


**GENDER-BASED APPROACHES TO EFFECTIVE  
SPEECH ACQUISITION**
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**ABSTRACT**

*The pursuit of effective speech skills is a universal goal in education, yet the paths to achieving this competency are not identical. This article argues that a single pedagogical model is fundamentally insufficient to address the complex interplay between gender socialization and language acquisition. It highlights the need for the formal recognition and implementation of gender-based approaches as an essential dimension of effective pedagogy. The term “gender approaches” is defined not as reinforcing essentialist stereotypes but as a sensitive and nuanced framework that recognizes the deeply embedded social and communicative patterns students bring into the learning environment. Drawing on key works in sociolinguistics, educational psychology, and feminist pedagogy, the article examines how gender norms shape communicative confidence, collaborative interaction, and rhetorical self-perception. Furthermore, it argues that by integrating awareness of these gendered dimensions, teachers can not only mitigate participation gaps but also actively empower all learners. The ultimate goal is to develop a pedagogical ecosystem that uses the concept of gender socialization as a tool to unlock the full speech potential of every student, transforming a potential barrier into a powerful educational resource.*

**Introduction.** Mastering complex speech skills is a critical stage in personal, academic, and professional development. The ability to articulate sophisticated ideas, persuade diverse audiences, and engage in constructive dialogue is a powerful asset. For decades, standardized methodologies—implicitly assuming a universal learner—have dominated language and communication pedagogy. Although well-intentioned, these approaches often overlook the profound ways in which a person’s social identity mediates their engagement with learning. Among these identity factors, gender is one of the most influential, shaping behaviors, expectations, and interactions from early childhood.

The central argument of this article is that effective speech pedagogy improves significantly when instructional strategies are consciously designed to recognize and work

with, rather than against, the realities of gender socialization. A gender-based approach does not aim to confine learners to predetermined categories. On the contrary, its objective is liberation. It seeks to dismantle hidden barriers created by gender norms and to provide diverse sets of strategies that allow each student to navigate and master speech contexts. This includes creating equitable learning opportunities, bolstering confidence through the validation of varied communication styles, and explicitly teaching code-switching skills essential for success in different rhetorical situations.

The article first establishes the theoretical foundations of gendered communication patterns, then explores their practical implications in learning environments, and finally offers a concrete framework for implementing gender-based approaches that foster truly inclusive and effective speech development.

**Discussion.** Understanding the logic of gender-based approaches requires appreciating how deeply communication styles are woven into the fabric of gender identity. From a young age, individuals are socialized into specific behavioral patterns through continuous reinforcement and sanctioning. Children learn what is considered appropriate or inappropriate for their gender through interactions with family, peers, media, and educational institutions. This socialization process significantly shapes the development of their communicative repertoire.

Classic sociolinguistic studies—though sometimes criticized for overgeneralization—highlight broad patterns that remain relevant to classroom dynamics. For example, girls are often encouraged to engage in collaborative speech genres that prioritize building rapport, exhibiting empathy, and taking conversational turns. Their play frequently revolves around co-constructing narratives, negotiating social relationships, and using language for connection. In contrast, boys are often socialized into more competitive speech genres, using language as a tool to assert status, establish hierarchy, and convey factual information. Their activities tend to center on rules, outcomes, and dominance, with speech acts serving purposes such as issuing commands, challenging others, or boasting.

These divergent pathways lead to the development of distinct communicative strengths. Students socialized as female may exhibit strong skills in active listening, fostering group cohesion, and expressing subtle emotional or subjective perspectives. Their comfort zone is often dialogic and relational. Students socialized as male may find it easier to claim speaking time, deliver information declaratively, and engage in adversarial speech such as debate. Their strengths are typically monologic and transactional.

Crucially, traditional classroom formats—especially whole-class discussions—often favor one set of skills over the other. Confident, declarative styles may be misinterpreted as competence, while collaborative or exploratory styles may be misconstrued as uncertainty or lack of preparation. A gender-based approach begins with recognizing this. What appears to be a discrepancy in ability is frequently a mismatch between a learner's socialized communicative repertoire and the pedagogical demands of the task. Effective teaching therefore requires diagnostic sensitivity to these diverse starting points.

Gendered communication patterns manifest tangibly in language-learning classrooms. One of the most documented phenomena is the participation gap: in mixed-gender environments, male students often dominate open-floor discussions—speaking more

frequently, taking longer turns, interrupting others, and projecting authority. This behavior reflects a socially reinforced norm rather than superior knowledge.

Meanwhile, female and gender-nonconforming students may experience heightened linguistic anxiety. Fear of public failure intersects with gender expectations. A female student may hesitate to speak for fear of appearing overly aggressive, or may feel her contribution is undervalued if not delivered forcefully enough. A non-binary student may struggle to find their voice within a linguistic landscape structured around a rigid male–female binary.

Teachers play a substantial role in either mitigating or reinforcing these dynamics. Unconscious bias may lead teachers to interact differently with students based on gender. Research shows teachers often allow male students more wait-time after difficult questions, restate questions to help them succeed, and tolerate more interruptions. Conversely, when a female student gives a tentative or incomplete answer, the teacher may quickly move on, unintentionally signaling that her contribution lacks value. These micro-interactions accumulate into a powerful meta-curriculum over time.

Thus, the classroom is not a neutral container for learning but an active agent shaping linguistic outcomes through interaction with gender norms.

#### Implementing Gender-Based Approaches

Adopting a gender-based approach to teaching speech requires shifting from passive observation to active, strategic intervention. This pedagogical framework rests on three pillars: awareness, diversification, and explicit instruction.

1. **Critical self-awareness.** Teachers must examine their own bias patterns through reflective practice—analyzing video recordings of lessons, observing participation patterns, reviewing who they call on, and exploring differential reactions to students' responses. The goal is to uncover unconscious patterns that may privilege one communicative style over another.

2. **Diversified classroom activities and assessments.** Relying on a single mode of speaking inevitably advantages those whose socialization aligns with that mode. A gender-based approach intentionally employs a wide range of speech tasks so that all students can use their strengths while expanding their competencies.

Collaborative tasks—small-group debates, think-pair-share activities, peer-feedback sessions—provide safer spaces for students who excel in relational communication. Meanwhile, structured low-stakes presentations and moderated debates can gradually help collaborative communicators build confidence in assertive speech.

3. **Explicit meta-communication.** This is the most transformative pillar. Teachers make the hidden curriculum of communication visible. By analyzing transcripts, speeches, interviews, and cross-cultural styles, students learn that different strategies are effective in different contexts—not inherently superior or inferior. This metalinguistic awareness empowers learners to view their natural style as a rhetorical strategy rather than a weakness. It frames code-switching—the ability to adapt communication to audience and purpose—as the ultimate mark of mastery.

**Conclusion.** The journey toward mastering effective speech is deeply personal, tied to one's sense of identity and place in the social world. Overlooking the gender dimension of this process means ignoring a foundational force shaping how students perceive themselves as

communicators. As shown in this article, gender socialization produces distinct communicative repertoires that, when interacting with traditional pedagogical practices, may systematically advantage some learners while disadvantaging others.

A gender-based approach to speech mastery is not about reinforcing stereotypes. It is a complex and equitable pedagogical practice that requires teachers to see the whole learner and the social and cultural baggage they carry into the classroom. By grounding instruction in awareness, diversification, and explicit teaching, educators can transform the language classroom from a site of reproduced inequalities into a laboratory of democratic communication. In such a space, every learner can find their authentic voice, value the voices of others, and navigate the complex rhetorical landscapes of the modern world with confidence and competence. The goal is not to eliminate difference but to leverage it—to ensure that the path to eloquence is open to all.

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