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Investigating Gender Differences in Terms of Teaching Strategies in Kurdish EFL (English as a Foreign Language) Classes

A B S T R A C T

The importance of teaching strategies is an essential factor in teaching EFL classes. Moreover, teaching strategies are vital for promoting effective learning in higher education, and little attention has been given to how gender differences affect the choice and implementation of these strategies at the university level. Male and female teachers may vary in selecting strategies, which can influence students' academic experiences in unique ways. However, many studies fail to address this variation. As a result, there is a gap in comprehending whether and how gender influences the teaching strategies adopted by university lecturers, and what implications this may have for students' academic outcomes and classroom dynamics. Thus, the main aim of this study is to investigate the teaching strategies of male and female teachers and discuss them in relation to gender differences. This paper was conducted in the College of Basic Education/ Salahaddin University. The number of participants is 20 teachers from the English Department morning and evening studies. The study used a mixed-method. The quantitative data were an observation checklist, and the qualitative data was an interview. An observation was used to collect information from the instructors, while an interview was used to elicit information from the same sample to double check their usage of the teaching strategies in the class. The study concluded that both EFL male and female teachers implemented these strategies but in different ways. Male teachers showed a moderate use of most teaching strategies, with the exception of the independent strategy, which was used at a high level, whereas female teachers employed most strategies more frequently, with the independent strategy used at a moderate level.

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استقصاء الفروق بين الجنسين في استعمال استراتيجيات التدريس في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في السياق الكردي

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الملخص

تُعدّ استراتيجيات التدريس عنصرًا أساسياً في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية عالية المستوى. وعلى الرغم من هذه الأهمية، لم تحظَ مسألة أثر الفرق بين نوع الجنس في اختيار استراتيجيات التدريس وتطبيقها على المستوى الجامعي بالاهتمام الكافي في الدراسات السابقة. إذ قد يختلف الأساتذة في انتقاء الاستراتيجيات التدريسية، الذي ينعكس بدوره على الخبرات الأكاديمية للطلبة وديناميكيات التفاعل الصفي. إلا أن العديد من الدراسات أغفلت تناول هذا التباين، مما أسفر عن وجود فجوة بحثية تتعلق بفهم مدى تأثير النوع الاجتماعي في استراتيجيات التدريس التي يعتمدها أساتذة الجامعات، وانعكاس ذلك على التحصيل الأكاديمي للطلبة وأجواء الصف الدراسي.

وانطلاقًا من ذلك، يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة استراتيجيات التدريس المستخدمة من قبل الأساتذة، ومناقشتها في ضوء الفروق المرتبطة بالنوع الاجتماعي. أُجري البحث في كلية التربية الأساسية / جامعة صلاح الدين، وبلغت عينة الدراسة (٢٠) الأساتذة الذكور والاناث من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية للدراستين الصباحية والمسائية. اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج المختلط، حيث تم جمع البيانات الكمية من خلال قائمة ملاحظة، بينما جُمعت البيانات النوعية من خلال إجراء المقابلات .

فالملاحظات استعملت لرصد ممارسات الأساتذة الذكور والاناث داخل الصف، في حين أُجريت المقابلات مع العينة نفسها للتحقق من مدى استخدامهم لاستراتيجيات التدريس المختلفة

وأظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن كلا الأساتذة الذكور والاناث يطبقون استراتيجيات التدريس، إلا أن ذلك يتم بطرائق ومستويات متفاوتة. فقد أظهر الأساتذة الذكور استخدامًا متوسطًا لمعظم الاستراتيجيات التدريسية، باستثناء الاستراتيجية المستقلة التي استُعملت بمستوى مرتفع، في حين استخدمت الأساتذة الإناث معظم الاستراتيجيات بمعدل أعلى، مع توظيف الاستراتيجية المستقلة بمستوى متوسط.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأساتذة الذكور الأساتذة الإناث، النوع الاجتماعي، الفروق بين الجنسين، استراتيجيات التدريس.

1. Introduction

Gender can influence various aspects of education, including teachers' preferences. These preferences may be shaped by factors such as students' learning conditions, teachers' abilities, and the availability of instructional resources (Mustika & Wardah, 2021). Research indicates that gender affects communication, pedagogical approaches, student interactions, and teaching strategy selection (Song et al., 2022). According to Entwistle (2009), teaching at university needs deep learning rather than focusing on rote memory. Therefore, strategy use is vital at university as Bain (2012) highlights effective strategy use by college teachers focusing on their approach to student engagement and learning. Moreover, an important aspect to consider in English language teaching is the use of teaching strategies. Teaching strategies are key elements of instructors to teach their modules. Various scholars conducted

studies (Kato, 2005, 2009; Oxford, 1989, 1990, 1996; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Wang, 2009; Cabaysa, 2010; Khmakhien, 2012; Tam, 2013; Hassan, 2017) about learning strategies where they highlighted on the significance of learning strategies in the teaching & learning processes. However, little attention is given to teaching strategies. To achieve success, language instructors must select, understand, master, and develop strategies that are most appropriate for their teaching. English instructors should actively promote the use of these strategies to create classrooms that foster authentic communicative practice. Teaching strategies are some steps instructors follow and select that are according to students' levels, ages, and needs. They are broad plans for delivering a lesson that outlines its structure, instructional goals, and the specific methods or techniques needed to achieve those goals (Stone and Morris, as cited in Issac, 2010). Roger Martins (2023) defines these strategies as an integrated set of decisions that reinforce each other, enabling teachers to achieve their objectives and produce an outcome. Besides teaching strategies, gender plays a significant role in teaching as male and female instructors adopt different strategies. Academics contend that gender is the most impactful and potent factor (Schibeci, 1984, cited in El-Emadi et al., 2019). On this basis, it is essential to examine the teaching strategies adopted by male and female instructors, and how these strategies are applied. Specifically, the study investigates the ways in which Kurdish EFL instructors successfully utilize these strategies to strengthen their instructional effectiveness and promote positive classroom outcomes.

The Objectives of the Study

The study aims at:

1. Identifying the teaching strategies commonly employed by male and female teachers in Kurdish classrooms through systematic classroom observation.

2. Examining gender-based differences in the implementation of teaching strategies during EFL instruction.

3. Exploring teachers' perceptions and beliefs regarding their choice of teaching strategies through semi-structured interviews.

4. Investigate how gender influences the selection and implementation of teaching strategies among EFL teachers in Kurdish educational contexts

The Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed:

1. What teaching strategies are employed by male and female EFL teachers in Kurdish EFL classrooms as observed during classroom instruction?

2. To what extent do teaching strategies differ between male and female EFL teachers in Kurdish EFL classes?

3. How do male and female EFL teachers perceive their own teaching strategies, as revealed through interviews?

4. What factors influence the selection of teaching strategies among male and female EFL teachers in the Kurdish context? In what ways does gender influence the selection and implementation of teaching strategies?

1.1 The Model of the Study

The researcher selected "Charles Darwin University's observation teaching strategies" as the main model of the study. The observation checklist was developed based on the observation teaching strategy. However, the researcher selected six strategies from 23 as they were suitable to the university students' levels, needs, and ages.

1.4 Literature Review

Instructors play as a key role in shaping students' learning. Students learn more successfully when they respect their teachers and have a positive relationship with them. Studies show that strong teacher–student relationships enhance students' confidence and feelings of competence which in turn improve their academic outcomes (El-Emadi etal., 2019). Thus, male and female teachers employ different strategies to teach their classes. Utilizing different strategies is important and these strategies may vary according to their gender; however, problems occur while implementing in the class. For example, Park and French (2011, p. 177) emphasize the importance of investigating gender differences in teaching strategies, noting that men and women tend to show distinct patterns in educational achievement and occupational outcomes. Female teachers tend to spend more time explaining the material and often use a greater variety of teaching methods compared to male teachers. For instance, when assigning practice questions, female teachers frequently create their own worksheets, whereas male teachers typically rely on worksheets provided by the school (Journal of Innovative and Creativity, 2025).

This fact indicates that gender has a significant role in our lives and plays a vital factor in teaching. During classroom teaching, teaching and learning occur between girls and boys, men and women, and the strategies they use, have an impact on the processes of teaching and learning. Giles (2008) argues that gender plays a crucial role in shaping teaching strategies; therefore, gender has attracted considerable attention from scholars in educational research. As a result, gender has become a prominent area of inquiry among scholars. (Ali & Krish, 2016, Anshori, 2016; Aziz, Jin, & Nordin, 2016, and Seyyedrezaie & Vahedi, 2017). Despite these differences, this phenomenon warrants systematic investigation.

Teaching strategies are general plans that teachers use them to help them to learn the content and to achieve the instructional objectives. In other words, they include structure, instructional objectives and an outline of planned strategies. According to, Lawson & Sardoe (2018) teaching strategies refer to a comprehensive framework for a lesson or series of lessons that specifies instructional goals, anticipates the learners' behaviors, and outlines the planned techniques and procedures required to implement the instruction effectively. Teaching strategies involve recognizing various learning approaches to select and implement the most appropriate method for effectively addressing the needs of the target

learner group. There is a wide range of teaching strategies that can be employed in the teaching process. In the current study, the researcher selected effective and simple strategies that teacher can use in the classroom:

1. **Brainstorming**

Brainstorming is a teaching strategy used to generate a wide range of ideas or possible solutions, during which evaluation and judgment are postponed until a sufficient number of ideas has been produced. According to Al-Maghrawy (as cited in Al-Khatib, 2012, p. 31) brainstorming is defined as a group-based creativity forum aimed at producing general ideas. Brainstorming aims to stimulate thinking, activate prior knowledge, and promote active student participation (Wehrli, 2003).

2. **Demonstration**

Demonstration refers to ongoing activity that students can observe how to do it, and foster them how to change from theoretical knowledge to practical applicant (Adekoya & Olatoye, 2011). In this strategy, the teacher demonstrates how to carry out and perform a task or activity, providing a clear model that allows them understand, observe and, replicate.

3. Discussion

The discussion strategy is a student-centered approach in which students share ideas and opinions, and it is teacher guided, to motivate them how to criticize interact, and learn from one to another. (Brookfield & Preskill, 2005). This strategy encourages critical thinking and active participation. It Develops communication skills and collective knowledge construction. Within this strategy, there are different forms of discussions such as (Whole-class, small- class, and Socratic discussion).

4. Thinking- Skill Strategy

It is a teaching strategy that designed to develop students' higher- order thinking such as analysis, evaluation, problem-solving, and decision-making. This strategy motivates students to be active, reflective, and independent thinking instead of focusing on the rote memory (Ennis, 1987).

5. Independent Practice

It is a teaching strategy that teachers allow learners practice individually or in groups using different resources. Alberta Learning (2002, p. 73) defines independent study as an individualized educational experience that enables learners to choose their own topics, investigate specific questions or problems, gather and evaluate information, utilize acquired skills, and present a final product reflecting their understanding and achievement.

6. Guided Practice

It is a teaching strategy where students practice new knowledge or skills while being supervised by the teacher who provides immediate feedback. This strategy serves as a bridge between teacher demonstration and independent work of students, helping learners grasp the correct procedures and concepts before attempting tasks on their own (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2015).

2. Methodology

2.1 The Participants of the Study

The main population of the present study were EFL teachers of College of Basic Education/ Salahaddin University- Erbil. Population was made of 25 teachers. The teachers are selected randomly as the participants of the study. They were 10 males and 10 females from both morning and evening studies. Their ages are between (30-55).

2.2 The Instruments of Data Collection

The tools were used in the current study were teacher's observation checklist and an interview. The instruments were developed and designed by the researcher. The data are collected to achieve the objectives of the study.

2.2.1 Observation Checklist

The first instrument that used to gather the data was an observation checklist. The observation checklist was used to see the use of the teaching strategies by male and female teachers in their teaching. Additionally, it is used to see the different use of these strategies according to the gender differences. The classroom observation checklist is composed of two sections. The first section of the checklist addressed general information, while the subsequent section examined which strategies are employed by teachers with reference to gender differences. The second section includes six strategies; each strategy consists of five items, each rated on a five-point scale ranging from 0 to 4. The checklist is piloted to establish reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha is used to check the reliability of the test. The reliability of the checklist was measured at 0.86, indicating high reliability. The researcher observed teachers in the first semester during the academic year (2024-2025).

2.2.2 The Interview

The second instrument was utilized to gather information was an interview. The interview was used to explore teachers' perceptions and to obtain in depth-detailed information about these strategies. The researcher followed a semi-structured interview by following an interview guide with predetermined questions while allowing flexibility for participants to introduce additional topics (Clarke & Braun, 2018). The interview was validated by sending it to a number of experts. The study employed one-to-one semi-structured interview consisting of 5 open-ended questions. The interviews were conducted on (25/11/2026) in the first semester. It was conducted in the Department of English Language. During the sessions, participants were provided with a copy of the interview questions and were asked to comment on each item sequentially. The researcher recorded all responses throughout the interviews.

2.3 Data Analysis and Discussion

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed in this study. This mixed-methods design enabled a comprehensive and in-depth discussion among experts to explore the issue thoroughly. In addition, the two research instruments were administered at different times.

2.3.1 Teachers' Observation Checklist Data Analysis

The study involved the observation of (20) EFL teachers who teach in both morning and evening studies. The checklist was employed to evaluate the extent to which these teachers' usage of strategies in their instruction within five Likert scales starting from 0 to 4. The scales are (0= not observed at all, 1= very week, 2= weak, 3= Good, 4 = very good/ fully observed). The observational data were used to address the first two research questions. The first question investigates: *"**What teaching strategies are employed by male and female EFL teachers in Kurdish EFL classrooms as observed during classroom instruction?**"* The second question examines: *"**To what extent do teaching strategies differ between male and female EFL teachers in Kurdish EFL classes**?"*

Data gathered from the observation checklist were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to calculate the weighted mean of responses for each item. The checklist data were analyzed using a practice-level classification to examine the frequency of teachers' usage of strategies, as illustrated in the table 1 below:

Table 1 The Classification Practice Level

Average Score	Interpretation	Practice Level
0-0.99	Not observed	Very low
1.00–1.99	Very weak	Low
2.00–2.99	Weak	Moderate
3.00–3.49	Good	High
3.50–4.00	Very Good	Very high

All the items of the checklist will be interpreted and discussed according to the above table. The results are analyzed using the classification of practice level.

The brainstorming strategy is the first strategy in the observation checklist which observed by the researcher to see to what extent these strategies were employed by male and female teachers in their teaching. These strategies are known as a pre-instructional strategy used to activate learners' background knowledge and encourage the free generation of ideas related to a topic (Richard & Rodgers, 2014). Additionally, Harmer (2007) states that brainstorming is a learner-centered activity in which students collectively produce ideas to prepare for a language task and increase engagement.

Table 2 The Mean Scores of Brainstorming Strategy (N=20)

No	Items	Mean of Male teachers	Level	Mean of Female Teachers	Level
1	The teacher clearly introduces the brainstorming task and its purpose	2.80	Moderate	3.40	High
2	Students are motivated to generate ideas without judgment or correction.	2.60	Moderate	3.20	High
3	The teacher uses prompts, visuals, or guiding questions to stimulate idea generation.	2.50	Moderate	3.10	High
4	Students actively participate and contribute ideas during brainstorming	2.90	Moderate	3.50	High
5	The teacher summarizes or organizes the generated ideas for later use.	2.54	Moderate	3.05	High

The findings show that female teachers achieved higher mean scores across all five items compared to male teachers. The largest differences were observed in items related to student participation and clear introduction of brainstorming tasks, suggesting that female teachers tended to implement brainstorming strategies more consistently and effectively. Male teachers demonstrated a moderate level of use across most items. However, the use of instructional supports such as prompts and visuals, as well as the organization and summarization of generated ideas, received moderate mean scores, suggesting areas where male teachers could improve their use of brainstorming techniques to enhance instructional effectiveness. The usage of these strategies varied according to gender, the researcher used the t-test formula for two independent samples at the 0.05 level of significance to compare the overall mean scores of the aforementioned strategy by male and female EFL teachers as shown in the table below:

Table 3 Independent Sample T-test for the Brainstorming Strategy

Gender	N	Mean	SD
Male	10	2.65	0.54
Female	10	3.15	0.47

The results of the independent sample t-test demonstrated a statistically significant difference between male and female teachers in their application of the strategies.

$t(18) = -2.29$, $p = .034$ since the p-value is below than 0.05, significance level, the observed difference is considered statistically significant.. The findings indicate that female teachers reported a higher mean score of (M = 3.15, SD = 0.47) than male teachers (M = 2.65, SD = 0.54), indicating more frequent use of brainstorming strategies. This suggests that gender may influence a role the extent to which teachers employ brainstorming strategies in classroom instruction.

Demonstration is the second strategy in the observation checklist. It is the teaching strategy in which instructors allow learners to observe procedures and processes step by step, making abstract concepts more concrete and easier to understand (Killen, 2016).

Table 4 The Mean Scores of Demonstration Strategy (N=20)

No	Items	Mean of Male teachers	Level	Mean of Female Teachers	Level
1	The teacher clearly states the purpose of the demonstration before starting.	2.70	Moderate	3.30	High
2	The teacher presents the task or activity step by step in a clear manner.	2.85	Moderate	3.45	High
3	Appropriate teaching aids or materials are used to support the demonstration.	2.60	Moderate	3.20	High
4	The teacher checks students' understanding during or after the demonstration (e.g., through questions)	2.55	Moderate	3.10	High
5	Students are given the opportunity to practice or replicate the demonstrated task	2.80	Moderate	3.35	High

According to the table 4, the results reveal that female teachers applied demonstration strategy more frequently with a high level than male teachers with moderate levels. Additionally, female teachers reported a higher-level use of these strategies with high mean scores in all items comparing to male teachers. This statistically difference suggests that gender influences the degree to which demonstration strategies are implemented in Kurdish EFL classrooms. Moreover, female teachers showed stronger performance across all five items, particularly in presenting tasks in a clear, step-by-step manner and providing students with opportunities to practice the demonstrated activities. To show the gender differences in using these strategies, the researcher used sample t-test to find the differences as shown in table 5 below:

Table 5 Independent Sample T-test for Demonstration Strategy

Gender	N	Mean	SD
Male	10	2.70	0.52
Female	10	3.28	0.48

This finding indicates that the gender difference in the use of the demonstration strategy is both statistically significant and educationally meaningful. These results revealed that female teachers are highly users of demonstration strategy with a mean score of 3.28 compared to male teachers with mean score of 2.70 at a moderate level.

The Third strategy is **Discussion strategy** in the list which observed by the researcher. They are instructional effective strategies which play a vital role in the process of learning as they focus on learner interaction, negotiation of meaning, and real-life communication. When effectively facilitated, discussion promotes learner autonomy and increases student engagement (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

Table 6 The Mean Scores of Discussion Strategy (N=20)

No	Items	Mean of Male Teachers	Level	Mean of Female Teachers	Level
1	The teacher clearly introduces the discussion topic and links it to the lesson objectives.	2.65	Moderate	3.25	High
2	Students are encouraged to express their ideas and opinions freely.	2.75	Moderate	3.40	High
3	The teacher motivates students to participate equally and give chance all to speak.	2.55	Moderate	3.15	High
4	The discussion takes place mostly in English, with only limited use of the students' mother tongue.	2.50	Moderate	3.10	High
5	The teacher concludes the discussion by summarizing on the key points that shared by the students.	2.70	Moderate	3.35	High

The analysis of the observation checklist for discussion strategy revealed clear differences between male and female teachers. Male teachers consistently scored at a moderate level, while female teachers consistently achieved high scores across all discussion items. The relatively lower mean scores for male teachers seem to reflect differences in teaching style rather than ability. Male teachers often lean toward teacher-led instruction that limit spontaneous discussion. In contrast, female teachers prefer more active and center- approach activities—such as moderating inclusive participation and integrating student contributions- lead to active participation and communication. Ultimately, female teachers make students feel more confident and secure in sharing their unique insights that create an interactive and supportive classroom environment.

Overall, these findings suggest that the observed differences are not about teaching ability, but about teaching style and how teachers interact with students, which in turn affects how discussion strategies are used in EFL classrooms.

Table 7 Independent Sample T-test for the Discussion Strategy

Gender	N	Mean	SD
Male	10	2.63	0.52
Female	10	3.25	0.48

The overall mean score for male teachers' use of the discussion strategy was 2.63 showing that they used this strategy at a moderate level. In contrast, female teachers achieved a higher overall mean score of 3.25, reflecting a high level of use of the discussion strategy.

The fourth strategy observed by the researcher is **Thinking skill.** It is a type of strategy which focuses on problem-solving, decision-making, and reasoning skills that allow learner to transfer knowledge to new situation (Fisher, 2005). It is the higher level of Bloom's Taxonomy which includes analyzing, evaluating, and creating, rather than focusing solely on remembering or understanding (Anderson & Krathowl, 2001).

Table 8 The Mean Scores of Thinking skill Strategy (N=20)

No	Items	Mean of Male Teachers	Level	Mean of Female Teachers	Level
1	The teacher asks open-ended questions that encourage critical and creative thinking.	3.25	High	2.60	Moderate
2	Students are guided to analyze, compare, or evaluate ideas rather than just recall facts.	3.20	High	2.55	Moderate
3	The teacher provides opportunities for problem-solving or decision-making tasks	3.25	High	2.60	Moderate
4	Students are encouraged to justify their answers or opinions with reasons or examples.	3.15	High	2.50	Moderate
5	The lesson activities promote higher-order thinking skills (e.g., analysis, synthesis, evaluation) beyond simple memorization	3.25	High	2.60	Moderate

The results of the aforementioned strategy shows that male teachers consistently scored higher than female teachers in all items. Female teachers' mean scores ranged from 2.50 to 2.65, reflecting a moderate level of implementation, while male teachers' mean scores ranged from 3.15 to 3.30, indicating a high level of use of thinking skill strategies. These findings suggest that male teachers are more likely to employ instructional practices that encourage critical, analytical, and higher-order thinking skills among students, whereas female teachers tend to rely more on moderate levels of these strategies.

To examine the differences between the two groups, the relevant results are presented in the table below:

Table 9 Independent Sample T-test for Thinking-Skill Strategy

Gender	N	Mean	SD
Male	10	3.23	0.48
Female	10	2.53	0.52

The overall mean score for female teachers in using thinking skill strategies was 2.58 (SD = 0.52), indicating a moderate level of implementation. Male teachers obtained a higher overall mean of 3.23 (SD = 0.48), reflecting a high level of application. This demonstrates that male teachers tend to use thinking skill strategies more frequently and effectively than female teachers.

The fifth strategy is **independent skill strategy**. It is one of the most effective strategies that motivates students take responsibility for their own learning by performing tasks practicing skills, and applying knowledge with minimal teacher guidance. It allows students to take charge of their own learning by planning, carrying out, and reflecting on their work. Similarly, Little (1991) highlights that independent strategies help students develop critical decision-making, and responsibility, which are essential for lifelong learning.

Table 10 The Mean Scores of Independent skill Strategy (N=20)

No	Items	Mean of Male Teachers	Level	Mean of Female Teachers	Level
1	Students are given tasks to apply skills or knowledge on their own	2.50	Moderate	3.20	High
2	The teacher ensures students understand instructions before independent work begins.	2.55	Moderate	3.25.	High
3	The teacher provides opportunities for problem-solving or decision-making tasks	2.45	Moderate	3.15	High
4	The teacher provides minimal assistance, intervening only when necessary.	2.60	Moderate	3.30	High
5	Independent practice activities are aligned with the lesson objectives and skills taught.	2.50	Moderate	3.25	High

Looking at how teachers encourage students to work on their own, the results from 20 observations show a clear difference. Female teachers consistently took the lead in this area. While male teachers used these strategies moderately (with scores between 2.45 and 2.60), female teachers used them much more frequently, scoring between 3.15 and 3.30. Simply put, female instructors seem more naturally inclined to give students the tools to work independently and ensure that every activity has a clear purpose.

Table 11 Independent Sample T-test for Independent Skill Strategy

Gender	N	Mean	SD
Male	10	2.30	0.48
Female	10	3.50	0.52

The overall mean score for male teachers in implementing independent practice and autonomy strategies was 2.52, indicating a moderate level of implementation. On average, female teachers had a higher overall mean of 3.23, showing that they frequently use strategies that help students take charge of their own learning.

The final strategy observed is **Guided strategy** which plays as a supportive net for students. Instead of leaving students to figure things out alone, the instructor provides clear steps, helpful examples, and constant feedback. This aligns with Harmer's (2007) view that like giving students a roadmap; by using prompts and organized activities, teachers build their students' confidence until they are ready to succeed on their own.

Table 12 The Mean Scores of Guided skill Strategy items (N=20)

No	Items	Mean of Male Teachers	Level	Mean of Female Teachers	Level
1	The teacher provides clear instructions and models the activity before students.	2.65	Moderate	3.30	High
2	The teacher monitors students closely during practice and offers immediate feedback.	2.70	Moderate	3.35	High
3	Students practice the target skill with teacher support (e.g., prompts, hints, scaffolding).	2.60	Moderate	3.25	High
4	The teacher encourages aa students to participate in guided activities	2.60	Moderate	3.35	High
5	The errors are corrected by teacher to improve students' performance	2.55	Moderate	3.20	High

The observation results for guided strategy use indicate that female teachers consistently scored higher than male teachers on all items. Male teachers' mean scores fell within a moderate range (2.55 - 2.70), reflecting a moderate level of guided strategy use, while female teachers achieved higher scores (3.20 -3.35), indicating more frequent use of guided strategies. This suggests that female teachers were more likely to offer clear guidance, scaffolding, and constructive feedback, helping students learn effectively while gradually becoming more independent.

Table 13 Independent sample T-test for Guided skill Strategy

Gender	N	Mean	SD
Male	10	2.30	0.52
Female	10	3.50	0.48

The results of the independent sample t-test show clear gender differences in the use of the Guided Skill Strategy. The average score for female teachers was greater M = 3.50, than for male teachers M = 2.30, suggesting that female teachers employed this tactic more frequently.

The two groups' adoption of the guided skill strategy differs significantly, as revealed by the obvious difference in mean scores. Overall, there is a significant difference in use of the guided skill strategy in both groups, as indicated by the noticeable difference in mean scores. Overall, the results suggest that gender affects how the guided skill strategy is used, with female teachers using it more frequently than male teachers. This difference may be regarded as both statistically significant and educationally significant if the independent samples t-test findings are statistically significant ($p < .05$), demonstrating substantial gender-based differences in teaching strategies.

The results for the **first research question** show a gap in how different teachers use these strategies. Female teachers are power users—they apply most strategies frequently, with five of them hitting the highest level of use. Male teachers, however, tend to use them more sparingly, landing in the "moderate" category. Overall, the findings suggest that female teachers are leaning into these instructional tools much more than their male colleagues.

Addressing **the second research question**, it shows that male teachers do not teach in the same way, female teachers use most of these strategies more frequently. However, male teachers have a clear "go-to" move: they rely much more on thinking skill strategy. Basically, the data shows that while women use a wider variety of tools, men have a stronger preference for one specific type.

Overall, gender plays an essential role in how instructors manage their classrooms. Female instructors are more consistent in using boards and employ diverse strategies

mostly. On the other hand, male teachers seem to have their specific style, showing their greatest strength in leading discussions rather than using a wide mix of different techniques.

2.3.2 Teachers' Interview Data Analysis

The third research question and fourth research question investigate internal perceptions of teachers and the contextual factors influencing their choice of instructional strategies within the Kurdish education system. The researcher interviewed the same sample of 20 teachers (10 males+10 females) from the first part of the study. The goal was to get their personal stories: how they choose their strategies, what they have experienced in EFL classrooms, and the real-world obstacles they face. By using open-ended questions and recording the audio, the researcher was able to capture the teachers' honest voices and ensure their perspectives were represented accurately.

In response to the initial interview question regarding '**Which teaching strategy is most frequently employed in the classroom?'** the teachers reported that the following strategies were most commonly used, as shown in the table:

Table 14 The Percentage and Frequency of the Answers

Teaching Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Brainstorming	4	20%
Discussion	7	35%
Demonstration	2	10%
Guided Practice	5	25%
Independent Practice	1	5%
Thinking Skill strategy	1	5%
Total	**20**	**100%**

The analysis indicate that discussion-based strategies are the most frequently used by EFL teachers, followed by guided practice and brainstorming. The rest of strategies (Demonstration, independent practice, and thinking skill) were used less often. Overall, teachers tend to favor interactive and supported strategies that keep students engaged, encourage communication, and guide learning in a clear and structured way.

To reply the second question of the teacher's interview- '**Do you believe that different genders differ in their teaching strategies?'** the female teachers perceive using interactive and student-centered strategies such as (discussion, peer work, scaffolding, creative thinking) in contrast male teachers are perceived as relying more on teacher-centered strategies including (lectures, demonstrations, and guided practice).

The analysis reveal that the discussion strategies is most used strategy that the rest of strategies. Interestingly, the teachers' gender seems to shape the "vibe" of the room. Female teachers almost always (85% of the time) create a collaborative, student-led environment. On the other hand, male teachers often (60%) prefer to lead the room from the front, sticking to more traditional, teacher-led methods.

The interviews showed a major split in how teachers view their own gender. 70% of male teachers thought their gender didn't affect how they taught; they believe they focus only on

the lesson and the students. 80% of female teachers thought that their gender has an impact by preferring teaching strategies that were more focused on the students, involved them, and contributed more together

Overall, these findings suggest that female teachers are more likely than male teachers to see gender as shaping their instructional strategy choices.

Regarding question four- **'Challenges Faced by Male and Female EFL Teachers in Applying Teaching Strategies' based on the interviewees' responses, the challenges are shown in Table 15:**

Table 15 The Percentage and Frequency of the Answers

Challenge	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total Frequency	Percentage (%)
Difficulty engaging students in Discussion	6	7	13	32.5%
Limited time/support in Guided Practice	7	8	15	37.5%
Students' lack of self-discipline in Independent Work	5	6	11	27.5%
Large class sizes hindering Demonstration	4	7	11	27.5%
Uneven participation in Brainstorming	6	8	14	35%

Table 15 presents the challenges of both gender while applying various teaching strategies. The most commonly challenges were limited to time/support in guided practice (37.5%) and unequal participation in brainstorming (35%), after those challenges in discussion, independent work, and demonstration (27.5–32.5%).

Both genders teachers reported similar challenges, but female teachers were faced difficulties in guided practice and brainstorming, while male teachers while had a bit more trouble with discussion. To sum up, the results suggest that time constraints, student engagement, and classroom management are the main challenges teachers faced when implementing interactive and student-centered strategies.

The final question in the interview is **'Do you think cultural or social factors in Kurdish society influence how gender impacts teaching and learning? How?** the teachers had different ideas regarding cultural factors:

Cultural and social factors in Kurdish society play a crucial role in influencing how teachers behave in the classroom and what responsibilities they take on, while students may respond differently depending on the teacher's gender. Social and cultural dynamics can affect how people participate, interact, and choose teaching methods. Female teachers tend to focus on support and collaboration, while male teachers tend to focus on authority and control. Cultural expectations generally affect how things work in the classroom, affecting both how strategies are put into action and how interested students are.

The results for the third research question show that both men and women teachers were aware of the teaching strategies. However, female teachers were more interested in student-centered and supportive methods, while male teachers were more focused on structure, control, and efficiency.

In answer to the fourth research question, the choice of teaching strategy is influenced by contextual, cultural, and institutional factors, with gender affecting implementation: female teachers are more likely to use collaborative methods, while male teachers are more likely to use teacher-directed methods.

3. **Conclusions**

Teaching strategies play a vital role in shaping the classroom activities and their use has an impact on the students' learning. Teachers may differ in the selection of these strategies especially when it is related to gender differences. The study examined the differences in their implementation of these strategies by both genders in the Kurdish context using classroom observation and interviews. The results from both tools of the study indicate that the two genders employ a similar range of teaching strategies, noticeable differences exist in how these strategies are perceived and implemented. The findings of both tools of the study indicate that male and female EFL teachers use similar teaching strategies but differ in their implementation. Male teachers demonstrated a moderate use of most teaching strategies, except for the independent strategy, which was employed at a high level, whereas female teachers used most strategies more frequently, with the independent strategy applied at a moderate level. The choice of teaching strategies is shaped by the classroom context, cultural expectations, and institutional requirements, with gender playing a role alongside these factors rather than on its own. These results underscore the significance of professional development that enables educators to implement strategies effectively and equitably in EFL classrooms.

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