



## An Exploration of Gender Differences on EFL Students' English Learning Satisfaction by Technology University Students

Mei-Ling Lee

Chienkuo Technology University, Taiwan

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Published Online: 24 January 2023	The purpose of this study is to explore whether the learning satisfaction of teachers' instruction and course content were varied according to gender diversities. Based on this notion, this study conducts a questionnaire survey with 232 participants, including 142 males and 90 females from seven classes as the study samples. The study employed descriptive statistics, and ANOVA etc. to perform analysis, and obtained the following conclusions; the EFL technology university students reported higher satisfaction with teachers' instruction than with the satisfaction of the teachers' course content, and male students reported higher satisfaction with the overall English learning satisfaction than their counterparts. Furthermore, it is likely that male students are more satisfied than female students in the English learning class.
Corresponding Author <b>Mei-Ling Lee</b>	
<b>KEYWORDS:</b> Satisfaction of teacher's teaching, Satisfaction of course content, Genders, Motivation.	

### INTRODUCTION

Studies yielded that correlation and interaction between the instructors and learners is an effective predictor of recognized value for student satisfaction. In other words, when class can provide a sound and positive learning atmosphere among the interactions of student-student and student-instructor, then, learners will be more pleased with their learning outcomes and performance. (Carr & Pauwels, 2006;). Other researchers claimed that satisfaction is an important factor to stimulate learning motivation and a condition to promote continuous learning motivation (Beder, 1991, Small & Venkatesh, 2000, Johnston, Killion, Oomen, 2005). Learning satisfaction is often used to study the correlation between learners and learners learning attitudes. Studies declared that the receptiveness of cognitive learning and students' learning satisfaction are positively correlated. In terms of students' motivation, although high satisfaction does not necessarily mean high motivation, low satisfaction is definitely low motivation. Biner, Dean, & Milliner (1994) believed that the study of learning satisfaction can define the lack of curriculum, make improvements, and promote the interests of learners. Abraugh (2000) proposed that the contact and interaction between teachers and learners are effective predictors of students' cognitive satisfaction. In other words, when classrooms provide positive student-student and student-teacher interaction and improve the learning climate, students will be more satisfied with their learning performance.

Many research results show that the success of language learning not only depends on the teacher's teaching, but also depends to a great extent on the learner's own personal differences, including: age, gender, personality, learning ability, learning attitude, learning motivation, and teaching strategies and other characteristics of learners themselves (Carr & Pauwels, 2006). In addition, Studies have found that there are many factors influencing the students' perception about their evaluations from teaching and teachers, including the internal factors, those mainly refer to learner's personality-related factors, such as interest, emotional, self-esteem, self-confidence, a sense of achievement and so on. As for the external factors involved in a wider range, including environmental impact, class arrangement, teaching materials factors, the role of teachers' course workload, teachers' personality or students' grade expectations (Gardner, 1988, Abraugh, 2000).

Gender has been regarded as an important affective factor that plays an important factor and influences second language acquisition (Swiatek & Lupkowski-Shoplik, 2000, Kissau, 2006). The differences can be fundamentally related to the biological viewpoint, cognitive ability, physiological differences, socio-cultural factors and differences of learning styles (Sunderland 2000, Bernat & Gvozdenko I. 2005).

Research into the relationship between second/foreign language learning and gender has witnessed a considerable change in the past three decades, as it has been informed by emerging conceptualizations of gender in language studies.

Studies found that sex-based differences in women’s and men’s linguistic repertoire which could be correlated with language and language learning (Bayyurt, 1999, Bayyurt & Litosseliti, 2006).

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study aimed to explore two objectives. The first one was to ascertain whether EFL students' satisfaction with teachers' instruction varied from male and female students. The second objective was to determine whether EFL students' satisfaction with teachers' course content varied from male and female students. The purpose of this study is to explore whether the learning satisfaction of teachers' instruction and course content were varied according to gender diversities. It is the desired outcome that the results of this study can function as a curricular reference for English instructors.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

English is learned as a foreign language in Taiwan. To large extent, English is learned during the primary school. Meanwhile, "Learning English" is a conscious learning, not a subconscious learning like the first languages. In Taiwan, English learning has always been a key subject over the past decades, but with the expansion of universities and technology institutions, along with the impact of fewer children, the English learning motivation and attitude of students has been deteriorating. It is hoped that through this study can arouse teachers to understand the predictable factors that influences students' English learning and be more aware of the correlation between genders on language learning. It is believed that in the current mixed-gender class setting, both genders can improve their foreign language learning through communication and interaction, it is important that the teachers should bear in mind that students learn best when teaching styles are matched to their learning styles.

### **PARTICIPANTS**

The study participants were sampled from a technological institute in the central part of Taiwan, they were all chosen from the daytime department. A total of 246 questionnaires were sent out during the regular session, excluding 14 invalid questionnaires that were not completely answered. A total of 232 valid questionnaires were sent, accounting for 97.9% of the total number. That is, a total of 152 questionnaires were sent out by male students, of which 10 were invalid and 142 were valid, accounting for 57.7% of the total number. In contrast, 94 questionnaires were sent by female students, including 4 invalid questionnaires and 90 valid questionnaires, accounting for 36.6% of the total questionnaires sent. Thus, totally 232 participants, 142 males

and 90 females from seven classes participated in this study. They were from five different academic backgrounds: Commercial Design, Industrial Engineering & Management; Information Management, Cosmetology and Styling, Electronic Engineering; Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Applied Foreign Languages and Civil Engineering. All students were sophomores and had received at least six-year standard formal English training in the Taiwanese education system.

### **DATA AND METHODOLOGY**

Research Tool: "EFL Students' English Learning Satisfaction Questionnaire"

The learning satisfaction questionnaire was based on the results of literature review referring to a learning satisfaction questionnaire compiled by Wei Yinhe (2003). Considering the fact that the complexity of disguised forms cannot be controlled, this study defines the English learning satisfaction scale in two parts: teachers' instruction and course content. This questionnaire was composed of 34 questions, divided into two parts. The first part was personal background information, and the second part was a survey on the teacher's satisfaction with instruction and course content, with a total of 28 questions. Among them, questions 1 to 13 belong to the satisfaction survey of the teachers' instruction, and questions 14 to 28 belong to the satisfaction survey of the course content.

All questionnaire items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5: "strongly disagree", "disagree", "uncertain", "agree" and "strongly agree", which were expressed as 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively. The collected questionnaires were analyzed by frequency distribution, percentage, descriptive statistics, T-test and ANOVA are performed in order to ascertain whether or not there was a significant difference in the degree of satisfaction with the sample EFL university students' English Learning Satisfaction subjects that depends on genders.

### **VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY REVIEW**

When the first draft of the questionnaire was completed, two scholars were invited to make amendments to the questionnaire content, the relevance of the research framework, and the terms of the questionnaire to establish the content validity of the questionnaire. A pre-test reliability analysis was conducted with 67 sophomore technology university students from three classes and the final questionnaire was completed. In addition, Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient was used to understand the internal consistency coefficient of each subscale, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient of EFL students' English learning satisfaction was obtained to be .97, indicating that the reliability of the measurement tools in this study was excellent.

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## ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTION

Research question: Are there any differences in the learning satisfaction of teachers’ instruction and course content among students with genders?

Based on the comparison between the average and standard deviation of EFL students' satisfaction with English learning

in Table 1, it was shown that on the whole, EFL students' satisfaction with course content was not as high as their satisfaction with teachers' instruction. That is to say, the EFL students were more satisfied with their teachers' instruction than course content.

**Table 1.** Mean and standard deviation of EFL students' satisfaction in English learning

Item	Mean	SD	N
Satisfaction with teachers' instruction	3.99	0.64	232
Satisfaction with course content	3.78	0.75	232

As seen in Table 2, in terms of teachers’ instruction satisfaction, males (M=4.06, SD=0.71) and females (M=3.88, SD=0.48). Thus, in terms of teachers’ instruction satisfaction,

the average value of male students' satisfaction with teachers' instruction was higher than that of female students.

**Table 2.** Means and standard deviations for students' satisfaction with teachers’ instruction and course content of Groups by Genders

Males	M	SD	R
Satisfaction with teachers' instruction	4.06	0.71	142
Satisfaction with course content	3.85	0.85	142
Overall learning Satisfaction	4.09	0.78	142
Females	M	SD	R
Satisfaction with teachers' instruction	3.88	0.48	90
Satisfaction with course content	3.68	0.56	90
Overall learning Satisfaction	3.90	0.52	90

As seen from ANOVA statistical analysis that EFL students' satisfaction with teachers’ instruction was

significantly different from that of males and females ( $p < .05$ ). Table 3.

**Table 3.** ANOVA tests of between-subjects’ effects of students' satisfaction with teachers’ instruction of different genders

	SS	df	MS	F	p
Teachers’ instruction	1.862	1	1.862	4.631	.032
* Genders	92.453	230	.402		
	93.314	231			

As shown in Table 4, among the 13 variables of "satisfaction with teachers’ instruction", the top three ranking items for male students were No.12: "Teachers never be late for class or absent for no reason" (M=4.37, SD=.75), followed by No.4: "Teachers are earnest and dutiful", (M=4.22, SD=.72), and the No.2. "Teachers have rich

professional knowledge", (M=4.15, SD=.78). As for the bottom three were No.3: “Teachers’ personal teaching style is charming", (M=3.92, SD=.92), followed by No.9: "Lively teaching style contributes to my learning", (M=3.92, SD=.93), and No.8: "Teachers can evaluate English performance in multiple ways" (M=3.92, SD=.96), Table 5.

**Table 4.** Listed top three variables of satisfaction with teachers' instruction by male students

Item	Mean	SD	R
12. Teachers never be late for class or absent for no reason	4.37	0.75	1
4. Teachers are earnest and dutiful	4.22	0.72	2
2. Teachers have rich professional knowledge	4.15	0.78	3

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**Table 5.** Listed bottom three variables of satisfaction with teachers' instruction by male students

Item	Mean	SD	R
3. Teachers' personal teaching styles are charming	3.92	0.92	1
9. Lively teaching style contributes to my learning	3.92	0.93	2
8. Teachers can evaluate English performance in multiple ways	3.92	0.96	3

Mean and standard deviation of male students' satisfaction with teachers' instruction as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Self-Reported on the satisfaction with teachers' instruction of males

No	Satisfaction with teachers' instruction No. 1-13	M	SD	R
12	Teachers never be late for class or absent for no reason	4.37	.75	1
4	Teachers are earnest and dutiful	4.22	.72	2
2	Teachers have rich professional knowledge	4.15	.78	3
5	The teacher speaks clearly	4.08	.90	4
7	Teachers respond appropriately to students’ reactions.	4.08	.88	5
10	The teacher's explanation is clear.	4.05	.84	6
1	Teachers interact well with students in class.	4.04	.88	7
6	Teachers can use multiple teaching methods to teach	4.02	.90	8
11	Teachers can combine theory with practice in class	4.01	.92	9
13	On the whole, I am satisfied with the English instruction	4.01	.91	10
8	Teachers can evaluate English performance in multiple ways	3.92	.96	11
9	Lively teaching style contributes to my learning	3.92	.93	12
3	Teachers' personal teaching styles are charming	3.92	.92	13

As shown in Table 7, among the 13 variables of "Satisfaction with teachers’ instruction", the top three items for female students were No.12: "Teachers never be late for class or absent for no reason" (M=4.23, SD=. 63), followed by No.4: "Teachers are earnest and dutiful", (M=4.08, SD=.60), and No2. "Teachers have rich professional

knowledge", (M=4.02, SD=.58). As for bottom three were listed No.9: "Lively teaching style contributes to my learning", (M=3.61, SD=.71), followed by No.3: “Teachers’ personal teaching styles are charming”, (M=3.70, SD=.69), and No.6: "Teachers can use multiple teaching methods to teach" (M=3.73, SD=. 75), Table 8.

**Table 7.** Listed top three variables of satisfaction with teachers' instruction by female students

Item	Mean	SD	R
12. Teachers never be late for class or absent for no reason	4.23	0.63	1
4. Teachers are earnest and dutiful	4.08	0.60	2
2. Teachers have rich professional knowledge	4.02	0.58	3

**Table 8.** Listed bottom three variables of satisfaction with teachers' instruction by female students

Item	Mean	SD	R
9. Lively teaching style contributes to my learning	3.61	0.71	1
3. Teachers’ personal teaching styles are charming	3.73	0.96	2
6. Teachers can use multiple teaching methods to teach		0.75	3

Mean and standard deviation of female students' satisfaction with teachers' instruction as shown in Table 9.

**Table 9.** Self-Reported on the satisfaction with teachers' instruction of females

No	satisfaction with teachers' instruction No. 1-13	M	SD	R
12	Teachers never be late for class or absent for no reason	4.23	.63	1
4	Teachers are earnest and dutiful	4.08	.60	2
2	Teachers have rich professional knowledge	4.02	.58	3
8	Teachers can evaluate English performance in multiple ways	4.01	.55	4

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7	Teachers respond appropriately to students’ reactions.	3.88	.65	5
1	Teachers interact well with students in class.	3.87	.62	6
5	The teacher speaks clearly	3.86	.65	7
11	Teachers can combine theory with practice in class	3.86	.71	8
10	The teacher's explanation is clear.	3.77	.69	9
13	On the whole, I am satisfied with the English instruction	3.77	.69	9
6	Teachers can use multiple teaching methods to teach	3.73	.75	10
3	Teachers' personal teaching styles are charming	3.70	.69	11
9	Lively teaching style contributes to my learning	3.61	.71	12

As seen from ANOVA statistical analysis that EFL students' satisfaction with course content was not significantly different from that of male and female ( $p > .05$ ). Table 10.

**Table 10.** ANOVA tests of between-subjects effects of satisfaction with course content of different genders

	SS	df	MS	F	<i>p</i>
Course content	1.520	1	1.520	2.695	.102
* Genders	129.744	230	.564		
	131.264	231			

As shown in Table 11, among the 15 variables of "satisfaction with course content", the top three ranking items for male students were No.14 "Teachers are fully prepared for teaching", ( $M=4.06$ ,  $SD=.82$ ), followed by No.15 "Teachers can carefully answer my questions on study, homework or test papers", ( $M=4.04$ ,  $SD=.92$ ), and No.20 "Course content can adapt to the trends of the times", ( $M=3.89$ ,  $SD=.94$ ). The

bottom three ranked questions were: No. 27 "English ability group instruction lifts my English learning inspiration", ( $M=3.60$ ,  $SD=1.14$ ), followed by No.17 "English lessons can cultivate and enhance my interest in learning English", ( $M=3.77$ ,  $SD=1.01$ ), and No.24 "The course content meet my needs", ( $M=3.80$ ,  $SD=1.02$ ), Table 12.

**Table 11.** Listed top three satisfaction with course content by male students

N	M	SD	R
14. Teachers are fully prepared for teaching	4.06	0.82	1
15. Teachers can carefully answer my questions on study, homework or test papers	4.04	0.92	2
20. Course content can adapt to the trends of the times	3.89	0.94	3

**Table 12.** Listed bottom three satisfaction with course content by male students

N	M	SD	R
27. English ability group instruction lifts my English learning inspiration	3.60	1.14	1
17. English lessons can cultivate and enhance my interest in learning English	3.77	1.01	2
24. The course content meet my needs	3.80	1.02	3

Mean and standard deviation of male students' satisfaction with course content as shown in shown in Table 13.

**Table 13.** Self-Reported on the satisfaction with course content of males

No	Satisfaction with course content N0. 14-28	M	SD	R
14	Teachers are fully prepared for teaching.	4.06	.82	1
15	Teachers can carefully answer my questions on study, homework or test papers	4.04	.94	2
20	Course content can adapt to the trends of the times	3.89	.94	3
18	English lessons can improve my understanding of international affairs and foreign culture	3.88	.96	4
16	English class can learn effective English learning methods	3.87	.92	5



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19	English class can enhance my English 4 skills, and apply them to real life.	3.85	.98	6
21	The course content helps develop critical thinking skills	3.85	.97	7
28	On the whole, I am satisfied with the English course content	3.84	.99	8
23	I am satisfied with the rich content of the course	3.84	.96	9
22	Courses help promote self-learning.	3.82	1.02	10
26	The design of course content is practical	3.82	.92	11
25	I am satisfied with the moderate difficulty of the content design	3.81	1.02	12
24	The course content meets my needs	3.80	1.02	13
17	English lessons can cultivate and enhance my interest in learning English	3.77	1.01	14
27	English ability group instruction lifts my English learning inspiration	3.60	1.14	15

As shown in Table 14, it was concluded that among the 15 variables of "course content satisfaction", the top three ranking items for female students were the No.14 "Teachers are fully prepared for teaching", (M=3.91, SD=.65), followed by the No.15 " Teachers can carefully answer my questions on study, homework or test papers", (M=3.84, SD=.69), and No.18 "English lessons can improve my understanding of

international affairs and foreign cultures", (M=3.78, SD=.70). The listed bottom three items were No.27 "English ability group instruction lifts my English learning inspiration", (M=3.50, SD=.82), followed by No.25 "I am satisfied with the moderate difficulty of the content design", (M=3.57, SD=.78), and No.23 " I am satisfied with the rich content of the course ", (M=3.58, SD=.72), Table 15.

**Table 14.** Listed top three satisfaction with course content by female students

N	M	SD	R
14. Teachers are fully prepared for teaching	3.91	0.65	1
15. Teachers can carefully answer my questions on study, homework or test papers	3.84	0.69	2
18. English lessons can improve my understanding of international affairs and foreign cultures	3.78	0.70	3

**Table 15.** Listed bottom three satisfaction with course content by female students

N	M	SD	R
27. English ability group instruction lifts my English learning inspiration	3.50	0.82	1
25. I am satisfied with the moderate difficulty of the content design	3.57	0.78	2
23. I am satisfied with the rich content of the course	3.58	0.72	3

Mean and standard deviation of female students' satisfaction with course content as shown in Table 16.

**Table 16.** Self-Reported on the satisfaction with course content of females

No	Satisfaction with course content of females No. 14-28	M	SD	R
14	Teachers are fully prepared for teaching.	3.91	.65	1
15	Teacher can carefully answer my questions on study, homework or test papers	3.84	.69	2
18	English lessons can improve my understanding of international affairs and foreign cultures	3.78	.70	3
16	English class can learn effective English learning methods	3.76	.71	4
19	English class can enhance my English 4 skills, and apply them to real life	3.74	.70	5
20	Course content can adapt to the trends of the times	3.71	.69	6
22	Courses help promote self-learning.	3.68	.70	7
17	English lessons can cultivate and enhance my interest in	3.67	.75	8

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	learning English			
28	On the whole, I am satisfied with the English course content	3.64	.71	9
26	The design of course content is practical	3.63	.80	10
21	The course content helps develop critical thinking skills	3.62	.74	11
24	The course content meets my needs	3.60	.73	12
23	I am satisfied with the rich content of the course	3.58	.72	13
25	I am satisfied with the moderate difficulty of the content design	3.57	.78	14
27	English ability group instruction lifts my English learning inspiration	3.50	.82	15

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

#### The results of this study conclude as follows:

The result of this study was not consistent with the previous findings. This study found that male students reported higher satisfaction with English learning than females. Thus, this research contributes new evidence on gender differences in terms of student satisfaction with English learning. Furthermore, the EFL university students reported higher satisfaction with teachers’ instruction than with the course content, male students reported higher satisfaction with the overall English learning satisfaction than their counterparts.

The findings of this study suggested that the EFL university students, male or female reported higher satisfaction with teachers’ instruction than with the course content. Male students reported higher satisfaction with the overall English learning satisfaction (satisfaction with teachers’ instruction and course content) than their counterparts.

The satisfaction with teacher’s English teaching was significantly different among different genders. Among the variables of satisfaction with the teacher’s English teaching, students reported No.12, “Teachers never be late for class or absent for no reason” and No.4, “Teachers are earnest and dutiful”, as the top two highest satisfaction choices for both male and female students. Whereas, they listed No.3, “Teachers’ personal teaching styles are charming” and No.9, “Lively teaching style contributes to my learning” as the least satisfaction rate. Thus, this suggests that a match between teaching and learning styles helps to motivate students’ learning process. Teachers should develop more efficient curriculum and lively teaching styles to obtain better results in the classroom.

The satisfaction with course content by EFL university students was not significantly different between genders, but male students reported higher satisfaction with the course content than females. Among the variables of satisfaction with the course content, students reported No.14, “Teachers are fully prepared for teaching” and No.15, “Teachers can carefully answer my questions on study, homework or test papers”, as the top two highest satisfaction choices. Whereas, both genders listed No.27, “English ability group instruction

lifts my English learning inspiration” as the least satisfaction rate. This suggests that English teachers may employ different teaching methods to make up for differences in student levels in order not to impact students’ self-esteem, such as team teaching, peer learning to boost learning effectiveness and motivation.

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