

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AT THE UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL IN ADILABAD DISTRICT: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Gender inequality in education is an unrelenting problem in Indian society, particularly for girls from rural areas and lower socioeconomic backgrounds. During the past several decades, India has achieved success in girls' school enrolment and in enacting policies to address educational inequalities such as those based on gender. However, education gaps still exist. Language is one of the basic requirements for education. Several research studies across the world proved that gender differences exist in learning a language. The main objective of this article is to find the role of gender differences among the undergraduate students of Adilabad district, Telangana state, India in learning the English language. For this purpose, the researcher elicited responses through a structured questionnaire from the sample population. The data so obtained as analyzed and discussed in this paper.

KEYWORDS: Gender Differences, English Language Learning, Under Graduate Students & Case Study

INTRODUCTION

Prior research details educational disparities by various demographic and school-related factors such as gender, social background, and access to educational resources. To build on this foundation, additional research is needed to further examine factors and moderating influences that are associated with gender gaps, and to assess how the effects of India's increasing educational attainment, public policies targeted to girls, and changing educational landscape are having an impact.

DIFFERENCES IN THE FIELD OF GENDER EDUCATION

Women education has become an important aspect now-a-days for boosting the social and economic development of the country. Keeping this in mind the government of India is trying to bring in new policies and amendments to ascertain the promotion of Girls Education. This facet of promotion of Girls Education needs to be in the form of content and quality of schooling, teachers, materials, enrolments, retentions, acquisition of basic literacy and numeric skills. It results in a purposeful change in social development in various sectors, increasing economic productivity, active political participation, health and sanitation, delayed marriage and making the effective investment for the future generation. However, there are many other possible ways and methods to achieve this national goal, but the education of girls is an effective way which has a concurrent impact on all aspects. Significantly, India is the second largest educational system in the world (after China) with a total enrolment of 114.6 million at primary and 41.3 million at upper primary levels; out of which 47.52 million and 18.72 million are girls at primary and up primary levels respectively.

GENDER RATIO IN ADILABAD DISTRICT

As per Census 2011, the total population of Adilabad district is 27,41,239 of which male and female are 13,69,597 and 13,71,642 respectively. The total literacy percent of Adilabad district is 61.01% of which female and male is 51.31% and 70.81% respectively.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In terms of general language learning strategies, some studies show minimal differences between males and females (Shmais, 2003; Szoke & Sheorey, 2002) or even higher strategy use for males (Baily, 1996). Most current literature in this area, however, shows that females tend to be more active strategy users than their male counterparts (Oxford, 1993). The merits of this and other generalizations regarding gender and second language learning remain hotly debated and should be approached with caution (Ehrlich, 1997; Kobayashi, 2002; Patterson, 1995), especially in light of the widely held myth, even among teachers and researchers, that females are innately more skilled language learners, which Oxford, Ehrman, and Nyikos (1988) identify as “the language learning folklore that women learn languages ‘better’ than men” (p. 321).

METHODOLOGY

The researcher used a descriptive survey through the questionnaire for the study. A sample of 150 UG students (75 boys + 75 girls) is randomly selected from Degree Colleges situated in Adilabad district. A structured questionnaire was administered to the sample to elicit responses from them. The researcher cleared the doubts that the sample raised while filling up the questionnaire.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data obtained through the structured questionnaire along with the analysis is presented below:

- Studying English at school level helps in building grammar and vocabulary.

Mostly/Sometimes/Never

This question was asked to know whether studying English at school level helps in building grammar and vocabulary. Of the total sample, 59% girls and 56% boys stated that studying English at school level ‘mostly’ helps in building grammar and vocabulary, while 35% girls 37% boys expressed that studying English at school level ‘sometimes’ helps in building grammar and vocabulary. On the other hand, 7% of girls and 7% boys said that studying English at school level ‘never’ helps in building grammar and vocabulary.

It can be observed from the above data that there is little variation in opinion between boys and girls. However, more girls opined that studying the English language at school level helps in building grammar and vocabulary.

- Studying English at the school raised my interest in learning English.

Mostly/Sometimes/Never

To this question 39% of the girls and 51% of the boys stated that studying English at school ‘mostly’ raised their interest in learning English, while 37% of the girls and 32% of the boys felt that studying English at school ‘sometimes’ raised their interest in learning English and another 11% of the girls and 17% of the boys said that studying English at school ‘never’ raised their interest in learning English.

It can be understood from the responses that most of the boys felt that studying English at the school raised their interest in learning English. Reasons for this might vary from understanding the language, clearing doubts by the teachers of English, attending to school regularly and so on.

- I can manage learning English without anyone's help.

Mostly/ Sometimes/ Never

In response to this question 48% of the girls and 45% of the boys stated that they can manage learning English without anyone's help; while 31% girls and 27% boys expressed that they can manage learning English without anyone's help only 'sometimes'; whereas 21% of the girls and 28% of the boys felt that they can't manage learning English without anyone's help.

It can be interpreted from the responses that a majority of the girls stated that they can manage learning English without anyone's help compared to boys. This shows that girls are not dependent on anyone for learning English. It is a good sign of learning on their own helps them in using a variety of new techniques.

- I feel jealous of people who can speak English fluently.

Mostly/Sometimes /Never

In this question 60% of the girls and 56% of the boys expressed that they feel jealous of people who can speak English fluently; on the other hand 31% of the girls and 40% of the boys felt jealous only 'sometimes'; whereas 9% of the girls and 4% of the boys 'never' felt jealous of people who speak English fluently.

It can be interpreted from the responses the more number of girls expressed that they feel jealous of people who can speak English fluently. This shows that girls compare their performance with others more than boys do. If jealousy is only to a certain extent, it can be considered positively. Otherwise, it becomes a major psychological problem.

- People who have good English proficiency are considered to be 'well educated'.

Mostly/ Sometimes / Never

In response to this question 55% of the girls and 53% of the boys stated that people who have good English proficiency are considered to be 'well educated', on the other hand, 37% of the girls and 31% of the boys considered sometimes, whereas 16% girls and 8% boys never considered to be well educated.

It can be understood from the responses that most of the girls' opined people who have good English proficiency are considered to be "well educated". This shows girls compare with the boys they showed exactly but they agree with this opinion.

- I make it a point to read English notices that I come across.

Mostly/ Sometimes / Never

The responses to this question presented as the boys and girls (45%) were given the same responses to this question. They can make a point to read English notices that they come across. And 19% of the boys and 16% of the girls were read English notices. Another 36% of the boys and 44% of the girls were never read English notices as themselves.

It can be observed from the above data that there is little difference between boys and girls. The boys and girls understand English notices that they across easily.

- I note down new words and their meaning.

Mostly/ Sometimes/ Never

51% of the boys and 56% of the girls were noted down new words and their meanings. Another 20% of the boys and 28% of the girls were also noted down new words and their meanings. Another 29% of the boys and 16% of the girls were cannot note down their new words and meanings.

It can be interpreted from the responses that the majority of the girls stated that they can note down new words and their meanings compare to boys. Compare to the boy's girls are interested to maintain clear notes. Generally, most of the girls come to college regularly and they must listen to English classes than the boys.

- I practice using English with friends.

Mostly/ Sometimes/ Never

In this query the student's responses 56% of the boys and 60% of the girls were practice using English with their friends. Another 37% of the boys and 35% of the girls were practice using English with their friends sometimes. And 7 % of the boys and 5% of the girls were never practicing English.

It can be observed from the above data there is little difference between boys and girls. However, most of the girls opined that practice English with their friends. And they can learn easily.

- I try to learn English grammar on my own.

Mostly/ Sometimes/ Never

The responses to this question were 63% of the boys and 65% of the girls were try to learn English for themselves. And the other 12% of the boys and 15% of the girls were also trying o learn English grammar on their own. While the 25% of the boys and 20% of the girls never try to learn English grammar on their own.

It can be understood that the above data most of the girls try o learn English grammar of their own. Majority of the girls learn English on their own because psychologically girls always be ready to work hard. They have more patience than the boys.

- I take opportunities to speak English in class.

Mostly/ Sometimes/ Never

This question was asked to find out the opinion of the respondents most of the girls can take opportunities to speak English in class. 49% of the boys and 53% of the girls were taken Opportunities to speak English in the class. And the other 15% of the boys and 13% of the girls take opportunities to speak English in the class sometimes. But 36% of the boys and 33% of the girls cannot take opportunities to speak English in the class.

It can be understood from the responses of the majority of the girls take opportunities to speak English in the class than the boys. Nowadays girls do not fear anything and they can go all the departments. Girls can learn anything and do anything. So it is the good thing to success for girls.

FINDINGS

- A little difference between boys and girls to the opinion that studying English at school level helps in building grammar and vocabulary. But most of the girls opined that basic grammar and vocabulary build in school level only.

- The majority of the boys felt that studying English at the school raised their interest in learning English. Because they clearing doubts by the teachers of English and go to school regularly.
- A majority of the girls manage learning English without anyone's help than the boys. Because they want to learn independently.
- A vast majority of the girls felt jealous of people who can speak English fluently. So girls
- Want to speak fluently in English.
- 55% of the girls expressed their views people who have good English proficiency are considered to be well educated.
- The majority of the boys and girls learn the English language similarly. And there is little difference between boys and girls to read English notices.
- 56% of the girls expressed their views on that they interested to note down new words and their meanings in English. So girls more interest to the new words and their meanings.
- The most number of the girls interested and practice English with their friends than the boys.
- The little difference between boys and girls to learn English grammar of their own.
- Most of the girls were interested to take opportunities to speak English in the class. They want to learn English eagerly than the boys.

CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded from the study that gender differences in English language learning at undergraduate level. The most number of girls interested to learn the English language than the boys. But their little difference to compare with boys and girls. Most of the girls take opportunities to learn the English language than the boys.

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