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The Impact of Gender of People's Learned Language on Their Mother Tongue Habitual Thinking Patterns

Davood Madani, Ph.D. Scholar
Islamic Azad University, Khomein Branch, Iran

Fatemeh Aziz Mohammadi, Ph.D.
Islamic Azad University, Arak Branch, Iran

Mahsa Kayedian
Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch
Arak, Iran

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Abstract

This study is intended to investigate the impact of gender of peoples' learned language on their mother tongue habitual thinking patterns. To reveal the link between gender and frequency use of the new habitual thinking patterns of new language on their mother tongue habitual thought, 80 (40 male,

40 female) Iranian students of universities were selected randomly. The data was gathered through Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT) and background questionnaires. Then the data was analyzed through Two-Way ANOVA to find whether the habitual thinking patterns of Iranian female students of English, Arabic and Turkish languages are more influenced by their majors of study in comparison to the influence of these learned languages on the male learners.
Key terms: gender, language learning, habitual thinking patterns

Introduction – Gender versus Sex Identity

In the general sense, the notions "sex" and "gender" are perceived to be synonymous and in some studies they are used interchangeably. But postmodernist scholars believe that *gender* is not a biological fact at all. According to Butler (1990), there are brute facts of biology and gender is a phenomenon which is brought into being when it is performed. In her own words, "Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a 'natural' kind of being" (Butler, 1990, p.32). Gender is therefore not something you acquire once and for all at an early stage of life, but an ongoing accomplishment produced by your repeated actions (Cameron, 2004).

One's *gender* is not equivalent to his/her *sex*; though, most of the time, building on the biological base he/she has from birth, he/she constructs it through his/her life with the experiences which take place first in the family, and then in society. One's social context and culture he/she lives in shapes his/her gender identity accompanied with unique individual experiences. As a consequence, every society has a distinct gender identity and any individual living in them may or may not comply with the presumed gender identity (as cited in Aslan, 2009).

Habitual Thinking Patterns

Habitual thinking patterns are patterns of thought (shared meanings that the members of a society attach to various phenomena, natural and intellectual, including religion and ideologies), patterns of behavior, artifacts (tools, pottery, houses, machines, works of art),

and the culturally transmitted skills and techniques used to make the artifacts (Liu Qingxue, 2003, as cited in D.W. Carroll, 2008, p.401). It's the kind of thought processes that comes easily or naturally to an individual (David W. Carroll, 2008).

Thinking for Speaking

Slobin (1991) argued that in the course of language acquisition, a person acquires a special kind of thought, what he calls "thinking-for-speaking". This is based on the idea that in the course of speaking we have to make cognitive decisions and patterns that our language provides us affect the way we think on line in order to speak. Accordingly people who speak different languages could follow different on line thought patterns. Concerning the second language acquisition, Slobin (1996) suggested that because each native language has its own influence on the thinking patterns of its speakers, they are resistant to restructuring in adult second language acquisition. In using native languages, speakers mostly make use of these categories and distinctions that have been provided by their languages. These patterns will affect the way second language learners perform in their target languages. That is, a kind of transfer of the patterns from source of languages will be traced in target language performance.

Many researchers who have discussed different conceptions as color perception (Berlin and Kay, 1969; Heider, 1972; Rosch, 1973; Clark and Clark, 1977; Lucy and Scweder, 1979; Kay and Kemptton,1984; Roberson, Davies and Davidoff, 2000; Kay and Rigier,2003 and 2006) and number terms which may influence thought processes (Hurford, 1987; Miura, 1987; Miura, Kim, Chang and Okamoto,1988; Miller, Smith, Zhu and Zhang,1995, Fuson, Smith, and Loci cero, 1997; Gopnik, 2001, as cited in D.W. Carroll, 2008), spatial terms (Choi and Bowerman, 1991 and 2001), and grammatical influence on cognition (A. H. Bloom, 1981 and 1984; Liu, 1985; Soja, Carey and Spelke, 1991; Carey, 2001; Brodistky, Schmidt, Phillips, 2003, as cited in D.W. Carroll, 2008) concluded language influences thought. Thus, in the current study, the researchers examined the gender influence on change and use of new habitual thinking patterns on their mother tongue situations. A question is raised as to who, males or females, prefer to use the patterns of new learning languages even in their mother tongue conversations.

Hypothesis of This Paper

H1: Learning additional Language effect on females more than males thought.

Methodology

Subjects

The participants were 80 Iranian students, 40 male and 40 female. They were all undergraduates majoring in English, Turkish, Arabic, group A, and Persian Language courses, Group B. They were students, whose native language was Persian and who received academic instruction in English, Turkish or Arabic for more than five years.

Materials

The following instruments were used:

a) A Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT) (Teacher Made Questionnaire, Cultural Patterns) to elicit the influence of learning new language on thought. It contained different contextual situations followed by a blank. The participants had to provide the appropriate responses of the speech acts investigated to fill in the blank and were asked to complete the dialogue as their own preference, not on what people say in Iran. All contexts in the test were controlled by situational variables, i.e., 'social distance' and 'power', and a culture-specific factor, three different levels of social distance represent different degrees of familiarity between participants.

b) A Background Questionnaire or Background Questionnaire Survey is the most commonly used method to obtain a snapshot of the conditions and events at a single point (Cohen and Manion, 1985).

Result and Discussion

1. ***Does an additional language affect more on males or female's thought?***

As far as the influence of gender was considered, the two-way ANOVA was employed in order to analyze the collected data. The statistical representation of analyzed data is given in the following tables:

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Dependent Variable: Score

Gender	Group1	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	B	10.00	.000	10
	A	13.90	1.689	30
	Total	12.93	2.246	40
Female	B	10.00	.000	10
	A	15.87	1.737	30
	Total	14.40	2.977	40
Total	B	10.00	.000	20
	A	14.88	1.967	60
	Total	13.66	2.723	80

▲ As Table (1) indicates, the mean scores of 30 male students of group A, Arabic, English and Turkish learners, were 13.90 and the mean scores of 10 male students of group were 10.00. Thus, there was significant difference between these two groups. And the standard deviation of their habitual thinking patterns of group A and B got equal with 1.689 & 0.000 respectively. Also, the total scores of male students thinking were 12.93 while females got 14.40. This meant male and female students differed on their thinking level.

Table 2
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Score						
Source	**Type III Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**	**Partial Eta Squared**
Corrected Model	415.721[a]	3	138.574	61.890	.000	.710
Intercept	9287.704	1	9287.704	4148.083	.000	.982
Gender	14.504	1	14.504	6.478	.013	.079
Group1	357.704	1	357.704	159.758	.000	.678
Gender * Group1	14.504	1	14.504	6.478	.013	.079
Error	170.167	76	2.239			
Total	15519.000	80				
Corrected Total	585.888	79				

a. R Squared = .710 (Adjusted R Squared = .698)

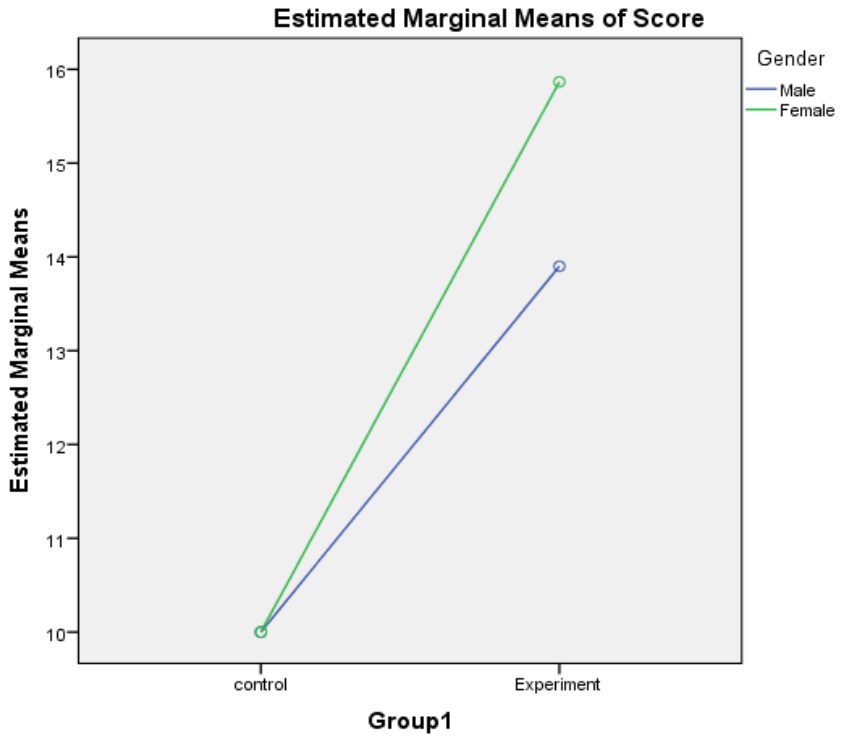
▲As indicated in Table 2, third row, the effect of gender on thought of learners had significant influence (F=6.478, Sig=0.13). That meant the mean scores of changes on habitual thinking patterns of males and females were different. Total of changes on females thought was higher than on males (14.40 & 12.93 respectively).

And in the fourth row the significant differences was observed between group A and B (F=159.758, Sig=.000). This meant the mean score of group A was 14.88 while the group B was 10.00. Therefore, both independent variables separately, group and gender, had influence on dependent variable.

The fifth row showed that two independent variables simultaneously had influence on changing habitual thinking patterns of learners. Another result of this table was R Squared. It showed two variables of gender and group could indicate .698 percent of dependent variable, change on habitual thinking patterns of learners and therefore, the rest of variance .302 of thought learners was influenced by the variables which this hypothesis had not studied.

Figure 1

Estimated Marginal Means of Separate and interactive effects of the independent variables (gender and group) on dependent variable, habitual thinking patterns



▲As indicated above, the mean score of females of group A was higher than all mean scores of female group B, male A and B groups. The mean score of male group A was higher than male group B as well. According to cut off both blue and green line of diagram, it may be concluded that the interaction of (synchronous) independent variables on the dependent variable of gender and language group had influenced. In other words, after learning a new foreign language, female learners' habitual thinking patterns changed more and more

individual females prefer to use the new habitual thinking patterns. Thus hypothesis was accepted.

Conclusion and Implication

In this research, the researchers wanted to show and emphasize that female learners are more influenced by learning new languages and they use the new habitual thinking patterns more. Thus we may conclude the female students are less affected by cultural interference in their use of the new language/s they learn. An analysis of variance (two-way ANOVA) was used to determine *Does an additional language affect more on males or female's thought?* Based on the results, (Table 6) the effect of gender on thought of learners had significant influence (F=6.478, Sig=0.13). That meant the mean scores of changes on habitual thinking patterns of males and females were different; total changes on females thought were higher than males (14.40 & 12.93 72 respectively). And also both independent variables separately, group and gender, had influence on the dependent variable.

Similarly the result of the present study supported the findings of Rezaie (2012) who worked on "A Cultural Study of the Effect of Language Transfer on Politeness Strategies employed by Iranian and Turkish Students" and suggested Iranian female learners of Turkish used more politeness strategies than Iranian male learners.

Tehrani et al. (2012) investigated the different primary and secondary strategies the Iranian EFL students use in different situations and the effect of gender on this. A questionnaire was developed based on Sugimoto's (1995) to compare the apology strategies used by male and female students. Only gender was examined as a variable. The results showed that the statement of remorse was the strategy most frequently used by male and female respondents across the sample and female participants used this strategy more frequently than male participants. Moreover, the four primary strategies used by the male respondents were accounts, compensation reparation, negative assessment of responsibility compensation, showing lack of intent to do harm, accounts, reparation (20%, 20%, 15%, and 10%, respectively). Male respondents tended to use negative assessment of responsibility more than their female counterparts (15% and 5%, respectively). Female respondents used the strategy of promise not to repeat offense in 10% of the situations, while their male counterparts did not use this strategy at all.

The difficulty faced by adult L2 learners has also something to do with the question of automatizing attention. Sometimes the concept is available, and L2 learners are aware of distinctions, but the problem is how to treat them automatically as native speakers do. Appropriate teaching strategies should be developed to train the learner to think as native-speakers do, and also do things to teach such automaticity.

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Davood Madani, Ph.D. Research Scholar
Islamic Azad University, Khomein Branch, Iran
Dr_madaniling@yahoo.com

Fatemeh Aziz Mohammadi, Ph.D.
Islamic Azad University, Arak Branch, Iran
F.Azizmohamadi@yahoo.com

Mahsa Kayedian
Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch
Arak, Iran
m.kayedian@yahoo.com