

**GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF
ENGLISH LANGUAGE: IMPLICATION ON THE NIGERIAN
ECONOMY**

OKEKE, Gift Chioma

Department of Language and Communication Education
School of General Studies Education,
Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo;
Email: okekegift2018@gmail.com
Phone No: 07069322922

ALABI, Temitope Dasola

Department of Language and Communication Education
School of General Studies Education,
Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo;
Email: suliyataleem@gmail.com
Phone No: 08162408813

ADELEKE, Adewumi Modinat

Department of Language and Communication Education
School of General Studies Education,
Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo;
Phone No: 08135957922

Abstract

The study investigated gender inequality in the teaching and learning of English Language. The population consists of secondary school students in Afijio Local Government Area, Oyo State. Proportionate random sampling technique was used to select thirty students each from five (5) schools to make one hundred and fifty (150) students as sample for the study. A self structured validated questionnaire was used as a research instrument. Five (5) research questions guided the study and the analysis was done using simple frequency and standard deviation. The result of the study revealed that government has seen gender inequality in English Language as problem. Also, parental attitude has significant relationship with the problem of gender inequality in English Language and there is no significant relationship with the perception of urban men and rural men towards the English Language of the female gender since they differ in their perception of the female folk. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that there is the need to embark on a more serious and rigorous

enlightenment drive to encourage the female gender to take active participation in various English Language programs available to them or specially designed for them.

Keywords: Gender, Inequality, Teaching, Learning, and Nigerian Economy

Introduction

English is the language mostly used for communication. Learning English is important as people all over the world communicate in English mostly. It is noteworthy that, of the five official languages UN recognizes, English language takes the first position because of its easy access to people across the nations (Madawaka, 2004). The other reason might be because almost half of the nations in the world were under the British rule. Hence, all the nations under the British rule had to learn English compulsorily. For others, learning English is important to keep pace with the modern world and many are influenced by English culture. English has emerged as the most important global language and also evolved to be a language of science and technology. English as a second Language (ESL) helps students learn how to speak, read and write English. English as a Second Language is a traditional term for the use or study of the English language by non-native speakers in an English-speaking environment. In many schools, English is taught as second language with different approaches to those whose primary language is not English (Okonkwo, 2017).

The heavy dependence on English Language makes it a subject that is dreaded by nearly all pupils especially girls at the secondary school level. Because of this English Language enjoys the most popularity among the subjects, thereby resulting in the dearth of girls pursuing English Language (Okonkwo, 2017). This has often resulted in girls' low enrolment in English Language at the various institutions of higher learning which has brought about few female teachers teaching English Language in our secondary schools. This fact has been earlier confirmed by Ogunleye (2019). Furthermore, girls' under-achievement in English Language could be seen from the performance in externally conducted examinations (Adeyemi, 2018).

Many factors have been identified to be influencing low enrolment in secondary school English Language. These include lack of social-cultural factor and influence of others or peers, home background of students; perceiving English Language as a difficult subject, low popularity index and rating among other school subjects (Ogunleye, 2017). Ogunleye (2017) also identified low parental expectation, encouragement, and fewer opportunities to work with

language materials and instruments and also low participation of girls in extra curricula activities as some of the factors contributing to girls low achievement level in English Language. All the above mentioned factors are also applicable to other subjects. In view of this, the study seeks to identify causes of gender inequality in the teaching and learning of English Language as well as contributing factors and the implication on the national economy. The result of this study will go a long way in addressing some of the current Nigerian economic challenge.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of the potency of the female gender, they have been relegated to the background as far as English Language is concerned. Regrettably, the effort at capacitating the female through English Language has met with little success. This is because the prejudice against women had persisted, despite the fact that women consists about half of the population of Oyo state and Nigeria at large. There is nothing to write home about in the performance of female student in English Language in the areas where the field work was conducted. The female gender have extremely low performance in the Senior School Certificate Examination and National Examination Council English Language examinations in the last decade, making it impossible to further in English Language and other subjects in the nations higher institutions of higher learning. In view of this, the study seeks to investigate this trend and as such proffered solutions and recommendations.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to identify causes and the resultant effects of gender disparity in the teaching and learning of English Language in some selected secondary schools in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo state. This shall be achieved through the following specific purposes:

1. Find out the nature of the pupils performance towards the teaching and learning of English Language in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo state.
2. Discover the gender inequality and its effect on the learning of English Language.
3. To establish whether performance of pupils towards the learning of English Language in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo state have positive impact.
4. To determine whether there is any gender inequality in teaching and learning of English

Language in our schools.

5. Find out the influence of these on the performance of pupils in English Language tests.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What are the factors that contribute to the failures in English Language between male and female in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo state?
2. Does gender inequality have effect on teaching and learning of English Language?
3. Does gender inequality affect the performance of pupils in learning of English Language?
4. What is the government perspective towards solving the problem of gender inequality in English Language?
5. What are the likely hindrances faced by the government and other stakeholders in solving the problems of gender inequality in English Language?

Significance of the Study

The study shall reveal the challenges encountered especially the female students during the course of the learning processes and recommend solutions which shall be useful to both the students, teachers, parents and stakeholders in education.

Methodology

The design for this study is a survey research design. The population of this study consists the secondary school students in Afijio Local Government Area, Oyo State. Proportionate random sampling technique was used to select thirty students each from five (5) schools selected to make one hundred and fifty (150) students as sample for the study. A self structured questionnaire was used as a research instrument for the study which was validated by two experts, one in the field of test and measurement and the second one from English language department at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo. Adjustment and correction were made on the instrument after validity and was administered on students of fifty senior secondary school students in Ilora Grammar School which is not part of the sample under consideration for reliability test and reliability coefficient of 0.85 was arrived at using croabanch alpha which presumed that the instrument is reliable.

Data analysis

The analysis was arranged according to the stated research questions;

Research questions 1: What are the factors that contribute to the failures in English Language between male and female in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo state?

Table 1: Factors that determine men's attitude

Factor	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%	TOTAL	%
Social economic background of parents affect the English Language of girl-child	75	50	45	30	2	1.3	17	11.3	11	7.3	150	100
Child rearing also militate against the edition of the female child	70	46.7	50	33.3	-	-	20	13.3	10	6.7	150	100
Illiteracy of men affect their interest to send girls to schools	80	53.3	50	33.3	3	3	7	4.7	10	6.7	150	100
Health condition of the girls child affect her English language opportunities	60	40	55	36.7	5	3.3	10	6.7	20	13.3	150	100

Source: Field work

From table one above, 75 out of 150 respondents strongly agreed that social economic status of men is one of the major factors that hindered men to sponsor the English Language of the female gender while 45 respondents representing 30 percent supported the above opinion that socioeconomic factors affect the attitude of men towards the English Language of the female gender. Two of the respondents were undecided whether socioeconomic status of men affects their attitude or not. The other 17 and 11 representing 11.3 and 7.3 respectively disagreed as well as strongly disagreed that economic status of men affects their attitude towards

the English Language of the female gender.

Similarly, 70 (46.7%) out of 150 respondents ticked agreed and 50(33.3%) ticked strongly agreed that child rearing is another factor that militate against the English Language of the female gender, while the remaining 20 (13.3%) and 10 (6.7%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively rejected the opinion that child rearing affect the attitude of men towards the English Language of the opposite sex.

However, 80 (53.3%) and 50 (33.3%) out of 150 respondents respectively opted for agreed an strongly agreed that illiteracy affect men not to belief in the English Language of the female gender while 3 (2%) respondents out of 150 were undecided. The remaining 7 (4.7%) and 10 (6.7%) respectively opted for disagreed and strongly disagreed with the opinion that illiteracy affect men attitude towards the English Language of the female gender.

Finally, 60 (40%) and 55 (36.7) out of 15, 0 respondents respectively agreed and strongly agreed that the health condition of the girl child affects her English Language chance. While 5 (3.3%) out the 150 respondents were not certain whether or not the health condition of the girl child affects her English Language opportunities. As concerning the remaining 10 (6.7%) and 20 (13.3%) respectively rejected the opinion.

Research question 2: Does gender inequality have an effect on teaching and learning of English Language?

Table 2: The interest of child in the English Language over the female gender

Factor	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%	TOTAL	%
Men are in favour of the English of the female gender	60	40	75	50	3	2	7	4.7	5	3.3	150	100
Men do not like the English Language of the female gender	30	20	10	6.7	5	3.3	50	33.3	55	36.7	150	100

Source: Field work

From table two above, 60 (40%) and 75 (50%) tick strongly agreed and agreed to support the statement that men are in favour of the English Language of the female gender in

the society. While 3 (2%) respondents were undecided and the remaining 7(4.7%) and 5 (3.3%) tick disagreed and strongly disagreed to reject the statement that men are in favour of the English Language of the female gender.

Again, 30 (20%) and 10 (6.7%) respondents out of 150 respondents agreed and strongly agreed that men do not like the English Language of the female gender while 5 (3.3%) of the respondents could not decide whether or not men like the English Language of the female child. Concerning the remaining 50 (33.3%) and 55 (36.7%) of the respondents marked disagreed and strongly disagreed to counter the statement that men do not like the English Language of the female gender.

Research question 3: Does the gender inequality affect the performance of pupils in learning English Language?

Factor	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%	TOTAL	%
The females are assets to their husband families	40	26.7	30	20	4	2.7	60	40	16	10.6	150	100
The girl-child English Language ends in the kitchen	30	20	25	16.7	3	2	60	40	32	21.3	150	100
The female gender have nothing to offer them to keep the home and rear children	25	15.7	15	10	-	-	65	43.3	45	30	150	
The culture of the land hindered the English Language of the female	45	30	40	26.6	2	1.3	43	28.7	20	13.3	150	

Source: Field work

Table three above indicates that 40 (26.7%) and 30 (20%) out of the 150 respondents strongly agreed and agreed to state that the female children are asset to their husband families. While 3 (2%) of the respondents could not decide and the remaining 60 (40%) and 16 (10.6%) of the respondents are of the view point that the female children are only assets to their husband family but to the larger society.

Similarly, 30 (20%) and 25 (16.7%) the respondents support the opinion that female child English Language ends in the kitchen by ticking agreed and strongly agreed. 3 (2%) out of the 150 respondents were undecided if the English Language of the female child ends in the kitchen or not. The remaining 60 (40%) and 32 (21.3%) of the respondents were in contrast with the opinion that the English Language of the female child ends in the kitchen.

Furthermore, 25 (16.7%) and 15 (10%) of the total respondents of 150 also agreed and strongly agreed to support the statement that the female child have nothing to offer than to keep the home and rear children. The remaining 65 (43.3%) and, 45 (30%) of the respondents rejected the statement by ticking disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Finally, 45 (30%) and 40 (26.7%) of the total respondents of 150 are of the opinion that the culture of the land hindered the English Language of the female gender and 2 (1.3%) out of 150 respondents were not sure whether the culture of the land hinder or support the English Language of the female gender. The rest 43 (28.7%) and 20 (13.3%) of the respondents say that the culture of the land does not hinder the English Language of the female gender by marking disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Research Question 4: What is the government perspective towards solving the problem of gender inequality in English Language?

Government perception and action	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%	TOTAL	%
Government have seen Gender inequality in English language as a problems	42	28	58	38.6	-	-	28	18.7	22	14.7	150	100
Government have plan some programmes and executed them to solve the problems of gender imbalance in English Language	49	32.7	62	41.3	4	2.7	30	20	5	3.3	150	100

Source: field work

From the table 4 above, 42 (20%) and 58 (38.6%) out of 150 respondents accepted the statement that government have seen gender inequality in English Language as problem while 28(18.7%) and 22 (14.7%) countered the statement by ticking disagreed and strongly disagreed. Again, 49 (32.7%) and 62 (41.3%) out of the 150 respondents accepted that government have planned and executed some programmes to ameliorate the problem of gender inequality in English Language. 4 of the respondents representing 2.7 percent were not sure if the government has taken any action or not. The rest 30 (20%) and had 5 (3.3%) of the respondents rejected the statement that government have taken any action to solve the problem of gender inequality in English Language.

Research question 5: What are the likely hindrances faced by the government and other stakeholders in solving the problems of gender inequality in English Language?

Hindrances	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%	TOTAL	%
Inadequate funding and manpower hindered gender equality in English language	41	27.3	32	41.3	7	4.7	15	10	25	16.7	150	100
Inadequate skills and personnel to execute government programmed	35	23.3	76	5.7	3	2	201	3.3	16	16.7	150	100

Source: field work

The first item in the above table indicates that 41 (27.3%) and 62 (41.3%) of the respondents ticked strongly agreed and agreed respectively to support the statement that inadequate funding and manpower contributed to problem of gender inequality in English Language while 7 of the respondents representing 4.7 percent were neutral to the opinion. The remaining 15 (10%) and 25 (16.7%) of the respondents disbelieved the statement by indicating on disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

That the parents are not in support of the English Language of their daughters but rather supported the child even though they are limited by the economic status and social-cultural factors. This is in line with the work of Egbochukwu (2002).

The government have also seen gender inequality in English Language as problem and a threat to the economic wellbeing of the nation and as such stated making efforts to tackle the problem. Moreover, government actions in the past to tackle the problem of gender inequality in English Language were hindered by inadequate funding, manpower, skilled personnel and instability of government in Nigeria.

Parental attitude have significant relationship with the problem of gender inequality in English Language. There is significant relationship between the perception of male and female with the perception and problem of gender inequality in English Language but differ significantly between male and female, such that the male are dominating that of the female counterpart. The result is corroborated by Madawaka (2004). More so, men's perception of the role of the female gender significantly influences their attitude towards their English Language. Finally, there is no significant relationship with the perception of urban men and rural men towards the English Language of the female gender since they differ in their perception of the female folk.

Conclusion

Gender inequality in the teaching/learning English Language is a task that will still take some length of time displaying its ugly trend in Afijio Local Government Area and Oyo State in general, if measures are not taken. The measures to be taken should be met with conscious planning and actions, since some of the factors that have perpetuated the problem of gender inequality in English Language before now are still living. The oral interviews conducted with the teachers and parents reveals that there is no single female child currently pursuing English Language as a course in institutions of higher learning from this area, also there is fewer enrollments of females in all the science related subjects. This shows lack of total commitment from both the students as well as their parents whose sponsorship rest on their heads.

The researchers realized that female students constitute almost half of the populations in all the schools visited; this shows that there is awareness of enrollment of females into school even in the rural areas. What remains is to arouse their interest and give them the best of English Language teaching/learning so that they can also contribute their own quota towards solving the nation's current economic challenges.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- There is the need to embark on a more serious and rigorous enlightenment drive to encourage the female gender to take active participation in various English Language programs available to them or specially designed for them.
- Socio-cultural beliefs and religion should be put aside while the main goal should be to develop the individual to leave a self-fulfilled life as well as contribute his/her own quota to national development parents are to expect good results from the female child as they expected from their male counterpart.
- All stakeholders should put heads together in order to orientate the parents and reshaping their perception about girl child education.

References

- Adeyemi T.O (2018), Science laboratories and the quality of output from secondary school in Ondo State, Nigeria. *Asian Journal of Information Management*, 2(1), 23-30
- Egbochukwu E. O. (2002). Perspective of men towards mathematics: Implication for Woman Mathematics. *African journal of Languages*, 5(2), 34-39
- Ogunleye, A. U. (2019), An assessment of the factors militating against the active participation of rural women in development-oriented language programmes in mid-west Nigeria. *Adult Literacy and development*, 5(2) 8- 25.
- Ogunleye, A. U. (2017). The problem of gender inequality in female mathematics: UBE as the way out in Nigeria. *African journal of Languages*, 5(2), 12-23.
- Okonkwo, R. A. (2017). The role of women leadership in mobilizing women. *Africa Journal of studies*,7(2), 92-98
- Madawaka A. (2004). Girls Mathematics from Islamic perspective: *Sokoto Language Review*, 7(3), 98-105.