

## **PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES IN ENHANCING FEMALE STUDENTS ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS AT FIRST CYCLE LEVEL: THE CASE OF FOUR PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SIDAMA ZONE**

**MESFIN ABERRA**

Hawassa University, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, School of Language and  
Communication Studies Research

### **ABSTRACT**

This research was conducted in four schools demarked with in the technology villages of Hawassa University, namely: Hagere Selam, Melga, Leku and Wondo Gennet Primary Schools. The study required one academic year. The major objective of the study was to investigate the practices and challenges in enhancing female students' performance. The research was designed in conformity with the principles of mixed approach. The main reason was to fill in the gaps in both research designing models. The major research tools used to collect the data were classroom observations, semi-structured interviews conducted with both English teachers teaching the language from Grades 5\_8 and female students learning at the same grades level in each of the school. Moreover, as ample test scores achieved by female students in English test in each school were analysed and interpreted in comparison with the achievements attained by male students Accordingly, the results from the observations showed that the performance of female students was less than males. As the data further indicated, only 26.31% of the female students raised up their hands to answer the English teacher's question in the class in contrary, among male students, 43.5 % of them were willing to answer the same question. During group discussions, similarly, the participations of female students were not as active as males. Many more female students were reticent while various group discussions were going on in the class. The results both from the semi-structured interviews and the analysis of sample test achievements, by the same token, revealed that most female students performed less than males. Nevertheless, the overall effort and performance of female students was not disappointing.

**KEYWORDS:** Achievement, Gender, Performance, Special Support