

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF GENDER EQUALITY ON LANGUAGE LEARNING OUTCOMES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES AND STUDENT EXPERIENCES

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Abstract

The connections between language acquisition and gender equality has been a crucial topic of inquiry in educational studies in recent years. The impact of gender dynamics on language learning and its consequences for instructional strategies in various educational situations are examined in this study. The study draws attention to enduring differences in language learning outcomes across genders by examining historical and modern viewpoints on gender in education. It examines the theoretical frameworks that support these processes, such as feminist pedagogy and social constructivism, and it surveys the body of research that shows the nuanced connection between language competency and gender norms. This study uses a mixed-methods approach in terms of methodology, combining qualitative information from interviews and classroom observations with quantitative data from language competency tests. Students from a variety of backgrounds participate, enabling a comprehensive knowledge of the experiences of various genders in language learning settings. The results show that boys usually show more confidence, although girls tend to show stronger language ability and involvement, indicating that socialization and cultural expectations greatly influence their experiences.

Key words: feminist pedagogy, educational settings, cultural expectation, personal growth.

The conversation around gender equality in education has accelerated recently, with a focus on the necessity of providing equal opportunity for all students. In an increasingly linked world, learning a language is an essential part of education and a vital path to both professional and personal growth. However, studies show that gender may have a big impact on language learning, affecting anything from classroom participation to general skill levels. This essay examines the complex connection between language development and gender equality, emphasizing the potential and problems that exist in educational settings. A long-standing structure of inequality is shown by looking at the historical background of gender in education. According to studies, there are still notable differences between how boys and girls approach

language acquisition, even in the face of progress made in gender equality. Theoretical frameworks that shed light on how gender norms and expectations influence educational experiences include feminist pedagogy and social constructivism. According to an analysis of previous research, girls frequently do better than boys in language classes, while boys may have more self-confidence, indicating that social and psychological aspects are important in determining language learning results. This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from standardized language assessments with qualitative insights gathered from interviews and classroom observations.

Participants include students from diverse backgrounds, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between gender and language learning. Data collection was conducted over a semester, allowing for a longitudinal perspective on students' experiences. The conversation highlights how important it is for educators and legislators to identify these differences and take action by implementing inclusive teaching practices and gender equality-promoting curricula. The inclusion of many voices and viewpoints in language resources and the promotion of cooperative learning methods are only two examples of the useful suggestions offered for creating an equal language learning environment. Gender equality has come a long way in the past few years and decades. There are more women with access to education at the tertiary level, more women in senior leadership positions, and women's rights have developed significantly. But much more is still to be achieved since women continue to face violence and discrimination. On average, women earn lower salaries and have lower levels of access to education compared to men. In this context, institutions of higher education can be critical actors for change. They can make certain that their female students have equal chances regarding applications, admissions, and completion rates. They can teach curricula that promote gender equality and gender equity, as well as equal representation. Through their research, they can expose inequalities, such as how women are discriminated against, and ensure that datasets include women's perspectives. Moreover, universities and colleges can help address gender inequality in the broader society by engaging in outreach projects that support women. In many ways, institutions of higher education have already been a positive force in the journey toward gender equality. However, with their significant outreach and impact, these institutions hold a much wider role in driving gender equality beyond their campuses into communities. According to Dr. Bhavani Rao, UNESCO Chair on Gender Equality and Director of the Center for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality at Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham University, a member institution of the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) in India, it appears that tertiary institutions do not seem to be doing much beyond their walls. To Dr. Rao, it has become apparent that "[universities] lose track of what happens to the girls who graduate from their programs." Of course, there are alumni, but in terms of their career paths, are they continuing, or do

they drop off? According to Dr. Rao, there needs to be a sufficient amount of data or resources to find the answer to such questions. Along these lines, the Gender Equality: How Global Universities are Performing Report says that “universities are more focused on measuring women’s access to higher education than tracking their outcomes and success rates.” The document was developed by The Times Higher Education (THE) and the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. In practice, less than two-thirds of universities track women’s graduation rates. And while getting women more access to higher education is a pivotal aspect of gender equality, as reflected in target 4.3 of Sustainable Development Goal 4, it almost becomes redundant. The latter, especially when not followed through. Referring back to Dr. Rao, who provided her insights and contributions to the report mentioned above and made an in-depth study on India regarding outcomes and success rates of graduated women in STEM, the initial numbers of women were actually more significant than the number of men coming into these courses. However, the professions they choose after they graduate are not necessarily in STEM-related fields. When it comes to the indicators of universities’ policies and services, not only on women’s progress but on other factors like anti-discrimination and other gender equality policies, most institutions initially declare that they have these measures. Yet, according to data retrieved by THE and UNESCO-IESALC for their report, the proportion of universities able to supply relevant documentation is often much lower. This is not to say that there are no policies or services in educational institutions at the tertiary level to combat other areas of gender inequality. Instead, it could be because universities and colleges lack the resources to track these measures. Dr. Rao argues that there is no actual scientific database or longitudinal findings that her own university can provide on these issues. Yet, services and policies are being implemented to address them. “If there are young women that have the research capacity or are interested in research, then we create jobs within the research centers in the university so that they can continue to be in touch with research and then eventually help them get into the Ph.D. track if and whenever they are ready,” she explained. While this example covers the “women’s progress” indicator, the institution also provides services to combat other aspects of gender equity. For example, the university is creating “support circles for women,” which act similar to a mental health support group for women only, both students and staff alike. This group helps to facilitate gender sense, gender equality practices, and stress management. In addition, it helps navigate these women through managing and balancing life at home and life at school or work, the challenges of raising children while being in school, and all other mental health aspects. Dr. Rao added that while the gender inequality problem is systemic, there is still a major part that universities and colleges can play as organizations and campaigners. For her, one of the most important things she believes an institution of higher education can do is to pilot their curriculum to include

topics related to gender equity and equality. Building tolerance and awareness is the first step to taking this movement forward.

In the conclusion, this paper makes the case that attaining gender equality in language instruction benefits both individual students and the larger social objectives of inclusion and fairness. The study intends to influence future research and practice by emphasizing the significance of addressing gender dynamics in language acquisition and promoting a more equitable educational environment that helps all students realize their full potential

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