback did not differ based on gender. Both genders also received a relatively similar amount of negative feedback. However, the way it was given was different. For misbehaving girls, the teacher either placed her finger on the mouth or quietly knocked on the student's desk. Only once did she turn to a girl by using her name and told her to stop packing whereas with boys she either sighed deeply and called out the boy's name in a loud voice or emphasised what was wrong.

Almost no foul language was used during the lesson. Only once did a boy quietly use an inappropriate word which did not receive any attention from the teacher and the classmates.

2.3.2 The second lesson

In the second lesson the topic was again conditional sentences. First the teacher gave feedback on the tests and as the results had not been so good, after some practising (students had to fill in the gaps and read out the answers) a new one was taken.

	Boys		Girls	
	Total	Average	Total	Average
Turns allocated by the teacher.	15	2.5	9	1.3
Turns taken without being given the permission to speak.	31	5.2	27	3.9
Time spoken (seconds)	165	27.5	91	13
Raising a hand	3	0.5	2	0.3
Minimal responses	4	0.7	4	0.6
Interrupting somebody	1	0.2	1	0.1

Table 2. The results of the second lesson.

The results (Table 2) showed that this time both genders took the floor more than in the first lesson and that the boys spoke more than the girls again. It might be that the number of turns taken was higher because in the first lesson students were playing in groups and it was impossible to follow who and how many times took the floor, but in the second lesson a lot of frontal work was done. This time the difference in speaking time was significant. On average, each boy spoke twice as much a girl. The boys were more cooperative and active whereas the girls preferred to sit quietly and not speak up. For example, a boy noticed a mistake in the exercise and politely pointed it out:

Peeter ((raises his hand)) I have one question

Teacher ((puts the cap on the marker)) So::? ((goes to Peeter and looks into his notebook))

Peeter: The last exercise (0.3) ((points at the exercise)) What word will I put there?

Teacher: .hh aa
 Peeter: My logic?
 Teacher >no no no< I have the words (0.5) somewhere? ((moves back to her desk and opens the computer))
 >I didn't think about it< it was a multiple choice exercise (0.3) Nice one \$ we will get there:: ((turns to the whiteboard and smiles))

It was clear that the teacher tried to involve the girls more. When a girl raised her hand or commented on something, she always got the teacher's attention. Whenever a girl complained or was in trouble, the teacher reacted and headed towards the girl to help her. However, when a boy raised his hand, the teacher noticed it only once out of the three times.

Surprisingly, it was the girls that needed disciplining in that lesson as they were not paying attention to what the teacher was saying. To do that, the teacher either raised her voice or pointed out what was wrong:

Mia ((slowly *melts* under the table))
 Teacher: MIA
 Mia: \$Sorry? ((gets back up and sits normally))
 ((Johannes comments something very quietly))

A couple of minutes later the same girls again got the teacher's negative attention:

Juuli ((knocks on Mia's back)) ()
 Mia ((turns to Juuli)) ()
 Teacher: followed by present simple (.) MIA (.) she needs to listen,
 Mia: ((nods)) mhm

Joking seems to be a boy thing in this class. Mario, again, tried to get everybody's attention, but no one reacted and so he settled down:

Teacher: If I were you:: >I would leave right away<
 Mario ((makes the movements as if he is going to leave and looks at Peeter and Mia to see if they think it is funny))

2.3.3 The third lesson

Everybody was present in the third recorded lesson. Prior to the lesson, the students had finished the oral part of their level test in Russian and because of that they were extremely anxious at the beginning and took the floor more than usual.

The topic of the lesson was connected to risky behaviour. Although the lesson was based on workbook and textbook activities, it included a lot of discussion on which behaviours are risky and why and which behaviours the students are involved in, so the students got lots of opportunities to speak.

	Boys		Girls	
	Total	Average	Total	Average
Turns allocated by the teacher.	23	3.8	24	3.4
Turns taken without being given the permission to speak.	62	10.3	31	4.4
Time spoken (seconds)	335	55.8	232	33.1
Raising a hand	9	1.5	4	0.6
Minimal responses	0	0	3	0.4
Interrupting somebody	12	2	4	0.6

Table 3. The results of the third lesson.

The results (Table 3) showed that girls were more patient and willing to wait for their turn. However, when the teacher did not react to a raised hand straight away, the boys did not wait for the permission to speak, but took the floor and said what they wanted to say. Dangerous and risky things might be appealing to boys and not so interesting for girls which might be the reason for girls not speaking so much. In addition, during the lesson the teacher asked 14 questions without saying who was to answer them and nine questions were quickly answered by male students.

The reactions to the jokes from the classmates and the teacher seem to depend on the joker. During this lesson three boys stood out with trying to be funny.

Teacher: Yes? Johannes?

Johannes: >Having a bad relationship with your mother< \$

Teacher: Having a bad relationship with your mother (0.2) is a risky behaviour for a teenager? = Johannes \$ Yes

Teacher: Why?

Johannes: .hh The mother can throw you out () or (0.5) () >do stuff<

Peeter: Or punch you with a pan \$
 Everybody laughs, including the teacher.
 Teacher: Does it happen? often Peeter that your mother punches you with a pan? \$
 Peeter: No.
 Johannes: Yes
 Peeter laughs and looks at Johannes. The others also giggle.
 Teacher: Okay?

In the second situation no one reacted, only the teacher sighed and rolled her eyes:

Teacher: Would you like to ride any of these? (0.6) °Kuslap°
 Mario: You don't ride a haunted house \$
 Teacher: .hh ((rolls her eyes)) okay? = Mario looks around to see other's reaction.

When Peeter and Johannes make a joke, both the teacher and the classmates either smile or giggle, but when Mario makes a joke, the teacher just rolls her eyes and the others do not react at all. It might be that everybody is tired of Mario's joking or that Mario is not so popular among the classmates, whereas Peeter and Johannes do not joke excessively and have not tired everybody out.

2.3.4 The fourth lesson

In the fourth lesson two girls were absent, so there were six boys and five girls. The topic of the lesson was again connected to risky behaviour. The lesson began with checking the homework which was followed by writing a 75-word description of a risky or dangerous situation and reading a text and doing tasks based on it. The lesson did not provide many opportunities for speaking as the teacher did not ask a lot of questions or allocate turns as most of the time students were either writing or reading and doing exercises on their own.

	Boys		Girls	
	Total	Average	Total	Average
Turns allocated by the teacher.	7	1.2	5	1
Turns taken without being given the permission to speak.	60	10	40	8
Time spoken (seconds)	192	32	76	15.2
Minimal responses	8	1.3	6	1.2
Raising a hand	2	0.3	1	0.2
Interrupting somebody	3	0.6	1	0.2

Table 4. The results of the fourth lesson.

The results (Table 4) showed that although the teacher allocated a relatively equal number of turns for speaking, boys were more active and took the floor more often by either commenting on the others' ideas or sharing their ideas on what they were writing about with the whole class. However, floor taking was done by a set of boys and girls. There were five students (three boys and two girls) who did not take the floor at all. One of the boys only spoke to the teacher when he went to the teacher's desk with his rough notes, but he did not open his mouth in front of the whole class.

The lesson showed once again that the teacher treats students of different genders differently: with boys the teacher used a loud voice and pointed out what was wrong, but with girls she was gentler. When two girls were not paying attention, the teacher did not raise her voice, but indicated quietly that she was not happy with what was going on:

Teacher: hobbies
Mia ((turns to Maali and shows something)) ()
Teacher: .hh yes Mia? ((sighs))
Mia: (mhm) I know
Teacher: OK? Take number five.

However, it was clear that the teacher became irritated with the boy trying to argue with her:

Teacher: So? you can take the rough notes into your notebook? (2) and then? (0.3) I will give you a small pap- = Mario: ((stretches his arm out))
Teacher: ((points her hand to the notebook)) ROUGH NOTES INTO THE NOTEBOOK?

Mario: Why?

Teacher: Because I would like you to (0.3) at least take notes of what you write ((voice shows irritation))

Mario: ()

Teacher: ((takes a deep breath)) Take notes? I'm not going to argue with you (0.3) you will survive.

2.3.5 The fifth lesson

All 13 students were present in the fifth lesson. The lesson began with checking homework. It was done from the screen, so the teacher did not allocate any turns to speak during that time. The rest of the lesson was spent on an activity called “Man overboard” where students were assigned roles and they had to justify why they should not be thrown overboard of a sinking lifeboat. Turns taken without being given the permission to speak came from either commenting on something while checking the answers of the homework or reacting while somebody was saying why he or she should not be kicked overboard and who should be sacrificed.

As the teacher only allocated turns when saying who was supposed to start saying why he or she should be left alive and who could ask a question (students raised their hands to show that they wanted to ask something), there were three students (two boys and a girl) who got almost no chance for monitored practice in that particular lesson. Due to the number of roles (10) they were in pairs in the speaking activity. In one pair the boys decided to divide the arguments and so both said at least one thing, but in other pairs only one person did the speaking. For one girl, the only sentence in the lesson was when she had to say whom she would throw overboard.

	Boys		Girls	
	Total	Average	Total	Average
Turns allocated by the teacher.	40	6.7	37	5.3
Turns taken without being given the permission to speak.	64	10.7	29	4.1
Time spoken (the beginning of the lesson, seconds)	85	14.2	79	11.3
Time spoken (Man overboard, seconds)	164	41	309	51.5
Questions asked (Man overboard)	26	4.3	20	2.6
Minimal responses	1	0.2	2	0.3
Interrupting somebody	22	3.7	8	1.1

Table 5. The results of the fifth lesson.

The analysis (Table 5) showed that, similarly to the previous lessons, boys tended to dominate the class as they took the floor more often, 10.7 turns on average compared to 4.1 turns taken by the girls. However, girls gave lengthier answers in the task where they could speak without being interrupted by someone. The average time for a girl to say why she should be kept on board and answer classmates' questions was 51.5 seconds which was 10 seconds longer than a boy's answer.

The lesson showed that not only did girls speak longer when they were given a chance to speak with relatively little interruption, but they were also cooperative. The questions they asked from the others were connected to the topic and the aim was not to confuse the speaker but to figure out whether the person should be given the chance to stay in the lifeboat. For example, a boy asked a girl who got the role of a mother of 12 children how her last child-birth went, whereas a girl asked about the age of the oldest child and from a boy who was in the role of a child another boy asked if he was African but a girl asked if he ate much.

Similarly to the previous lessons, the teacher's interaction with the girls was more positive. None of the girls' names was called out in this lesson and even if they received a disciplinary comment for interrupting somebody, the teacher smiled at them and spoke in a normal voice. During the whole lesson only one boy was called to order by using his name.

When Mario was trying to make fun, the teacher did not appreciate it:

Teacher: MARIO? (0.3) everybody has to (0.3) fight for (0.2) hi:s (0.1) or her (0.1) life?

Mario: ()

Teacher: Mario? if you want to do >it this was way< then the door is there. and you will make life easier for us.

No other student was disciplined by calling out his or her name; the teacher only placed a finger on her mouth and said *Shh* or whispered the name of the student who was not listening.

2.3.6 The sixth lesson

There were 11 students in the last lesson as one girl and one boy were missing. The lesson dealt with the advantages and disadvantages of being an exchange student. At first homework was checked. The teacher chose the student who read out the answers, five boys and four girls. It was followed by a discussion where students had to answer some questions related to the text they had read – girls were asked a question 11 times and boys 10. In addition, girls took the floor four times, compared to the five times when boys spoke without being asked to answer the question.

The results (Table 6) showed that although the teacher tried to give equal opportunities for speaking, boys dominated the class by taking the floor more often than girls. There were two girls who gave lengthier answers as they were interested in the topic, but boys took the floor more often and, therefore, an average boy spoke longer than an average girl.

	Boys		Girls	
	Total	Average	Total	Average
Turns allocated by the teacher.	29	5.8	32	5.3
Turns taken without being given the permission to speak.	21	4.2	14	2.3
Time spoken (seconds)	213	42.6	205	34.2
Minimal responses	6	1.2	2	0.3
Interrupting somebody	3	0.6	0	0

Table 6. The results of the sixth lesson.

In the second part of the lesson the teacher divided the students into mixed pairs (one was a mixed group of three). The observed pairs were formed so that a more proficient boy was put together with a more proficient girl, one formed a pair with a less proficient girl and one more proficient girl was together with a less proficient boy. All pairs had to discuss what could be the advantages and disadvantages of being an exchange student.

Both Peeter and Mari are academically stronger students, who understand the written and spoken English and are good at writing. Peeter is more active and likes to take part in discussions, whereas Mari is quiet and does not speak when the teacher does not ask her specifically. Peeter was more active in the discussion: he started the discussion and suggested six ideas compared to Mari's three. However, he seemed not to value Mari's ideas as he did not write them into his notebook.

Peeter: So? (0.7) (I think) the disadvantage is: the first one is that you have to repeat the class?

Mari: mm. yeah? ((both write the idea into their notebooks)) umm? (next one) is that you will get homesick.

Peeter nods, Mari writes her idea into her notebook, Peeter plays with his pen.

Peeter: Advantages? (0.6) (you'll learn) a language

Both write the idea into the notebooks.

In the second pair Mario is academically stronger than Juudit. Mario enjoys speaking whereas Juudit manages quite well with written tasks but often needs reassurance that she is doing something correctly. She tends to keep a low profile in speaking tasks when it is necessary

to speak in front of the whole class. The discussion was dominated by Mario who suggested seven ideas, Juudit used minimal responses to indicate that she agreed with Mario, but provided only one idea herself.

Mario: (you get) experience (.03) in school
 Juudit: Yea:h?
 Both write, Mario shows his notebook to help Juudit.
 Mario: () away from your family () terveks aastaks
 Juudit writes and nods.
 Mario: new knowledge?
 Juudit: mhm

Toomas and Arabella were the third observed pair. Arabella is a girl with good academic results who does not speak much in lessons (it might be because she has been in this particular group since September and the two groups are still not on good terms as they used to be different classes while in elementary school). Toomas finds English difficult: although he knows the words and grammar rules, he does not speak much in the lessons. When Toomas is asked a question, he panics and, most of the time, becomes red in face and just shakes his head and does not say a word. The discussion was dominated by Arabella who suggested six ideas. Toomas did not say a word during the time, only nodded and took notes.

Arabella: () out of your comfort zone.
 Toomas nods and writes.
 Arabella: you don't know the school (or the place) you go to so? you can go and actually a really bad experience with (the family) and school.
 Toomas writes.

2.4 Discussion

The thesis concentrated on finding out how much boys and girls get to talk in a foreign language classroom, if there is gender dominance in classroom talk and, if yes, whether girls or boys dominate the class and if and how teacher approval affects the discourse.

The results showed that in all six lessons boys dominated the class when it came to the speaking time. On average, boys spoke 32 seconds more in each lesson and took the floor almost

twice as often as girls. The only time girls spoke more and longer was during the activity called “Man overboard” when the teacher allocated the speaking turns, girls were interested in the task and gave lengthy explanations why their character should not be thrown overboard and did not come up with funny explanations.

The study found no proof to Hu’s (2012) claim that when the teacher does not pick a person to answer a question, girls will take the floor. The results showed that when the teacher asked a question without choosing the person to answer, boys answered the question and girls remained silent. The observations showed that even when the girls knew the correct answer, they stared at their notebooks or out of the window and did not volunteer to answer. It cannot be connected to the language level and character of the girls as none of them chose to answer without being told to whereas it was clear that those boys who have a more active personality, chose to take the floor, no matter their language skills. It might be that girls, in general, do not feel comfortable in speaking in a public context as suggested by Holmes (1992:132).

Although boys were the more dominant gender in the observed group, I have to agree with Sunderland (2000) and Myhill (2002) who emphasise that in each group there are also more reserved boys who do not contribute that much to boys’ dominance; the same goes for girls. The study showed that in this particular group there are three boys and three girls who participate voluntarily in discussions only minimally. Toomas, Jessica and Arabella gave an answer without being asked only once during the six lessons. Mari, Tobias and Kuslap spoke only when the teacher directed the question or the speaking turn to them specifically. Therefore, unfortunately these students do not get the needed opportunities to practise language in the classroom. The reasons behind this taciturnity might be the level of language or the person’s character. Toomas, for example, has the language skills but he becomes extremely anxious when he has to speak in a public context. When he is not entirely sure about the answer, he shakes his head and refuses

to answer and when he is confident about the answer, he speaks as briefly as possible. Jessica, on the other hand, does not have good enough language skills to express herself freely in speaking and so she rarely speaks without being asked to. Those who are shy and quieter by nature speak less in the lessons too. The best example here would be Mari who has enough language skills to express herself relatively freely on any topic, but speaks only when the teacher addresses her specifically. In the pair work with Peeter she let the boy start the discussion and then suggested her ideas, without saying anything off topic. In addition, in the board game about the conditional sentences there were two groups of girls. One group was formed by Jessica, Mari and Arabella who are quiet by nature and hence, during the task, they concentrated on the task and only produced the sentences needed for the game. The second group, consisting of Juuli, Maali, Mia and Juudit, however, spoke on different topics while playing the game; these girls are also more talkative and active outside the classroom.

As classroom is a formal and public setting, the results are consistent with Holmes (1992) who stated that males speak more in public contexts so as to demonstrate their knowledge and enhance the status in the group, and females speak more in the settings that they find comfortable. The observations showed that most of the girls were rather passive, they let the boys do the talking, did not interrupt them much and did not express their opinions much. It is unlikely that the girls spoke less because they did not find the setting comfortable as the observed group has been together for almost nine years (only two girls joined the group this school year) and they are used to each other. The reason behind the girls' relative passivity might have been, as suggested by Clarricoates (1987, cited in Chapman 2002:67), that they did not find the topic interesting as the discussion topics could have been chosen in a way that they would appeal to the boys so as to avoid disciplinary problems in the lessons. Girls were more active in the sixth lesson where they showed interest in the topic of being an exchange student

and were willing to express their opinions. Additionally, the reason might be that girls are afraid to speak in a public setting like a classroom, because they are afraid of making mistakes and feel that it is better to be quiet when you are not sure whether your answer is correct, so as not to be laughed at.

For increasing girls' contribution Holmes (1992) suggests encouraging them to attend actively, making sure that girls get an equal share of official talk, selecting topics that would give them the opportunity to excel and to contribute and providing opportunities for small group discussions. The case study showed that the teacher tried to give equal opportunities to talk, the difference in the number of turns allocated by the teacher was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). She tried to make sure that everybody has had a chance to answer by asking if everybody had said something. However, the study revealed that pair or small group discussions do not necessarily encourage girls to participate actively and speak more. It is more likely that the participation depends on the person's character and the language level as the pair work in the sixth lesson (p. 32 – 33) showed. In the three observed pairs there were two more proficient girls and one less proficient one. The more proficient girls (Arabella and Mari) contributed actively to the discussion, but the girl with the lower language level (Juudit) used only minimal responses to show that she agreed with her partner's opinion, she did not propose any ideas herself. She may not have felt comfortable while having to discuss the topic with the boy with better language skills and therefore avoided saying anything so as not to embarrass herself. When comparing Arabella's and Mari's contributions, it was evident that Arabella, who is not as shy and quiet as Mari, took the lead in the pair work and spoke more. She might have felt more comfortable in one-to-one conversation than Mari.

Women are said to use more minimal responses to indicate listener's positive attention to the speaker (Andersen 1999). The results of the present study showed no statistically

significant difference in using minimal responses ($p>0.05$), as both genders used them to show that they were listening to the teacher or to each other. For example, when the teacher asked Mia to stop talking to Juuli (p. 25), the girl nodded and said *mhm* to show that she heard and understood the teacher. In addition, when the teacher answered one of the boy's question, the boy also used a minimal response to show that he was listening. It might be that the students imitate the language used by the teacher as most of the times the teacher's first reaction while checking homework was a minimal response.

It has been claimed that boys interrupt others to get the opportunity to speak (Coates 2004) and girls listen to their classmates without interrupting (Leaper and Smith 2004). Such generalisations cannot be made based on the present study because there was no statistically significant difference in interrupting others ($p>0.05$). Interrupting might depend on the character as the study showed that those who are more active in general and like to share their ideas, for example Johannes, Mario, Juuli and Maali, interrupt the classmates and the teacher more whereas the quieter students do not interrupt others. It does not seem to depend on the language level and skills as neither Mari and Kuslap, who are academically stronger, nor Tobias or Jessica, academically weaker students, interrupted others.

It has been argued that boys are perceived to be a more entertaining gender (Baxter 2002a) who try to be cool and fool around in order to get the attention of the teacher and other students (Baxter 2002b; Coates 2003:53). The present study also indicated that this kind of behaviour is more common to boys than girls as boys made more jokes in the lessons. The best example would be the behaviour of Mario who either took the floor to say something witty (p. 23, p. 27) or tried to act in a funny way (p. 25). Although the only reactions he got were the teacher's disciplinary comments, it was clear that he was looking for his classmates' approval as the recordings showed that he always looked around to see if his classmates were laughing.

In addition, the questions asked in the “Man overboard” activity also showed that most boys probably aimed at having fun whereas girls took the task seriously as their questions were more serious.

Previous studies (Sadker and Sadker 1994, Younger et al 1999, Davis and Kasama 2004) have shown that boys’ dominance is achieved in cooperation with the teacher as teachers pay more attention to boys so as to maintain control in the classroom. The results of the present study indicate the same in the observed group. Although there was no statistically significant difference in the number of turns allocated to boys and girls ($p>0.05$), the observations showed that whenever a boy was doing something that he was not supposed to be doing (talking to a classmate, checking his phone, looking out of the window), the teacher immediately tried to get him to focus on the work again and asked him a question. The same thing did not happen when a girl was not paying attention. It is possible that the teacher did not see the girls as potentially disruptive and did not feel that she needed to force them to focus all the time. It is also consistent with Sadker and Sadker (1994) and Beaman et al’s (2006) findings that boys are given more opportunities to answer in order to maintain discipline in the lesson.

Previous studies (Stalling 1979; Younger et al 1999; Julé 2002) have shown that although boys get the majority of teachers’ attention, the interaction with girls is often more positive. The results of the present study also showed this as the teacher let the girls get away with things that she did not tolerate in case of boys, for example chatting with a classmate. The teacher smiled at girls more often and, when they misbehaved, she either placed a finger on her mouth or said *Shh* quietly. She raised her voice and said the girl’s name in a disciplinary comment only six times during the observed lessons. It is consistent with Younger et al’s (1999) findings that girls would be ignored when talking whereas boys would be shouted at or sent out for talking. The teacher did not send anybody out of the classroom but she raised her voice at

boys more and gave them more disciplinary comments. However, rejecting boys' behaviour also seems to depend on the character as it was evident that some boys, for example Peeter, were allowed more than the others. It is possible that the teacher is willing to accept some level of disobedience from those boys who are generally conscientious and hard-working. It can be concluded that teacher's approval affects gender dominance as boys' behaviour forces teachers to pay more attention to them and that results in boys getting more opportunities to speak.

Sunderland (1998) and Julé (2002) have argued that girls do not get many opportunities to speak and their utterances are more likely ignored by the teacher. There was no statistically significant difference in being ignored by the teacher in this study ($p > 0.05$). The observed lessons showed that the teacher ignored those students more who tended to interrupt others probably because she tried to give the others a chance to speak. Also, it was evident that the teacher was more likely to ignore those boys who stood out as jokers (Johannes, Mario). She may have been tired of the constant joking and hoped that when she paid no attention to them, they would stop fooling around and focus on the work.

In conclusion, the study showed that boys dominated the lessons, regarding the time and turns taken, and it was achieved in cooperation with the teacher who let the boys answer the questions or speak when there was the slightest sign that they were not listening or might cause disciplinary problems in the lesson. However, it was also evident that the dominance is achieved by a certain group of students who are also more active outside the classroom; it is not affected by their language skills.

CONCLUSION

Gendered speech has been a topic of interest for many researchers; both the amount of speech and linguistic variables and interactional patterns, such as minimal responses, tag questions, interruptions, have been studied thoroughly. Although it is stereotypically believed that women speak more than men, studies have shown that the number of words spoken during the waking hours is relatively equal (Mehl et al 2007). Men are said to be more willing to speak in public contexts as it gives them the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and enhance the status (Holmes 1992) whereas women speak more in contexts that they find comfortable, such as talking to a friend (Toohey and Scholefield 1994).

It is claimed that women use language for making a connection and men to achieve dominance. Women's speech is said to be politer than men's. They are said to use more minimal responses (Coates 2004; Zhang 2010) and tag questions (Holmes 1992) to indicate that they are listening to the speaker and to show interest in the conversation. Men, however, are said to swear more (Mehl and Pennebaker 2003; Beers Fägersten 2007; Coats 2021) and interrupt others more often than women (Sadker and Sadker 1994; Coates 2004) in order to show toughness and to achieve dominance.

Additionally, several studies have been carried out regarding gender in the classroom. Although there are some studies that have shown that girls are the more talkative gender in the lesson (Sunderland 1998; Leaper and Smith 2004; Zhang 2010; Hu 2012), generally boys are said to talk more in the classroom context (Stalling 1979; Becker 1981; Holmes 1995; Younger et al 1999; Francis 2000; Julé 2002). One of the reasons behind it might be that men are more willing to speak in public contexts (Holmes 1992). In lessons they not only speak more, but also interrupt the classmates and the teacher more often. Their dominance is achieved in cooperation

with teachers who pay more attention to boys due to their behaviour and treat boys and girls differently (Sadker and Sadker 1994; Younger et al 1999; Davis and Kasama 2004). Even though teachers pay more attention to boys, their interaction with girls is more positive (Stalling 1979; Younger et al 1999; Julé 2002). Girls are given fewer disciplinary remarks, teachers smile more often at them and they are more likely to get away with poor behaviour.

National Curriculum for Basic Schools (2011) states that by the end of the basic school students should be able to participate in oral communication, on a familiar topic without prior preparation and to be able to express themselves relatively fluently. In order to achieve it, students need opportunities to speak the learned language in the classroom as for many of them it is the only opportunity for monitored practice. Therefore, this thesis focused on finding out if there is an inequality in the amount of foreign classroom talk of boys and girls, if there is gender dominance in classroom talk and whether it is affected by teacher's approval.

A case study was carried out among year nine students to find answers to the research questions. Six lessons were video-recorded during the period of December 2022 and January 2023. Only those parts of the lessons were transcribed that included examples of behavioural and gendered differences in teacher-student interaction. In addition, characteristics, like turns taken and given, putting up a hand, using minimal responses, interrupting others were counted for each lesson.

The results of this study largely coincided with the findings of previous studies. The analysis showed that, in general, boys in the observed group participated actively and seemed to be a slightly more dominant gender than girls, speaking longer and taking the floor more often, although the teacher provided both genders with a relatively equal number of turns to speak. The only exception regarding the speaking time was the activity where the students had

to justify why they should not be thrown overboard: in that task girls spoke noticeably longer than boys.

None of the counted characteristics showed statistically significant differences from the perspective of gender. Therefore, it cannot be said that the boys in the observed group interrupt others more or girls' speech is politer because of using minimal responses. When it comes to interrupting others, the difference lay in how and when it was done. The analysis showed that the girls mainly interrupted others when they did not understand something and wanted to ask for clarification. Only once during the six lessons did a girl snap at a boy. Boys' interruptions aimed at having fun and trying to distract others which is also consistent with Baxter's (2002a) claim that boys are seen as the more entertaining sex. The analysis also showed that interrupting others is connected to the students' character, not to their gender: the more active students are not willing to wait for their turn and take the floor when they want to say something, but the quieter students wait for their turn to speak.

Additionally, the study showed that active participation, through what dominance is achieved, is affected by the character of a student, but not their language skills. Those who are shy outside the classroom also contribute less in class regardless of their gender or language skills. Therefore, it is important that the teacher provides students with equal opportunities for speaking and pays more attention to the quieter ones, the active ones will find the opportunity to speak themselves.

As suggested by previous studies, the study also aimed at finding out whether and how teacher's approval affects gender dominance in the classroom. The results revealed that the teacher did treat boys and girls differently as she tolerated the girls' misbehaviour more than the boys' and paid more attention to the boys, most probably in order to avoid disciplinary problems because the boys were louder and took the floor more often. Also, the teacher gave negative

feedback differently: disciplinary remarks given to the girls were mainly uttered in a low voice or given by placing a finger on her mouth whereas the boys' names were called out in a loud voice and a lot of attention was paid to the things they did wrong. Whenever a girl needed help, the teacher reacted right away, but the boy could be ignored by the teacher. It was also evident that the teacher's attitude towards boys depended on the person as those who did not try to be witty all the time received fewer disciplinary remarks when they were talking and misbehaving and received immediate help when needed.

It can be concluded that although boys dominated in the class, it is more likely that the dominance is connected to the character of the students and not their gender. In general, students with a more active character also speak more in the lessons and those who are quiet outside the classroom, remain reserved in the classroom. Therefore, in order for all students to achieve the ability to communicate in the learned language, it is important for the teacher to make sure that he/she pays more attention to the quieter students and provides them with more opportunities to speak.

These conclusions remain preliminary, to be confirmed, altered or discarded in the light of future studies as the present thesis has several limitations. As a case study of one group in one school, this study provides an illustration of the situation, but does not necessarily mean that the situation is the same in other groups. A replication of this study could be carried out among younger and older students to see whether the situation is the same or different and to see whether Warrington and Younger (2000) are correct when they claim that boys' domination is manifested in earlier years of study. In addition, a similar case study could be carried out in the 9th grades of different schools, to see whether boys' domination is a general characteristic of that age or if it describes only that particular group.

Additionally, it is possible that the author modified her behaviour with respect to giving opportunities to speak because she knew she was being videotaped and she was aware of the theoretical background of the study. Therefore, the same group could be studied in another subject, for example their Russian class where the teacher would not be aware of the theoretical background.

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APPENDIX 1. PARENTS' CONSENT

Lp Lapsevanem

Palun Teie nõusolekut, et viia läbi minu magistritööks vajalik uuring. Uuringu tulemusena valmib magistritöö, mille fookuses on suhtlus klassiruumis, s.t kuidas õpilased ja õpetaja omavahel suhtlevad. Magistritöö juhendaja on Tartu Ülikooli professor Raili Marling.

Uuringu läbi viimiseks salvestan 9. klassi I rühma inglise keele tunde detsembris 2022 ja jaanuaris 2023. Salvestused transkribeerin ning saadud tulemused üldistan nii, et õpilasi ei ole võimalik identifitseerida. Töös viidatakse õpilastele ainult tuvastamist mittevõimaldava koodiga. Salvestusi kasutan vaid mina ning säilitan neid ainult magistritöö kaitsmiseni. Pärast seda salvestused kustutatakse.

Kui Te ei ole nõus oma lapse osalemisega uuringus, töötab laps filmitavate tundide ajal iseseisvalt väljaspool klassiruumi.

Õp. Tuuli Saksa

Olen/Ei ole nõus oma lapse osalemisega uuringus. (Palun joonige sobiv variant)

Lapse nimi:

Lapsevanema nimi:

Lapsevanema allkiri:

Kuupäev:

APPENDIX 2. SCHOOL'S CONSENT

Pr xxxxx

Direktor

10.11.2022

Avaldus

Palun Teie nõusolekut, et viia xxxxx läbi minu magistritööks vajalik uuring. Uuringu tulemusena valmib magistritöö, mille fookuses on suhtlus võõrkeeles tunnis, s.t kuidas õpilased ja õpetaja omavahel suhtlevad. Magistritöö juhendaja on Tartu Ülikooli professor Raili Marling. Uuringu läbi viimiseks salvestan 9. klassi I rühma enda poolt läbi viidavaid tunde detsembris 2022 ja jaanuaris 2023. Salvestused transkribeerin ning saadud tulemused üldistan nii, et õpilasi ei ole võimalik identifitseerida. Töös viidatakse õpilastele ainult tuvastamist mittevõimaldava koodiga. Salvestusi kasutan vaid mina ning säilitan neid ainult magistritöö kaitsmiseni, pärast seda salvestused kustutatakse.

Tuuli Saksa

APPENDIX 3. TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

Transcription conventions

- (0.5) The number in brackets indicates a time gap in tenths of a second.
- (.) A dot enclosed in a bracket indicates a pause in the talk of less than two-tenths of a second.
- = The 'equals' sign indicates 'latching' between utterances.
- [] Square brackets between adjacent lines of concurrent speech indicate the onset and end of a spate of overlapping talk.
- .hh A dot before an 'h' indicates speaker in-breath. The more h's, the longer in-breath.
- hh An 'h' indicates an outbreath. The more h's, the longer breath.
- (()) A description enclosed in a double bracket indicates a non-verbal activity or comments.
- A dash indicates the sharp cut-off of the prior word or sound.
- : Colons indicate that the speaker has stretched the preceding sound or letter. The more colons the greater the extent of the stretching.
- () Empty parentheses indicate the presence of an unclear fragment on the tape.
- (guess) The words within a single bracket indicate the transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance.
- . A full stop indicates a stopping fall of tone.
- , A comma indicates 'continuing' intonation.
- ? A question mark indicates a rising inflection. It does not necessarily indicate a question.
- und Underlined fragments indicate speaker emphasis.
- CAP Words in capitals mark a section of speech noticeably louder than that surrounding it.
- ° ° Degree signs are used to indicate that the talk they encompass is spoken noticeably quieter than the surrounding talk.
- > < 'More than' and 'less than' signs indicate that the talk they encompass was produced noticeably quicker than the surrounding talk.
- Arrows in the left margin point to specific parts of an extract discussed in the text.
- \$ This sign indicates smiley voice.

RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Tuuli Saksa

Competing discourses in the classroom

Võistlevad diskursused klassiruumis

Magistritöö

2023

Lehekülgede arv: 53

Annotatsioon:

Üheks võõrkeeleeõppe eesmärgiks on saavutada suutlikkus suhelda õpitavas keeles nii kirjalikult kui suuliselt. Õpitavas keeles suhtlusvõime saavutamiseks peaks kõikidel õpilastel olema tundides võimalus rääkida, sest see võib olla nende ainult võimalus kontrollitud harjutamiseks, kuid uuringud on näidanud, et poistel ja tüdrukutel võrdsed võimalusi harjutamiseks pole. Käesoleva uuringu eesmärk oli selgitada välja, kas poiste ja tüdrukute kõne võõrkeeles tunnis on sooliselt ebavõrdne räägitud ajas ja kõnevoorude arvus ning kas klassiruumis domineerivad poisid või tüdrukud. Samuti oli eesmärgiks selgitada välja, kas ja kuidas mõjutab õpetajapoolne heakskiit diskursust.

Töö koosneb sissejuhatuses, kahest sisupeatükist ning kokkuvõttest. Töö sissejuhatuses on toodud uurimustöö põhjendus, töö eesmärgid ning ülesehitus. Esimeses peatükis annab autor ülevaate keele ja soo valdkonnas läbi viidud uurimustest. Ülevaade antakse keelelistest erinevustest meeste ja naiste kõnes, keskendudes uurimustele soost klassiruumis. Teine peatükk räägib soost ja keelekasutusest inglise keele tundides. Esmalt kirjeldatakse uuringus osalejaid, keskkonda ning metodoloogiat, seejärel üheksanda klassi õpilaste seas läbi viidud uurimuse tulemusi.

Analüüs näitas, et uurimuses osalenud grupis domineerivad üldiselt poisid, kes rääkisid tundides rohkem nii ajalises kui ka kordade arvus. Domineerimine saavutatakse koostöös õpetajaga, kes küll andis nii poistele kui tüdrukutele võrdselt võimalusi rääkida, kuid analüüs näitas, et poisid said võimaluse rääkida, kui tekkis oht, et nad hakkavad tunnikorda rikkuma. Samas näitasid tulemused, et kuigi suurem osa õpetaja tähelepanust läheb poistele, on tema suhtlus tüdrukutega positiivsem. Valdav osa korralekutsuvatest märkustest oli suunatud poistele, tüdrukutele õpetaja naeratas rohkem ning kui tekkis vajadus kellegi käitumise kohta märkus teha, tehti seda leebemalt ning vaiksemal häälel.

Märksõnad: soouuringud, suhtlus klassiruumis, sooline ebavõrdsus, inglise keele õpetamine

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