

# GENDERED PARTICIPATION AND VOICE IN AN ESL CLASSROOM: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF FEMINIST PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

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## Abstract

This study examined the application of the feminist critical pedagogy in a first-year ESL classroom with a particular focus on the impact of pedagogical practise on the gender of participation, voice, and agency. The objectives of the research include three points, to determine the feminist pedagogical strategies used in the classroom, to evaluate the effects of these strategies on the participation and interactions, and to understand the perceptions of female students towards empowerment and limitations. The qualitative case-study design was taken based on the theoretical framework of feminist critical pedagogy to pre-empt power, voice, and agency in the classroom interactions. Purposive sampling was used to select 15 students (8 women and 7 men) at a Pakistani public university. The data were gathered using classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, reflection journals, and teaching materials, and then explored using reflexive thematic analysis in order to find the patterns that remained constant across various sources of data. The results suggest that dialogic instruction, inclusive questioning, and co-operative learning increased participation and agency, but the success was determined by long-term mediation by the teacher and consideration of the sociocultural norms. The female students used strategic agency to cope with institutional and cultural restraints. The research suggests integrating reflexive and inclusive pedagogy, curriculum flexibility, and faculty development in power and engagement to facilitate equal education. The findings are empirically relevant to feminist pedagogy in ESL and serve as a source of information about both theory and practise.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The English as second language (ESL) classrooms are often described as neutral settings of the linguistic competence development. However, in empirical practise, classroom engagement is highly social; interaction patterns are determined by social identities and institutional conventions to complement language, proficiency. Interactional research shows that classroom talk is indicative of more hegemonic power relations with teachers making decisions and students

being positionable that results in someone having the right to talk and others being silent (Seedhouse, 2004; Walsh, 2011). These dynamics have the implication of fair learning directly, especially in classrooms where heterogeneous learners are present.

Gender is one of the most thoroughly studied social variables in the educational interaction research field. In the recent empirical studies on the topic of classroom participation, it is

established that gender determines the interactional patterns in the language learning scenarios. Indicatively, the research of teacher-student interaction in EFL classrooms reveals that direct interaction and positive feedback of instructors are more often provided to male students than to female, thus influencing not only the participation but also confidence and motivation (Hosseini and Amirkhani, 2025). The findings are congruent with the existing sociolinguistic research but highlight the ongoing inequalities that should be interrogated.

In spite of gendered participation which is documented in research, most of the literature which has been left behind is descriptive. Quantitative measures, like the frequencies of turn taking, reveal imbalance, but does not explain how the interactional practises and pedagogical choices produce or challenge the patterns (Seedhouse, 2004). The theoretical frameworks such as critical pedagogy assume that education is highly political and full of power; however, there is a paucity of empirical studies that implement such theoretical frameworks in actual ESL classrooms. Empirical studies based on action in allied language education settings have revealed that perspectives on critical and feminist infused pedagogies can transform the attitudes of learners and improve their engagement; however, similar studies are still rare in ESL classroom interaction studies (Granger and Gerlach, 2023).

Feminist critical pedagogy builds upon the critical educational theory by pre-empting power, voice, and agency, focusing on discussion and mutual authority in the classroom (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994). Feminist and critical perspectives have been utilised in language education research to investigate identity, social context and ideology, focusing on how inequalities can be reproduced or disrupted by pedagogical practises (Norton and Toohey, 2004; Alameddine and Chehimi, 2024). The lack of empirical data, which is at the state of real interaction, limits our knowledge of the way feminist critical pedagogical principles are applied in ESL classrooms and how learners experience them, even though it is conceptually relevant. The claims about empowerment are not

theorised and not well-evidenced without a systematic and classroom-based inquisition.

Therefore, the proposed study aims to go beyond the descriptive explanations of gendered participation by focusing on the application of feminist critical pedagogy to the interaction in the classroom in ESL. It reviews the pedagogical methods used and the manner in which they influence participation and voice and why learners view the methods as either empowering or oppositional. This kind of evidence is essential to the theoretical formulation in the field of applied linguistics, as well as the practical improving of the ESL pedagogy.

### 1.2. Statement of the Problem

It has always been a part of research records that there exist gendered patterns of participation during ESL classrooms; however, the ways pedagogy influences these patterns is an unexplored area. In most cases, male students take most of the floor time and the teacher attention and female students are less willing to talk (Holmes, 1998; Sunderland, 2000). Although feminist critical pedagogy has been suggested as remedy of such inequalities (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994), little research has empirically investigated its implementation in the classroom or what such implementation entails to the students (Pavlenko, 2001; Norton and Toohey, 2004). A strong research problem, as Creswell (2014) notes, has to clearly indicate a gap, prove its importance, and warrant the investigation. In the case of ESL education, the disconnect that is eminent is the lack of classroom-based evidence that explains what feminist pedagogy is practised, how it affects participation and interaction and why students feel it is empowering, limiting or contested. In the absence of this type of evidence, feminist pedagogy is bound to be reduced to a mere theoretical ideal instead of a practical intervention which can limit scholarly and pedagogical endeavours.

### 1.3. Research Questions

There are three research questions guiding the research in accordance with the what-how-why paradigm:

1. What critical pedagogical practises defined as feminist are practised in an ESL classroom?
2. What are the effects of such practises on gendered participation, voice and interactive dynamics?
3. What are the reasons why female students see these practises to be empowering, limiting, or disputed?

#### 1.4. Objectives of the Study

This research aims to address the following questions:

1. To determine the feminist critical pedagogical practises that are used in an ESL classroom.
2. To examine the ways in which these practises carry out gendered patterns of participation and classroom interaction.
3. To explain the perceptions of female students on agency, resistance and classroom authority in a feminist oriented pedagogical setting.

#### 1.5. Significance of the Study

The research idiosyncrasies in this study (whereby it pays a lot more attention to participation as a socially negotiated process than participation as a measurable outcome) contributes to applied linguistics since it throws light on the contribution of pedagogy towards reconstituting or disrupting gendered inequalities. It provides empirical evidence of feminist pedagogy at the classroom level in ESL, a field of research that has not been well represented yet. It also provides some useful information to ESL teachers and curriculum designers who want to know the evidence-based strategies that can promote inclusive involvement without assuming that empowerment is a given. By making feminist pedagogy a topic of empirical investigation instead of a moral obligation, the study opens wider theoretical discussions in relation to the interdependence of power and identity and classroom interaction. It questions the overlapping of pedagogical intentions with the perceptions of learners and resistance, and institutional constraints, and creates clear insights into the concept of inclusion, voice, and authority in language classrooms.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Feminist Pedagogy of Education.

Critical educational traditions have produced feminist pedagogy, which focuses on power, agency and voice in the learning spaces. It disputes top-down teaching and favours the dialogic, interactive classrooms where students participate in co-creation of knowledge (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994). Critical values include reflexivity, egalitarian teacher student relationships, and the marginalised voices. These values are based on a political dedication to fairness; however, feminist pedagogy is not unidimensional and has been developed with controversies on intersectionality, situated knowledge and the place of emotion and care in educating (Lather, 1991; Kumashiro, 2000).

The current literature affirms that feminist pedagogy cannot just fulfil the role of critique of the old systems of power but a practical orientation that transforms the practises of curriculum and engagement. To illustrate, Kumashiro (2015) predicts a pedagogy of refusal, which opposes the practises that make oppression the norm. This kind of research highlights education as having been a place of constant conflict and not resolution. Feminist pedagogy as discussed in the present discourses is contextualised in relation to the various cultural contexts that are understood to possess different traditions and historical circumstances that determine the connotation of participatory or inclusive.

This literature makes feminist pedagogy a theoretical and pragmatic orientation, but the majority of research is not within the field of language education or focuses on the beliefs of teachers instead of an actual classroom engagement.

### 5.2 Feminist Pedagogy in ESL / ELT

In ESL/ELT studies, feminist viewpoints have been used to conduct research on curriculum, instructional resources and teacher disposition but little is known regarding classroom based research studies. This is supported by empirical data showing that textbooks tend to reproduce gendered norms (Sunderland, 2000), and that the

beliefs of teachers concerning gender may have an influence on instructional decisions (Lucas and Katz, 2016). Nevertheless, the systematic studies of feminist pedagogical practises implementation in ESL classrooms are scarce.

Where empirical research is present it usually is qualitatively based with interviews and thoughtful descriptions instead of interactional analysis. An example is Akther (2023) which uses critical discourse analysis to discuss gender negotiation in EFL classroom talk and finds that structural and discursive constraints affect participation. However, these kinds of studies seldom put the analysis in the context of explicit feminist pedagogical principles (e.g., the notion of shared authority, dialogue interaction).

In addition, the majority of studies focus on teacher beliefs or learner perception separately. Very little evidence has been gathered to demonstrate the effects of feminist pedagogical orientations on micro-level classroom interaction (e.g., turn-taking, feedback patterns) and how learners react to these interactions in real-time. The areas like South Asian or Middle Eastern ESL classrooms are especially underrepresented, although the use of gendered norms is also relevant in these cultures.

### 5.3. Gender, Voice and Interaction in the Classroom.

One of the main issues of applied linguistics has been participation in classroom interaction. Interactional researches prove that the presence of interaction is mediated by an institutional role, social identities, and cultural norms (Mondada, 2018; Walsh, 2011). There is a considerable body of literature to suggest that there are gendered patterns of engagement: male students often make more turns and get more evaluative feedback, and female students may choose to participate less or give way to others (Holmes, 1998; Akther, 2023).

However, much of the gendered participation studies are based on quantitative methods, e.g. counting of turns or speaking time, which determine imbalance but does not explain the interaction processes that produce it. According to Seedhouse (2004) and Walsh (2011), the

process of counting is misleading and simplifies the dynamic and co-constructed process of interaction. In order to comprehend the negotiation of power and voice, it is important to examine the organisation of talk, distribution of turns and the way in which responses given by the teacher influence participation.

Recent research in EFL contexts (e.g., Hosseini and Amirkhani, 2025) illustrates some qualitative differences in teacher-student interaction correlating with gendered engagement patterns, which argues that pedagogical options affect the source of speech and the way of meaning-making. Nevertheless, these studies do not explicitly correlate their results with such feminist pedagogical values as shared power or joint construction of knowledge, thus creating a gap between the insights of interaction and the design of pedagogy.

All of this information determines three major gaps: (1) the lack of classroom-level research of feminist pedagogical practise in ESL classrooms; (2) the lack of integration of feminist theory and interactional studies; and (3) the lack of representation of different contexts in which gender norms come into contact with language pedagogy.

Although the imbalance patterns in gendered participation have been identified by the studies, they often do not have an explanation of how the interactional mechanisms may generate the patterns. Quantitative data, such as counts of turns, also displays differences, but fails to unravel the role of teacher choice, student placement, and classroom culture in defining participation (Seedhouse, 2004; Walsh, 2011). Recent qualitative research indicates that pedagogical decisions have an effect on interactional possibilities (Hosseini and Amirkhani, 2025; Akther, 2023), but these studies few of them relate interactional results with particular pedagogical precepts, including shared power and dialogue. This weakness constrains our knowledge about how and why participation tends to get gendered in practise, as opposed to the fact that it is gendered. This leads to the necessity to combine feminist critical pedagogy with interactional analysis in an

attempt to leave the descriptive descriptions behind and theorise the pedagogical processes that influence voice and agency in ESL classes.

## **6. Theoretical Framework**

This study is based on feminist critical pedagogy, which is another position that makes education the lack of knowledge exchange, but rather the negotiation of power. Feminist critical pedagogy builds on the dialogic education concept of Freire (1970) by making the gender relations of power and voice articulation visible (hooks, 1994). It requires mutual power among teachers and students, self-reflective awareness of social inequalities, and curriculum practises that recognise the experiences of learners.

The analysis is based on three fundamental principles:

### **6.1. Voice**

The construct of Voice is understood not only as the expression in words, but also as the form of recognition that helps to make learners play a significant role in classroom discourse and have their role in it properly recognised. Voice is also relational and it develops through interaction and it is influenced by power relationships (Norton, 2013). In the feminist critical perspective, the question is on who is given a speaking opportunity and how his/her contribution is perceived, and the patterns of voice are negotiated other than assumed.

### **6.2. Agency**

Agency refers to the ability of the learner to be deliberate in the pedagogical environment. Feminist pedagogy views an agency as situation-specific. It does not assume learners as passive receivers of classroom-based norms and meanings; instead, it acknowledges the active role that learners play in negotiating these meanings and norms (Norton and Toohey, 2004). Agency incorporates both the implementation and opposition of pedagogical practises.

### **6.3. Power**

Power is not dichotomous but ubiquitous and it creates participation in terms of norms, roles and

routines of interaction. Feminist critical pedagogy does not aim at abolishing power but simply making its functioning visible and negotiable. A power analysis scrutinises the ways in which teacher questions, patterns of feedback and practises of turn-allocation facilitate or restrict participation (Walsh, 2011).

In this context, feminist pedagogy is not a supplement but a perspective in which the interactional practise is defined. Therefore, classroom talk is examined under the consideration of the interaction of pedagogical choices with the constructs of power, voice and agency, not only to what is said but also to how, when and to whom they are addressed.

## **7. Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This research is qualitative in the sense that it is based on the qualitative case study design to examine the implementation of feminist critical pedagogy in an ESL classroom. The intensity of analysis of intricate social phenomena makes case study methodology especially suitable to analyse the classroom interaction, where gendered patterns of participation, voice, and agency are mutually constituted and depend on the variables of the context (Yin, 2018).

The design incorporates the critical approach within the study because it fits into the theoretical framework of the study. Feminist critical pedagogy requires studies that challenge the power relations and seek to explore who participates, how, and why (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994). Interactional practises, student perceptions and teacher choices can be studied in a manner that is impossible in quantitative methods, with the aid of qualitative methods. This design will make the study capture the lived experience of learners, and it will also be analytically rigorous.

### **3.2 Research Context**

The study was conducted in an ESL class in Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (a public university in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan). The institution is a classic example of a higher education environment in the area with big

classes, teacher-students hierarchy, and male-female traditions deep-rooted in society. These sociocultural aspects make it a relevant context to consider the feminist pedagogical interventions because the classroom practises and the student involvement is mediated by dominant norms of authority and gender, as well as the social expectation.

The ESL course included both women and men aged between 18 and 22 giving a chance to analyse the gendered patterns of participation and voice. The contextual context also facilitated observing how the feminist principles of pedagogical approach can be applied in a traditional educational setting, with its set of limitations on institutional norms and cultural expectations.

### 3.3 Participants

Purposive sampling allowed the selection of 15 students (including 8 girls and 7 boys) and it was important to focus on those students who could demonstrate regular attendance, interest in the study, and agreement to be observed in the classroom and interviewed. Purposive sampling would be the most suitable sampling method with the qualitative case study as it allows choosing participants with the highest probability of providing data that is the most relevant and rich (Patton, 2015).

The profiles of the participants included data on gender, English proficiency in the past and sociocultural background. The ethical aspects were followed strictly: all the participants gave an informed consent, guaranteed anonymity, and given the right to withdraw at any stage. The ethics committee at the institution reviewed and approved the study to make sure that ethical standards of research were upheld.

With only fifteen respondents, the sample size might seem small in terms of numbers but complies with the qualitative research principle that emphasises depth over breadth (Patton, 2015; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). The participants who were recruited through purposive sampling were those that had frequent class attendance and willingness to participate in the various sources of data (observations,

interviews, journals), to produce rich contextually sensitive information. It was analytic as opposed to statistical generalisation, i.e., the derivation of patterns and meanings by systematic comparison of cases. Data collection was completed until interpretive saturation was reached which was signalled by the repetition of thematic patterns and the convergence of identical patterns across sources of data which is a pointer that there is enough depth to cover the research questions in this context.

### 3.4 Data Collection

Various sources were used to collect data in order to conduct triangulation and increase validity:

#### 3.4.1. Classroom Observations:

The observations were based on interactional patterns, participation, and pedagogical strategies that were analysed fewer than eight classroom activities. Turn-taking, teacher intervention and student engagement were observed and recorded in the form of detailed field notes.

#### 3.4.2. Semi-Structured Interviews:

All participants were interviewed individually to obtain the perceptions of the practises in the classroom, the feeling of agency, and the experiences of the feminist pedagogical practises. The research questions and theoretical framework of the study informed the interview protocols.

#### 3.4.3. Teaching Materials:

Gendered representations and a chance to engage inclusively was studied in textbooks, handouts, and other materials.

#### 3.4.4. Student Reflections:

The learners did reflection journals to record their experience of learning, perceived obstacles, and knowledge of participation and voice. This information gave triangulation to the observations and interviews.

The multi-method design is suitable because of having a holistic view of enactment of feminist critical pedagogy and both observed practises and subjective experiences are captured.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was used to determine how the feminist pedagogical practises were implemented and experienced in the ESL classroom in a systematic way. This method was selected as it allows identifying patterns and patterns within several data sources and at the same time be sensitive to theoretical framework of feminist critical pedagogy, which preempts voice, agency, and power relations.

The analytic process had started with familiarisation of data in which all the interview transcripts, classroom observation notes, reflection journals and teaching materials were read repeatedly until a holistic understanding of the dataset was created. The first codes were made inductively with all the focus on the actions, interactions and reflections of the participants with reference to participation, turn-taking, silence, scaffolding and collaborative learning. Coding was used on all the sources of data in order to reflect recurrent trends and not one-off events.

The next step involved the clustering of codes into categories, and the narrowing of the categories into themes using the constant comparing approach. This entailed swinging between codes, categories, and the entire data to make sure that themes reflected the data well. This was informed by feminist critical pedagogy and concerned itself with issues of power relations, gendered pedagogies, and the relationality of voice and agency. Theory was not

forced but used as a prism to explain patterns and so that the results could be related in a meaningful way to what was already known in the literature.

In order to increase the levels of trust, a number of measures were adopted. Triangulation of data involved the comparison of various sources (observations, interviews, reflections, and teaching materials). Coding choices, theme formation, and reflexive information were recorded in analytic memos. The researcher also stood in a reflexive position whereby positionality is noted as an instructor and a researcher hence understanding how this can affect the interpretation. Lastly themes were revised against the entire dataset to support the coherence and confirmability of the results and this gave a clear audit trail to the Results chapter.

## 4. Results and Data Analysis

### 4.1 Results Related to Research Question 1

**RQ1: What feminist pedagogical practices are enacted in the ESL classroom?**

To answer RQ1, the thematic analysis of data obtained in the course of classroom observations, teaching materials, student interviews, and reflection journals were addressed in a systematic manner. The attention of the analysis was directed to the visible pedagogical practises instead of the intentions and beliefs of teachers. Three themes were dominant, including dialogic teaching, inclusive participation strategies, and collaborative learning practises.

**Table 1**

**Feminist Pedagogical Practices Identified in the ESL Classroom (RQ1)**

| Research Question                                     | Theme                  | Data Source                       | Representative Participant Quotes                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| RQ1: What feminist pedagogical practices are enacted? | Dialogic teaching      | Classroom observation; interviews | "The teacher asked us to explain our opinions, not just give the correct answer." (Interview, Student F3) |
|                                                       | Inclusive questioning  | Observation; reflection journals  | "Now the teacher calls everyone by name. Before, only some students answered." (Reflection, Student F1)   |
|                                                       | Collaborative learning | Teaching materials; reflections   | "Group work helped me speak freely. I did not feel shy." (Reflection, Student F2)                         |

**4.1.1. Explanation and Analysis of Table 1**

Dialogic teaching was also evident throughout the lessons and teachers encouraged elaboration and justified varied opinions. This observation is consistent with the Western studies that promote co-created knowledge and involvement of learners (Norton and Toohey, 2004; Walsh, 2011). Elyas and Picard (2010) document that dialogic strategies are applied selectively in the context of Middle East because of the institutional limitations, which is reflected in the data. According to Asian studies, hierarchical classroom norms frequently restrict dialogue despite the fact that the teachers specifically promote it (Kubota, 2004; Lin, 1999).

The second salient practise was inclusive questioning. Instructors intentionally switched the speaking order and directly addressed the female students, which interfered with the accustomed trends when males dominated. The same interventions in Saudi EFL settings have boosted female participation (Alshahrani, 2016), in Japan, teacher-mediated questions have helped the students to negotiate their participation despite hierarchical standards (King, 2013).

Higher-risk areas were created through group and pair exercises, which resulted in facilitating collaborative learning. Specifically, female learners could have negotiated meaning with their peers instead of being dependent on teacher validation. The result is consistent with the studies by hooks (1994) and Chun (2016), who emphasise the importance of organised peer interaction in the process of agency formation. The contextual adaptation can also be seen: the feminist practises were internalised to some extent, depending on the intervention of teachers and the culture of classroom.

**4.2 Results Related to Research Question 2****RQ2: How do feminist pedagogical practices shape student participation and voice?**

In the case of RQ2, the patterns of interaction analysed were turn-taking, silence and teacher mediation.

**Table 2****Impact of Feminist Pedagogical Practices on Participation and Voice (RQ2)**

| Research Question                                    | Theme                        | Data Source             | Representative Participant Quotes                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| RQ2: How do practices shape participation and voice? | Teacher-mediated turn-taking | Observation             | "When the teacher asks me directly, I feel confident to speak." (Interview, Student F4) |
|                                                      | Gendered silence             | Observation; interviews | "Sometimes I stay quiet because boys answer quickly." (Interview, Student F5)           |
|                                                      | Scaffolded participation     | Reflection journals     | "The teacher helps us continue speaking when we stop." (Reflection, Student F3)         |

**4.2.1. Explanation and Analysis of Table 2**

Participation by the female students was greatly promoted by teacher-mediated turn-taking. Similar trends have been observed in Western ESL classrooms, in which teacher recognition justifies learner voice (Norton, 2013; Pavlenko, 2001).

Gendered silence was also present in that some of the female students would not speak because they anticipate being interrupted or apprehensive of unfavourable judgement. The Middle Eastern research proves that the involvement of females depends on the institutional authorization and facilitation by teachers (Mahboob, 2017; Al Issa, 2015). In Asian studies like Liu and Jackson (2009) silence is associated with anxiety and strategic positioning as opposed to disengagement.

The scaffolded participation also enabled the students to have an opportunity to continue their responses with the teacher support hence developing agency. This is in line with theoretical consideration of hooks (1994), who underlines the value of systematic interaction in the establishment of voice space. Altogether, the results show voice to be relational and interactionally created, as opposed to being granted automatically.

**4.3 Results Related to Research Question 3**

**RQ3: Why do students perceive feminist pedagogical practices as empowering or limiting?**

RQ3 studied the views of the students based on the mainly interview-based data and reflection journals.

**Table 3**

**Students' Perceptions of Empowerment and Constraint (RQ3)**

| Research Question                                           | Theme                | Data Source         | Representative Participant Quotes                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| RQ3: Why are practices perceived as empowering or limiting? | Sense of empowerment | Reflection journals | "I feel my opinion matters now." (Reflection, Student F1)                  |
|                                                             | Cultural constraints | Interviews          | "In our culture, girls should not speak too much." (Interview, Student F6) |
|                                                             | Strategic agency     | Reflection journals | "I prepare my answer before class." (Reflection, Student F4)               |

**4.3.1. Explanation and Analysis of Table 3**

Learners associated empowerment with acknowledgment, organised access, and colleagues. The Western pedagogy highlights that empowerment is a situational phenomenon, and it should be fostered as a part of the classroom relations (hooks, 1994; Chun, 2016).

Empowerment was restricted by cultural constraints. In Pakistan, and in the Middle Eastern settings, in general, female involvement is limited by the existing social norms, even in so-called inclusive classrooms (Shah and Amjad, 2020; Hamdan, 2014). Asian studies (Norton and Gao, 2008; Kubota, 2010) show the patterns of adaptive participation of learners with their strategic behaviours like preparation and selective

participation, which are reflected in the current study.

There was also an agency of strategies as the learners negotiated to participate despite structural and cultural hindrances. These findings support a poststructural understanding of agency as a relationship, negotiated, and context-based.

**4.4 Summary of Findings**

In all three research questions, the feminist pedagogical practises facilitated conditions of inclusion and voice amplification but effectiveness varied depending on teacher mediation, classroom norms, and cultural context. The relationships, voice, and agency became outcomes of participation, negotiation,

and not presupposed ones. The paper shows how feminist pedagogy can be both localised and responsive and partially practised, which requires a long-term analysis of the relationships of power, authority, and patterns of interaction.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

### 5.1 Overview of the Discussion

It is this section that precedes an interpretation of the scientific findings based on the analytical framework of the feminist critical pedagogy, and it places the results in the body of international research regarding gender, voice and involvement in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms. The debate avoids any presumption that feminist pedagogy is necessarily transformative, but rather interrogates the contingent conditions, which affect the classroom interaction and learner agency, of the conditionality of such pedagogic practises. The thematic analytic structure goes together with the findings that are correlated with the three research questions.

### 5.2 Feminist Pedagogical Practises Mediated As Contextual (RQ1)

The results indicate that the feminist pedagogical practises such as dialogic instruction, inclusive questioning and collaborative learning were present but not consistently implemented, thus supporting the growing body of literature that portrays feminist pedagogy as a negotiated, situated form of practise as opposed to a monolithic, stable model of instruction.

Norton and Toohey (2004) argue in the Western ESL setting that critical and feminist pedagogies are often constrained by institutional frameworks, assessment policies and deep-rooted classroom practises. Similarly, Sunderland (2000) also shows that even teachers with a gender awareness might repeat the same gendered interactional norms, which explains why practises of feminism in the current study did not seem comprehensive enough but were selective.

These trends are reflected in research in the Middle East. In their study of Saudi EFL classrooms, Elyas and Picard (2010) mention that the teachers use dialogic strategies, but are unable

to maintain them due to the institutional pressure and gender expectations. Alshahrani (2016) continues to explain that the intentions of inclusion in pedagogy usually stay symbolic unless these efforts are supported by the significant institutional change. The findings of this research are very appropriate to the current study whereby the feminist practises were majorly based on the teacher mediation as opposed to the curricular design.

Hierarchical cultural educational cultures have also been found to work within the feminist pedagogy in the Asian context. As noted by Lin (1999) and Kubota (2004), the collaborative learning and dialogic instructions co-exist with a high regard of authority and thus limit their transformative opportunities. This literature is broadened by the current research because it shows that partial implementation of feminist pedagogy cannot be translated into failure but instead an adaptive pedagogical response that is situational.

Notably, the given research expands further than just describing the patterns and explaining how interactional outcomes can be influenced by feminist pedagogical practises. As opposed to studies that define inclusivity in pedagogy as a reasonable virtue, the current results show that inclusivity practises depend on structural and interactional factors. This is in line with hooks (1994) who makes it clear that pedagogical change is a struggle within the institutional set up and builds upon the work of Hosseini and Amirkhani (2025) by emphasising the fact that teacher mediation is not facilitating, but constitutive of the realisation of participation and voice. Feminist pedagogy, through this prism, exists as a negotiating interactional orientation of negotiating power as it happens, and not as a repertoire of set techniques.

### 5.3 Voice Structurally Enabled and Interactionally Produced (RQ2)

Among the most salient findings of the study, it is possible to identify that the student voice was distributed unequally even when inclusive pedagogical strategies were adopted. Participation was based on teacher mediation, turn taking, and

interactional scaffolding, but not individual confidence or linguistic proficiency.

This observation is quite in line with the conceptualisation of voice by Norton (2013) who views voice as socially and historically constructed. Norton is able to note in Western ESL situations that learners are able to speak when they are perceived as valid participants, whereas Pavlenko (2001) maintains that silence can also serve as resistance or self-defence and not deactivation.

Studies in the Middle East have shown time and again that the participation of female students depends on express institutional authority. Mahboob (2017) and Al Issa (2015) show that gendered power relationships define the speaker, the time, and the manner in the EFL classroom. These findings are evident in the turn taking mediated by the teacher that was witnessed in the current study.

Asian studies also make it difficult to easily simplify the meaning of participation. King (2013) demonstrates that the silence among the Japanese EFL learners is a strategic act, and Liu and Jackson (2009) associate the anxiety of participation with the fear of negative judgement but not with the linguistic inability. The current work fits into this literature as it shows how feminist pedagogical practises can redesign the interactional space but cannot completely defuse the well-established standards of participation.

#### 5.4 Conditional and Negotiated Empowerment (RQ3)

Respondents in the investigation said that they felt empowered in the course of organised conversations and participatory assignments, but this empowerment was momentary, situational, and unbalanced.

Hooks (1994) in the Western feminist pedagogy clearly warns against the romanticisation of the empowerment process, in that it needs to be continually made in the classroom practise. Chun (2016) equally concludes that critical pedagogies tend to empower some students and marginalise others, hence validating her conclusion that the group of students who become empowered is not necessarily a consistent one.

The culture often mediates empowerment in the Middle East context. Conducting the research of Pakistani universities, Shah and Amjad (2020) state that female students feel confident in the discussion-based classrooms but still regulate participation in a way of self-control. Hamdan (2014) explains parallel tensions in the feminist classrooms where pedagogical inclusion and the prevailing gender norms oppose each other. These dynamics are reflected in the given work.

The Asian research views agency as modulating, as opposed to confrontational. As demonstrated by Norton and Gao (2008) and Kubota (2010), learners make use of agency in terms of preparation, silence, and selective participation. These results are consistent with the strategic behaviours reported in this work; thus, supporting a post structural conceptualisation of agency as relational and negotiated, as opposed to being an autonomous confrontational power.

#### 5.5 Teacher as Interactional Gatekeeper.

In all themes, the teacher stands out as a critical agent which facilitates or limits feminist pedagogical results. It is only with the help of purposeful interactional management that feminist practises can become efficacious.

The Western scholarship confirms this finding. Walsh (2011) and Waring (2011) show that teacher talk influences the participation in terms of turn allocation, uptake and repair. In a related idea, Alshahrani (2016) and Lin (2012) also state that in the world of the Middle East and Asia, inclusive intentions often do not result in just participation, so it is necessary to provide the necessary discourse-level awareness.

#### Conclusion

The current paper builds on this body of literature by demonstrating that feminist pedagogy in ESL classrooms involve more interactional level than either materials or proclaimed notions, thus highlighting the role of negotiation of pedagogy in real-time.

The purpose of the study was to explore how feminist critical pedagogy emerged in an ESL classroom, how it was demonstrated through pedagogical practises and patterns of interaction,

and how it was important to the participation, voice, and agency of students. The qualitative use of case study methodology presupposed the predetermined lived experiences of the participants in the classroom instead of hypothetical ideological statements. The empirical results present factual foundation to the debates that have often been theorised but rarely studied among situational ESL contexts.

The findings suggest that feminist critical pedagogy is not a fixed practise but as a pedagogical practise. It became practised, in practise, in terms of dialogic education, decentralisation of classroom authority, and formal legitimisation of the experiences of students. The willingness to speak was especially more expressed by female participants, especially when classroom norms were changed to involve a shift in teacher-dominated interaction to negotiated meaning-making. This helps in the opinion that the individual trait of participation is not an isolated phenomenon but a social construct, which is influenced by power relations. Limitation and tensions were also revealed in the analysis. Feminist practises were not even maintained as there were institutional constraints and pressures in curriculums and previous socialisation of students to passive modes of learning. In turn, silence may not be unambiguously viewed as resistance or empowerment, and it was often about fear of being judged or linguistic insecurity or the deep-rooted cultural gender conventions. This observation criticises the exuberant reports on feminist pedagogy and highlights the importance of context-focused interpretation.

Notably, the research confirms the rationale behind the importance of feminist critical pedagogy in the ESL classrooms beyond the rhetoric of gender equity. It relates towards language learning in that it helps in creating a space of interaction in which learners have better opportunities to invest in communication. Voice and agency therefore become paramount causes of language development and not marginal products. This research bridges the gap between feminist pedagogy as a theoretical discussion and feminist pedagogy as a classroom practise by

empirically connecting pedagogy, power and participation.

The fact that gendered participation is placed into the framework of the feminist critical pedagogy allows the research to bring applied linguistics a step further in demonstrating that voice and agency are not simply an instructional result but an interactional process that is created under the influence of classroom conventions, teacher mediation, and sociocultural pressures. This re-conceptualisation has consequences and implications on the measurement of language learning success and design of pedagogy in different ESL contexts.

### Recommendations

Judging by the results, feminist critical pedagogy as a reflective position but not a singular approach should be implemented by ESL teachers, incorporating the dialogic interaction, widespread turn-taking, and the legitimization of experiences of the learners into regular classroom activities. Teachers are advised to critically read the silence of students as a socially constructed event depending on gender conventions, linguistic self-confidence, and institutionalisation, and address it with low-risk participation patterns and self-reflection. Professional development programmes as well as teacher education should clearly deal with issues of power, gender and classroom discourse to avoid the indiscriminate reproduction of hierarchical patterns of interaction. On institutional level, curriculum developers and administrative experts must allow pedagogical flexibility through lessening over-standardisation and examination-contained restrictions that inhibit participatory instruction. Lastly, longitudinal and comparative designs, including intersectional views and mixed methods, should also be followed up in future studies in order to investigate the role of feminist pedagogical practises in promoting participation, identity formation, and language development among various ESL learning.

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