

THE LINGUISTIC PLACE OF AN EDO WOMAN IN LANGUAGE PRESERVATION

BY

**OSAMUDIAMEN FAITH
ART1901442**

**DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS STUDIES
FACULTY OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY,
EDO STATE, NIGERIA.**

APRIL, 2024.

THE LINGUISTIC PLACE OF AN EDO WOMAN IN LANGUAGE PRESERVATION

BY

**OSAMUDIAMEN FAITH
ART1901442**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS
STUDIES, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY.
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
BACHELOR DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A) HONOURS IN LINGUISTICS
STUDIES.**

APRIL, 2024.

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that this project was done by **OSAMUDIAMEN FAITH (MISS)** with **MAT. NO. ART1901442**, of the Department of Linguistics, University of Benin, Benin city, Edo state, Nigeria.

OSAMUDIAMEN FAITH
STUDENT

DATE

DR. (MRS) O.V. EVBAYIRO
Supervisor

DATE

CONFIRMED BY:

PROF. M.S. AGBO
Head of Department

DATE

EXTERNAL SUPERVISOR

DATE

PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATION

I, **OSAMUDIAMEN FAITH (Miss)**, with matriculation number **ART1901442** declare that this work titled “The Linguistic Place of An Edo Woman in Language Preservation” has successfully passed the anti-plagiarism test, and so does not violate any copyright regulations.

Sign: _____
OSAMUDIAMEN FAITH

DATE

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project was done by **OSAMUDIAMEN FAITH (MISS)** with **MAT. NO. ART1901442**, of the Department of Linguistics, University of Benin, Benin city, Edo state, Nigeria.

DR. (MRS) O.V. EVBAYIRO
(Supervisor)

DATE

PROF. M.S. AGBO
(Head of Department)

DATE

EXTERNAL SUPERVISOR

DATE

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God almighty for the grace and undying love he has shown me and to my loving parents for their relentless prayers and support throughout my stay at this institution. Also, my siblings for their support.

Lastly, I would like to dedicate this project work to my Future husband and kids, though they are not yet in my life but my education is a blessing to them also.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My greatest thanks go to God Almighty for his grace and mercy that kept me alive and healthy throughout the course of my project, nothing would have been possible without him.

My profound gratitude goes to my project supervisor **DR MRS O.V. EVBAYIRO** for her guidance and assistance throughout the project period, and also ensuring that I had an in-depth knowledge of this project.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Head of Linguistics Department, University of Benin, **PROF. M.S. AGBO**. Also, to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, **PROF. L. C. YUKA** and to all other staff of the Department of Linguistics Studies for their guidance and assistance directly or indirectly during my study period in the University of Benin.

I want to say a big thank you to my parents **MR AND MRS OSAMUDIAMEN** for the love and support right from my secondary school till now, also my siblings, **OSAMUDIAMEN TINA** and **OSAMUDIAMEN JOY**. God bless you abundantly. Also, I want to appreciate **MR AMOS OKOJIE**, **MR LANTIS OSEMWENGIE**, **MR KINDNESS OGEDEGBE** for their support during my stay in this institution, may God continue to bless you sir.

Finally, I want to say a big thank you to some persons that made my stay at this institution worthwhile, to mention a few, Ogedegbe Joy, Osayande Favour, Uwagwu Mirabel, Edosomwan Victory, Okoli Chinelo, Oleh Chinenye, Fesomade Adesewa, Aiyede Stephen, Ohwevwo Rex, Erazua Emmanuel, Itoya Obehi, Amratefa Obed, Anigala Peace. May God continue to bless you all abundantly.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL PAGEiii

PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATION iv

CERTIFICATION v

DEDICATION vi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT vii

TABLE OF CONTENTSviii

ABSTRACT xi

CHAPTER ONE 1

INTRODUCTION 1

1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY 1

1.1 THE ÈDO LANGUAGE AND THE SPEAKERS 2

1.2 METHODOLOGY 5

1.3 PURPOSE OF STUDY 6

1.3.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM 6

1.3.2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES 6

1.3.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS 7

1.3.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY 7

1.3.5 SIGNIFICANCE AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY 7

CHAPTER TWO 9

LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.0 INTRODUCTION	9
2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW.....	9
2.2 PREVIOUS STUDIES	11
2.3 CONCERN OF PRESENT STUDY.....	13
CHAPTER THREE	14
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	14
3.0 INTRODUCTION	14
3.1 FEMINIST SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY	15
3.2 A FEMINIST SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY ANALYSIS OF THE LINGUISTIC PLACE OF AN EDO WOMAN IN LANGUAGE PRESERVATION	16
CHAPTER FOUR.....	20
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS	20
4.0 INTRODUCTION	20
4.1 ROLE OF WOMEN IN PRESERVING THE EDO LANGUAGE	20
4.2 WAYS TO SUPPORT AND EMPOWER WOMEN TO USE THE EDO LANGUAGE.....	43
FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE USE OF THE EDO LANGUAGE.....	44
4.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	46
CHAPTER FIVE	47
SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION.....	47

5.0 INTRODUCTION 47

5.1 SUMMARY 47

5.2 FINDINGS..... 48

5.3 CONCLUSION..... 48

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS 49

REFERENCES 50

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the linguistic place of an Edo woman in language preservation. The aim of this research work is to gain a better understanding of the linguistic features of the Edo language, and to explore the role of women in language preservation. The method used in carrying out this research was both primary and secondary. The data for this study was collected using oral interview with competent native speakers of Edo. The data were collected from residents whose ages range from fifty years and above. The respondents were: old people (specifically women), Ekosodin Benin women and the researcher's mother and also documented data from secondary sources. The feminist sociolinguistic theory framework was employed for the analysis of the data. The analysis of the data reveals valuable insights into the ways in which women actively participate in language preservation efforts and contribute to the vitality of the Edo language and culture. The study concludes that through activities such as storytelling, singing traditional songs, and teaching cultural practices, women actively contribute to the transmission of linguistic and cultural knowledge to future generations, thereby playing a crucial role in language preservation efforts. The study is recommended to policymakers, educators, community leaders, and researchers interested in language preservation, gender studies, and cultural heritage.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In many cultures around the globe, women have traditionally been seen as guardians of language and culture. This is because women are often responsible for passing on traditions and knowledge to the next generation. For the Edo people, women have played an important role in preserving the Edo language and associated culture. Additionally, in Edo society, women have traditionally played an important role in preserving language and traditional customs. Adebija (2012) argues that indigenous languages in Africa are at risk of extinction and that women play an important role in preserving these languages. Igboanusi (2013) emphasizes the importance of promoting the use of indigenous languages in education while Abubakar (2013) highlights the urgent need to preserve indigenous languages in Nigeria, which are at risk of extinction. Lakoff (2004) argues that language death can be avoided if language revitalization efforts are made, and that women can play a key role in these efforts. All of these scholars agree that language preservation is an important goal, and that women can play a significant role in achieving this goal. This research work is part of a larger body of scholarship on language preservation and revitalization. In particular, it builds on previous research that has focused on the role of women in language preservation and revitalization efforts. To understand the linguistic position of Edo women in language preservation, it is important to first understand the broader role of women in language preservation efforts, which is what this study aims to achieve. Therefore, the linguistic position of Edo women is deeply related to their role in preserving the language as a whole. Women are also seen as guardians of society's moral fabric, upholding values such as honesty, generosity, and kindness. It is therefore considered an important cultural and linguistic resource in Edo society. There are two motivations for this study. First, it is necessary to record and understand the

linguistic and cultural customs of the Edo people and ensure that these customs are preserved for future generations. Second, the role of women in preserving Edo language and culture must be recognized and valued. This study will help highlight the important role of women in language maintenance and will serve as a resource for future research on this topic. It will also provide valuable information about the language and cultural practices of the Edo people that may be of interest to linguists, anthropologists, and other scholars. Ultimately, the purpose of this study is to contribute to the understanding and preservation of Edo language and culture. It will also raise awareness of the important role of women in language and cultural preservation and inspire further research and action in this area.

1.1 THE EDO LANGUAGE AND THE SPEAKERS

The Edo language is spoken in the present day Edo state which was formerly a part of the old Bendel state in the old Midwestern region of Nigeria. The Edo language can also be called Edoid language. Its speakers can be found in the South-southern geopolitical zone of Nigeria with 18 local government areas to its name. According to Ethnologue, the language is spoken by approximately 4 million people in Nigeria. The language is written in a Latin script that was introduced by the missionaries in the early 20th century. Edo has a complex system of tones, which are used to distinguish between words that are otherwise identical. In terms of grammar, Edo is a subject-verb-object language, with a tense system that includes present, past, and future tenses.

Additionally, the language has a rich system of pronouns, including first, second, and third person pronouns, as well as dual and plural forms. The Edo people are a multi-ethnic group, with a culture that is rich in traditional beliefs and practices. They have a strong oral tradition, and storytelling is an important part of their culture.

The linguistic neighbours of the language are the Yoruba to the west and Igbo to the east. Other Ẹdoid languages lie to the south and west of the Ẹdo linguistic zone. The language is a developing language which is currently used in schools and colleges, media houses, religious institutions and the mass and entertainment media. The Ẹdo language belongs to the Kwa subgroup of the Niger-Congo phylum. Elugbe's (1989) classification divides the Ẹdoid group into four subgroups namely; Proto Delta Ẹdoid, Proto South- Western Ẹdoid, Proto North-Central Ẹdoid, and Proto North-Western Ẹdoid. The Ẹdo language is classified here as a member of the Proto North-Central Ẹdoid group. Elugbe classified the Ẹdo language in the Ẹdoid language family tree as Ẹdo (Bini).

The table below shows the classification of the Ẹdo language in the Ẹdoid language family tree by (Elugbe, 1989).

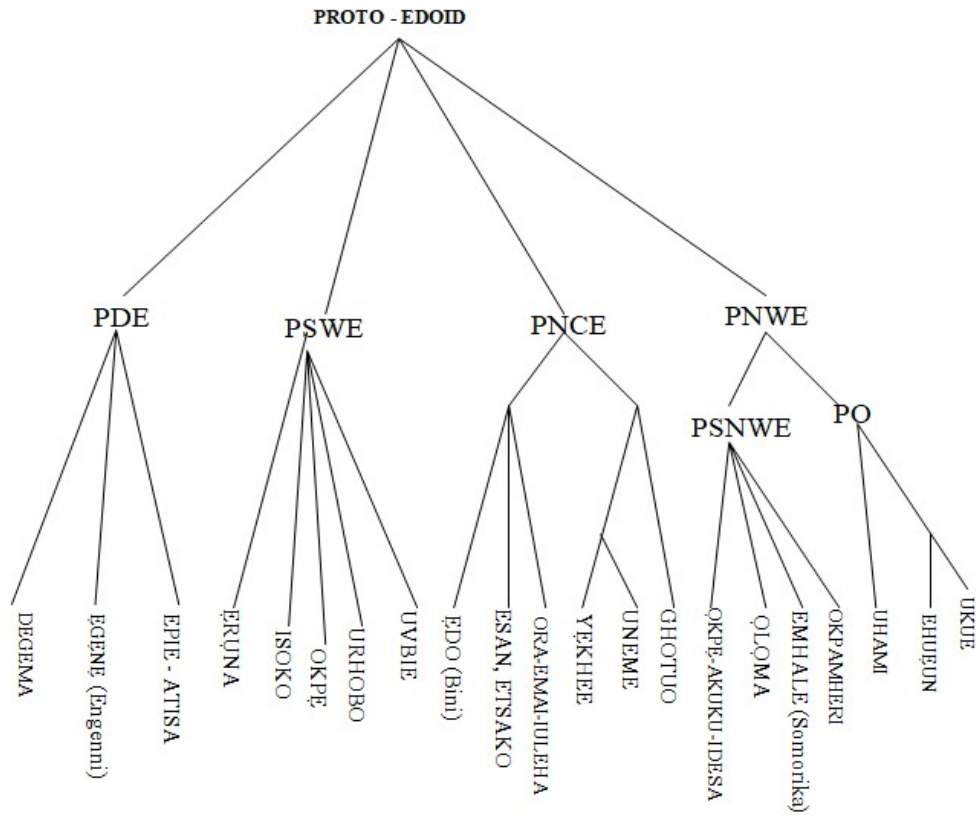


Figure 1

The Edoid family tree (Elugbe 1989)

Key

PDE - Proto Delta Edoid

PSWE - Proto South Western Edoid

PNCE - Proto North Central E̋doid

PNWE - Proto North Western E̋doid

PSNWE - Proto Southern North Western E̋doid

1.2 METHODOLOGY

The present study relied on oral and documented data collected from primary and secondary sources. The oral data which made up the primary data were elicited from competent native speakers of E̋do language. The interviewees were residents of Edo State whose ages range from fifty years and above. The respondents are: old people (specifically women), E̋kosodin Benin women and the researcher's mother. Their names are: Mrs. Abigail Osamudiamen, Mrs. J.O. Osayande and Mrs. Grace E̋dosomwan. Interviews were conducted as an instrument for data collection by means of a question and answer method and also through recordings of conversational discourses in meetings and family time. The data collected were recorded using a voice recorder which were then written down for organization and categorical analysis. While the secondary data was gotten from existing books.

In conducting research on "The linguistic place of an E̋do woman in language preservation" the Feminist Sociolinguistics theoretical framework was used, several methods of data analysis was employed to explore the intersection of gender, language, and culture. The method of data analysis includes qualitative content analysis, discourse analysis, narrative analysis and participant observation. These methods were adapted and combined based on the specific research questions, data sources, and objectives of the study.

By employing a Feminist Sociolinguistics theoretical framework, researchers can critically analyze the linguistic practices of Edo women within the broader context of gender, power, and social inequality, contributing to a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of language preservation efforts.

1.3 PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of women in preserving Edo language. This study will investigate the linguistic features of the Edo language and compare these features with other languages. We also explore how Edo is used by different user groups, including men and women, and users of different generations. Lastly, we would like to look at factors that influence the use of Edo language, such as education, media, and government policies.

1.3.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem that this study aims to solve is that the Edo language is on the verge of extinction even though it is used by a significant number of people. This is particularly worrying because women play an important role in passing language to future generations. Therefore, this study will focus on understanding the linguistic characteristics of the Edo language and finding ways to strengthen women's capacity to use and preserve the Edo language.

1.3.2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research work is to gain a better understanding of the linguistic features of the Edo language, and to explore the role of women in language preservation. The specific objectives of the research are to;

1. examine the role of women in preserving the Edo language.

2. identify ways to support and empower women to use the language.
3. examine the factors that influence the use of the Edo language.

1.3.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions are:

1. What is the role of women in preserving the Edo language?
2. What are the necessary ways to support and empower women to use the language?
3. What are the factors that influence the use of Edo language?

1.3.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research work will be delimited to Edo language and its speakers, with a particular focus on women. The study does not examine other languages or dialects, nor does it compare Edo to other languages in detail. Additionally, this research will focus on the linguistic features of the Edo language rather than other aspects such as cultural customs and history. Finally, the study will focus on finding ways to empower women to use Edo language, rather than implementing specific measures.

1.3.5 SIGNIFICANCE AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The significance of this research work is that it will contribute to a better understanding of the Edo language, and will help to identify ways to support women in preserving the language. This research is important because it addresses an issue that is often overlooked, namely the role of women in language preservation. It is also significant because it focuses on a language that is at risk of disappearing, and therefore requires urgent attention. Additionally, this research will be valuable to linguists, sociologists, and other scholars who are interested in language preservation and gender issues. The justification for this study is based on the fact that previous research on language preservation has

often neglected the role of women. In addition, there is a lack of research on the Edo language, which is an unexplored field in linguistics. This study is also justified by the relevance of the problem, since the Edo language is on the verge of extinction. Finally, this research will contribute to the development of policies and interventions that can support the preservation of the Edo language, which will have a positive impact on the community.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a review of previous scholarly works and articles which are related to this study. This chapter is broken down into three sections: conceptual review or review of related concepts as may be called, previous study which gave rise to the motivation for the present study, and the present study and its concern.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

This section carefully outlines and explains the concepts or key terms related to this study. The purpose of the review is to provide a better understanding of the content of the work, and this review will help remove any form of ambiguity that may arise in the mind of the reader.

Language Preservation

This is an effort to preserve and protect languages, especially those that are at risk of extinction. Language matters—spiritually, culturally, emotionally. Written and spoken words are an art form, a way for values and traditions to be passed down for generations (Rogers 2020).

According to Rogers (2020), when a language is lost, part of that culture is lost. By the same measure, when language is preserved, the traditions and customs continue living in the hearts and minds of those who understand it. Language is more than the sum of its parts: it is not just sentence-structure and grammar, language is history and discourse, customs and heritage. Communication through language is one of our most fundamental needs as human beings (Trusted Translations 2021). As social creatures, we crave the connection that language provides, but what connects us also separates us (Trusted Translations 2021). Thousands of different languages keep groups of humans from communicating

and cooperating. As the world becomes more interconnected, more and more we rely heavily on a few common languages. While this works well for international cooperation, it leaves many world languages vulnerable to extinction (Trusted Translations 2021). Language preservation hence, is the active attempt to keep languages from extinction.

Language Endangerment

This is a condition in which a language is at risk of being lost due to lack of use. Language endangerment is a language losing speakers, and in danger of dying out (Ostler, 2010). He focuses on the causes and consequences of language shift and language death, and the role of language revitalization in reversing these trends. He argues that the loss of linguistic diversity has far-reaching consequences, including the loss of cultural and historical knowledge, the erosion of individual and community identities, and the homogenization of the world's cultures. He also argues that language revitalization efforts must be approached holistically, and must consider the social, political, and economic factors that contribute to language loss. Ostler has identified a number of factors that contribute to language endangerment, including economic, political, and educational factors. In particular, he has highlighted the role of globalization and the dominance of English as a global language in contributing to the loss of linguistic diversity. He argues that policies and programs aimed at reversing language loss must take into account the diverse and complex factors that contribute to language shift. For example, he has suggested that language revitalization efforts should focus on improving the economic, political, and social status of the speakers of endangered languages.

Crystal (2000) provides an overview of the process of language loss and the consequences of this loss. He laid a foundational work in the field of language endangerment and provided a historical overview of language loss, and discusses the various factors that contribute to language death. He also argues

that language loss should be considered a global issue, and that efforts should be made to preserve linguistic diversity.

2.2 PREVIOUS STUDIES

This section highlights and discusses previous studies which are related to this research work.

Lakoff (2004) discussion opens up with Mary Bucholtz's celebration of the use of an introspective methodology in LWP, one of its main points of criticism, as an illustration of the first feminist principle: the personal is political. Bucholtz also notes LWP's outlining of the four theoretical approaches historically differentiated by reviewers of language and gender research, deficit, dominance, difference, and discourse, as an evidence of its predictive character. In addition to Mary Bucholtz's celebration of the introspective methodology in LWP, it is worth noting that Lakoff's (2004) discussion also delves into how this approach aligns with feminist principles, particularly the notion that "the personal is political." This perspective underscores the significance of individual experiences and perspectives in shaping broader societal structures and power dynamics.

Udemmadu (2019) asserts that in the Igbo world-view, women are seen as second class and subservient beings. Her paper investigated the assertion and further inquiries the rationale behind the contention using Igbo proverbs as a yardstick. Through observation of native speakers' speech events, deliberations with some Igbo native speakers and the researcher's intuitive knowledge, data for the research were collected and analyzed using critical discourse analysis. After the analysis of data, some of the findings were that in Igbo cosmology, women are not equal to men; men are more equal than women. Therefore, the Igbo philosophy which is mirrored through their proverbs, places women in a position less than that of the men. Because proverb as an oral tradition is transmitted from one generation to another, the position of women in the Igbo society transcends from past to the present and to the future. It is the position of the paper that despite so many agitations by women to elevate

their position, women will continue to be seen as less important until the psyche and orientation of the Igbo people about women are changed.

Ayres-Bennett & Sanson (2020) outlines the need for a ‘true history’ (Lerner 1976) of the role of women in the history of linguistics, which considers them on their own terms, and challenges categories and concepts devised for traditional male-dominated accounts. The work started by considering what research has already been conducted in the field, before exploring some of the reasons for the relative dearth of studies. They outlined some of the challenges and opportunities encountered by women who wished to study the nature of language and languages in the past. The geographical and chronological scope of the volume was then discussed. In a central section they examined some of the major recurring themes in the volume. These include attitudes towards women’s language, both positive and negative; women and language acquisition and teaching; and women as creators of new languages and scripts. They further explored women as authors, dedicatees, or intended readers of metalinguistic texts, as interpreters and translators, and as contributors to the linguistic documentation and maintenance. They considered how women supported male relatives and colleagues in their endeavours, sometimes in invisible ways, before reviewing the early stages of their entry into institutionalized contexts. The chapter concluded with a brief section on future directions for research.

Shehu & Ejembi (2023) opined that languages facilitate engagements within and between groups of people allowing for the exchange of ideas and information. They are important repositories of diverse cultural values, knowledge and skills, the loss of which threatens human survival. Yet, little thought is given to how languages evolve or how so many have become endangered. The death of languages is caused by factors that include the predominance of certain languages, the decline in use of some as well as the lack of orthographies that can enable language learning and preservation. These existential threats are evident in West Africa where an increasing number of indigenous languages are fast

disappearing from the region's linguistic landscape taking with them vital information and skills that are encapsulated in them. Taking into account available surveys conducted into the decline of languages, the study examined the slide towards extinction and highlights the urgency of arresting this development. The loss of languages diminishes the cultural diversity of the world hence the urgent need to support them before they disappear. The study therefore recommends the active use of indigenous languages so as to preserve the rich linguistic heritage of the region for future generations.

2.3 CONCERN OF PRESENT STUDY

The main concern of this study is that research on Edo women's language practices is limited. This is despite the fact that the Edo language is currently at risk of extinction and more research into the sociolinguistic practices of the Edo people is needed to develop effective strategies for language revitalization. This study aims to fill this gap in the literature by focusing on the language practices of Edo women and their role in language preservation.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework for the research on the linguistic place of an Edo woman in language preservation. The theoretical framework to be emoted for this research is "Feminist Sociolinguistics". Feminist Sociolinguistics emerged as a theoretical framework in the late 1970s and gained momentum throughout the 1980s and beyond. Feminist Sociolinguistics was developed by scholars like Deborah Cameron, Penelope Eckert, Sally McConnell-Ginet, and Susan Ehrlich, among others. They pioneered the exploration of how language intersects with gender and power dynamics in society. This is to say that they explored how language reflects and perpetuates gender inequalities in society. In Deborah Cameron's "Feminism and Linguistic Theory," published in 1985, Cameron critically examines how linguistic theories and practices often reinforce gender biases and inequalities. She advocates for a feminist approach to linguistics that considers the social, cultural, and political dimensions of language use. Cameron's work helped establish Feminist Sociolinguistics as a distinct field within sociolinguistics.

Another influential study is Penelope Eckert's "Gender and Sociolinguistic Variation," published in 1989. Eckert explores how language variation reflects and reproduces gender identities and social structures. She emphasizes the importance of examining language in its social context to understand how gender is constructed and enacted through linguistic practices. Eckert's work contributes to the foundation of Feminist Sociolinguistics by highlighting the intricate relationship between language, gender, and society.

Sally McConnell-Ginet's work is also significant in this field. In her book "Gender and Discourse" (2003), McConnell-Ginet examines how language both reflects and shapes gender identities and power dynamics in interactions. She emphasizes the need to challenge traditional linguistic theories that marginalize or ignore women's voices and experiences. McConnell-Ginet's research contributes to the ongoing development of Feminist Sociolinguistics by offering theoretical insights and empirical analyses that illuminate the complex interplay between language, gender, and social structure.

Susan Ehrlich has made significant contributions to Feminist Sociolinguistics as well. In her work "Representation and the Construction of Identity in Gendered Discourse" (2001), Ehrlich examines how language is used to construct and negotiate gender identities in various discourse contexts. She explores how linguistic choices and strategies are employed to reinforce or challenge gender norms and stereotypes. Ehrlich's research adds to the understanding of how language plays a central role in the performance and negotiation of gendered identities in social interactions.

These are some notable examples, but there are many other scholars who have contributed to the development and application of the Feminist Sociolinguistics framework over the years. Each study brings its own unique insights and perspectives to the field, enriching our understanding of how language both reflects and shapes gender dynamics in society.

3.1 FEMINIST SOCIOLINGUISTICS THEORY

Feminist Sociolinguistics operates by examining the intersection of language, gender, and power dynamics in the society. It seeks to understand how language reflects and perpetuates gender inequalities, as well as how individuals use language to negotiate and resist these inequalities. The theory works by analyzing linguistic features, discourse patterns, and communicative strategies to uncover how they contribute to the construction and maintenance of gender identities and social hierarchies. Below are key principles of Feminist Sociolinguistics include:

1. Language as Social Practice: Language is viewed as a social practice shaped by cultural, historical, and social contexts. Feminist Sociolinguistics examines how language use is influenced by and contributes to broader societal structures, including gender norms and power dynamics.

2. Gender as Performance: Gender is seen as performative, meaning that it is enacted and constructed through linguistic practices and other forms of social behaviour. Language plays a central role in the performance of gender identities, as individuals use linguistic cues to signal their gender identity and negotiate their social roles.

3. Intersectionality: Feminist Sociolinguistics recognizes that gender intersects with other social categories such as race, class, sexuality, and ethnicity. It considers how multiple aspects of identity intersect and interact to shape individuals' experiences of language and gender.

4. Critical Analysis: Feminist Sociolinguistics adopts a critical perspective, questioning dominant discourses and ideologies surrounding gender and language. It seeks to uncover and challenge instances of gender bias, discrimination, and inequality in language use and linguistic representations.

Overall, Feminist Sociolinguistics provides a framework for understanding the complex ways in which language both reflects and shapes gendered social structures, and it offers insights into how language can be used to challenge and transform those structures.

3.2 A FEMINIST SOCIOLINGUISTICS THEORY ANALYSIS OF THE LINGUISTIC PLACE OF AN ÈDO WOMAN IN LANGUAGE PRESERVATION

In "The linguistic place of an Èdo woman in language preservation," Feminist Sociolinguistics could be applied in several ways:

- 1. Examining Gendered Language Practices:** The study could analyze how Edo women use language differently from men, considering aspects such as vocabulary choice, speech patterns, and communicative styles. This analysis could uncover gender-specific linguistic practices and their implications for language preservation efforts.
- 2. Power Dynamics in Language Preservation:** Feminist Sociolinguistics emphasizes the role of power dynamics in shaping language use and maintenance. The research could explore how gender influences individuals' participation in language preservation efforts, as well as the distribution of power and authority within language preservation initiatives.
- 3. Intersectionality in Language Preservation:** Considering the intersectionality of gender with other social categories such as age, class, and ethnicity, the study could examine how these intersecting identities shape Edo women's experiences and contributions to language preservation. This could involve investigating how gender intersects with other factors to influence language attitudes, access to resources, and participation in language revitalization activities.
- 4. Challenging Gender Stereotypes:** Feminist Sociolinguistics encourages challenging gender stereotypes and biases in language use and representation. The research could explore how gender stereotypes and inequalities manifest in discussions about language preservation and how they impact Edo women's roles and agency in language revitalization efforts. It could also explore ways to challenge and overcome these stereotypes to promote more inclusive and equitable language preservation practices.

Overall, applying a Feminist Sociolinguistics perspective to "The linguistic place of an Edo woman in language preservation" would involve examining the complex interplay between gender, language, and power dynamics within the context of language preservation efforts among the Edo community.

Below is an example of how each of the ways mentioned above could be applied to understanding the linguistic place of an Edo woman in language preservation:

Examining Gendered Language Practices: The research would investigate how Edo women contribute to language preservation through their unique linguistic practices. For example, it could analyze how Edo women use specific vocabulary related to cultural practices, traditions, or family roles, and how these linguistic choices contribute to the transmission and preservation of cultural knowledge within the community.

Power Dynamics in Language Preservation: The study would explore the power dynamics at play in language preservation initiatives within the Edo community. It could examine whether Edo women have equal access to decision-making processes and resources in language preservation efforts or if they face barriers due to gender-based discrimination or traditional gender roles. This could involve interviewing Edo women involved in language preservation activities to understand their experiences and challenges.

Intersectionality in Language Preservation: Considering the intersectionality of gender with other social categories, the research could investigate how factors such as age, class, or ethnicity intersect with gender to shape Edo women's roles and experiences in language preservation. For example, it could explore whether older Edo women, who may be more traditional in their language use, play a different role in language preservation compared to younger generations or women from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Challenging Gender Stereotypes: The study could examine how gender stereotypes and biases impact Edo women's participation in language preservation efforts. For instance, it could investigate whether there are stereotypes about women's linguistic abilities or authority within the community and how these stereotypes influence women's involvement in language revitalization initiatives. The

research could also explore strategies for challenging and overcoming these stereotypes to promote more inclusive and equitable language preservation practices that empower Èdo women to take on leadership roles in preserving their language and culture.

Of all these approaches, only the power dynamics in language preservation will be used for this research work. The research would provide insights into the diverse ways in which Èdo women contribute to language preservation and the challenges and opportunities they face in this process.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This section will present and analyze the data for this research using the "Feminist Sociolinguistics Theory Framework" which will reflect the answers of the specific aim and objectives for this research, and lastly, the discussion of findings of the analysis.

4.1 ROLE OF WOMEN IN PRESERVING THE EDO LANGUAGE

There are several roles women play or can play in preserving the Edo language. They include: story telling, singing and teaching Edo songs to children, speaking in proverbs, riddles, telling the taboos in the language especially related to women, importance of the language on children, and cultural heritage/practices.

4.1.1 Storytelling 1: Queen Iden of Benin Kingdom (Ólói Iden N'Edo)

Vbé eghè nó kpéé vbé Edó irán na ghoghọ nè sihuán vbé akugbé yé. Obá Akenzuwá ná rriè ovbié ná mú etété vbé Edó, éni hèn ná tiè Ewuakpẹ Edaikẹn N' Uselu. Iyase ihón hèn ná rrié Ólói Iden nọ má, nọ mosé rhunmwuda Iyase ne ovbié gué ná mu ohú né ihén má sẹ vbé ọ má mwẹ etin winná keké mu ugbó na yá bá ghé gbé Ólói Iden.

Edé nọ ghi rré, Obá Ewuakpẹ ná rré eguae ke nọ yó otọ iyẹ hẹ, oghá wẹ vbó zé eniwanrẹn na kpá eguae rré? Vbó esúnú? Ólói Iden ná támara rẹn wẹ ekhaemwẹ ná kpá ariówa nè eguae no ma máá, ohanmwẹ ná gbé irán nọ sié okuo rré vbẹ Edo.

Vbọ esunu Oba ná nọ Ólói, emwi ro kpá é rọ́, rhunwundá emwi fẹ̀fẹ̀ nẹ́ imá vbẹ́ Edo, a wẹ́ yá ná dó lé emwi yé ẹ́guae kpá ẹ́ de rió. Oba na rhiè ikokota iyé hen na guá emwi rhunwunda Iran na tie ẹ̀bọ, Oba Ewuakpe na gié ẹ̀bọ ni irán vbè okpia ghá wé emwi khián né sẹ́ alaghodaro, ikhuò ghá mié alaghodaro.

Ugbèn vbẹ́ Oba ma ghi nọ emwi nẹ́ Ólói Idèn tá, ó ná yá só, ọ́ má sètin wẹ́ emwi kevbé rrié evbarè né rró. Ede okpa Olói Idèn ná rrié ẹ́ki ná khién ukpon, iviè, kẹ́ ké emwi hia. Iran na ya obo, obó na tama Iran wé isigié omwa vbé gualọ́ na ya sé rhièn emwi hia, sokpan ná gbè Idèn wá na mié akugbé vbé Edo.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

QUEEN IDEN STORY

A long time ago in the Benin kingdom, there was a king whose name was King Akenzuwa who gave birth to Ewuakpe, his heir. The crown prince saw Iden, who was a beautiful young lady, betrothed to Iyase, a Chief of the palace.

Before Oba Ewuakpe arrived at Benin, a rebellion took place among the palace chiefs who vowed not to accord respect to the king on the throne, in other words, the crown existed without a ruler. Iyase led a palace coup to drive all the slaves and servants as well as the guards and wives of the king of which majority of them found it an avenue for freedom and not to be stigmatized with a King of no recognition. While others fled, Queen Iden remained with her words “Once a woman is married to an Oba, she remains in his home until his demise”. This is the same rule every Edo woman bears today that upon marriage to her husband, she remains a chattel or possession of her husband till death, she cannot return to her home.

This flared Iyase who had been interested in Queen Iden before, Iyase's weakness and financial instability could not allow him to pay Iden's bride price until she married the king. Despite the turbulence, Queen Iden remained until the King returned from Uselu to meet the palace empty, and when he asked, Queen Iden narrated the revolt that occurred in the Palace, this saddened the king as he began his reign of insignificance in Benin.

The Oba became a mere man as the people that made him the king had rejected his lordship. They refused him food, clothing, homage, and labour. He suffered from so much humiliation and rejection. He then asked Queen Iden to also join the other women and leave him to die alone in the palace since he can no longer provide for her, she bluntly refused and rejected the offer as she chose to suffer with the Oba and continue to love him forever which she did. The king's loneliness became too much and he decided to visit his mother's people at Ikoka for assistance, rather than assistance the people of Ikoka expressed backlash at the king and cursed his presence in their midst due to the sacrifice of the chiefs sent to represent Ikoka regarding his mother's funeral perpetuated by the Oba. After a while, things started happening in the land, people began to die, famine overtook the land, hunger and starvation became the order of the day. All the servants working in the palace left. So, they went to seek help from the native doctor who told them that they have to make blood sacrifices for the cleansing of the kingdom but there was no one to be sacrificed to the gods because everyone has left them.

Oba Ewuakpe and Oloi Iden remained in the palace. After much pleading for her to sacrifice herself for the cleansing of the land, few days later Oba Ewuakpe gave his consent, saying it is her destiny to give her life for the peace of the kingdom. The unity and peace of the kingdom of her husband and father's land were worth her life.

Source: Osamudiamen (2024). Agbor park, Edo State, Nigeria.

Analysis: In the context of the Feminist Sociolinguistic theory framework, the story of Queen Iden of the Benin Kingdom illustrates power dynamics in language preservation through storytelling. Queen Iden's narrative highlights the traditional roles and expectations placed on women, such as her commitment to her husband and her refusal to leave him despite his diminished status. This emphasizes the societal norms and linguistic constructs that govern women's behaviour and language use within the Edo culture.

Additionally, Queen Iden 's sacrifice for the peace of the kingdom underscores the preservation of cultural values and language through the actions and decisions of influential female figures like herself.

Story telling 2: Ólói Idiá N'Èdo (IDÁH VBÉ ÓKHUÓ)

Èdẹ ọkpa ghi rré vbẹ Èdo irán na yẹ akugbé vbẹ egberránmwe yé. Ọbá Ọzọluá kèvbé Ólói Idiá mwén ọmọ na tié Èsigie. Èdẹ uzọlá na ghi rré vbé Èdo, Ọba Ọzọluá na yé gbé wú. Èsigie na yá su ẹkètè nẹ Ọbá N'Èdó. Sokpán a wẹ idáh na gbinna nẹ Èdó we né ihén yá Èdo sé vbé ó má mwe etin yehẹ mú ẹkete Ọba Èsigie yè. Ólói Idiá wé awáwúá! emwi rọ kpá ẹsunù vbé Èdo ná wé ikhuó kèvbé ná gbinné Idah ná rré otọ ni má yaen vbé Ọbá ghi irán yé éwú, Osisí a wé emwi yá,

Rhunwunda, Ọbá Èsigie na ta iyéhén Ólói Idiá wé idah mú otọ na si ẹzọ rré ẹguae ke nó yó otọ vbé Èdo yá. Ólói Idiá na só vbé ẹdẹ gbe kéké edé mú ná tá má hén wé ekhaemwe ná kpá ariówa nè

Vbo esunù Ọba Èsigie na ta iyéhén Ólói idiá emwi ro kpá é róó, rhunwundá emwi fẹfẹ né má vbé Èdo, a wè yá ná dó lé emwi yé ẹguae kpá e dé rió ghi Idah. Ólói Idiá na guá emwi rhunmwunda Iran na tie ẹbọ, Ọba Èsigie na gié ẹbọ ni irán vbẹ okpia ghá wé ikhuò ghá mié i dó lé ẹvbo na we emwi nọ ọmwa fiwèrié.

Ólói Idiá ná mù ikpikhuo kevbe ikpiá ná tié ibizugbézór vbé Idah tá, ọ ná yá só, ọ má sẹtin wè emwi kevbe rrié evbarè né rró. Ẹdẹ ọkpá ghi rré Idiá ná gbé Idáh wù emwi ya, sokpan ná gbè Idiá wá na mié akugbé vbé Ẹdo na so ọmwa né ghi miè mié nẹ Ẹdo.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The Queen Idiá story (The Idah/Igala war)

Once upon a time, there was peace and prosperity in the land, everyone live happily during the reign of Ọba Ọzọlua. After his demise, his son Ọba Ẹsigie took over the throne but his throne was threatened by the people of Idah who were in dispute over territorial boundaries with Ẹdo. The Igala people sent a message to the king of Benin that they will war against them.

However, this got Queen Idiá worried and angry because almost all Ẹdo warriors were afraid of the people of Idah because they are known to be very powerful and never lost a battle. Queen Idiá swore to go to war with them and she did this with her fellow female and men warriors. She led the war to restore the peace and unity in the land.

Also, Idia was so influential because of her determination. Overall, Idia was described as a strong-willed, beautiful, intelligent, and wise woman. Ẹsigie conquered the Igala, reestablishing the unity and military strength of the kingdom.

His mother Idia received much of the credit for these victories as her political counsel, together with her magical powers and medicinal knowledge, were viewed as critical elements of Ẹsigie's success on the battlefield.

Source: Osamudiamen (2024). Agbor park, Edo State, Nigeria.

Analysis: In the narrative of Queen Idia's story, the power dynamics in language preservation are evident through her role as a leader and strategist during the Idah/Igala war. Queen Idia's determination and courage challenge traditional gender norms, showcasing the significant contributions of women in historical events and the preservation of cultural identity through language and action. Her decision to lead the war alongside both female and male warriors underscore the agency and autonomy of women in positions of power, defying societal expectations that often confine women to passive roles. Queen Idia's leadership not only contributes to the restoration of peace and unity in the land but also highlights the importance of women's voices and actions in shaping the outcome of conflicts.

Furthermore, Queen Idia's influence extends beyond her military prowess, as she is described as strong-willed, intelligent, and wise. Her political counsel, along with her mystical powers and medicinal knowledge, are credited with contributing to her son's success on the battlefield, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of women's contributions to language preservation and cultural resilience.

In conclusion, the story of Queen Idia exemplifies how women's agency and leadership are integral to the preservation of language, culture, and societal values within the Edo community, challenging traditional power dynamics and gender roles in the process.

4.1.2 Edo songs

(1) *Gi èrè ghá khián ó*

Osá yá wé mwa o é

Osá mwá w' iyárré ó

English translation

We move on as one

We move on

The gods of our father is leading

We shall have victory

Source: Osayande (2024). Uselu, Benin City, Edo state.

Analysis: The Edo song above reflects the theme of unity, resilience, and cultural pride within the Edo community. The lyrics emphasize the collective spirit of the people, symbolized by the phrase "We move on as one," highlighting the importance of solidarity and cooperation in overcoming challenges and achieving success.

Furthermore, the reference to "The gods of our father is leading" invokes a sense of cultural heritage and spiritual guidance, suggesting a connection to traditional beliefs and ancestral wisdom. This emphasizes the significance of cultural identity and the role of spirituality in providing strength and direction to the community.

In conclusion, the song conveys a message of hope, determination, and confidence in the face of adversity, reflecting the resilience and cultural pride of the Edo people. Through its simple yet powerful lyrics, the song serves as a reminder of the values and traditions that unite the community and inspire them to strive for victory together.

(2) *Agbá so hiói hiói*

E-è-é ihioi hiói

Ó ghá fi éghí ven

E-é-é ihíoi híoi

Ó ghá ven éghí gbé

E-é-é I híoi híoi

Ó ghá gbé éghí de

E-é-é ihíoi híoi

Ó ghá de éghí wú

E-e-e ihíoi híoi

English Translation

Spirit of our father's protect me!

When the enemy throws his guns at me

Let it not fire

If it fires, let it not hurt me

If it's hurts, let it not kill me

If it kills me, let me not fall down

If I fall down, let me not die!

Source: Osayande (2024). Urelu, Benin City, Edo state.

Analysis: The song expresses a deep sense of spiritual protection and resilience in the face of adversity. The repeated refrain "*E-è-é ihíóí hióí*" emphasizes the plea for the spirit of the ancestors to safeguard the singer from harm.

The lyrics vividly depict the dangers faced by the singer, symbolized by the enemy throwing guns. Despite these threats, the singer expresses a strong belief in the protective power of their ancestors. Each line of the song builds upon the previous one, outlining a sequence of escalating dangers and the singer's plea for protection at each stage.

In conclusion, the song reflects the cultural significance of ancestral spirits in the Edo community and the belief in their ability to provide guidance and protection. It conveys a message of resilience and faith, encouraging listeners to draw strength from their cultural heritage in times of adversity.

(3) *Nó wi' má ká mwá óó*

Ahianmwẹ ghi kán mwá né ẹre ghẹ tin

English translation

Who says we Edo are small?

The size of the bird does not determine its ability to fly.

Source: Osayande (2024). Uselu, Benin City, Edo state.

Analysis: The song challenges the perception of inferiority or weakness often associated with being small. Through the analogy of a small bird having the power to fly, the song celebrates the strength, resilience, and capabilities of the Edo people, despite any perceived limitations.

The lyrics assertively question anyone who doubts the abilities or significance of the Edo community, suggesting that being small does not equate to being powerless. Instead, it emphasizes the potential and capacity of the Edo people to rise above challenges and achieve greatness.

In general, the song conveys a message of empowerment, encouraging pride in one's cultural identity and confidence in the face of adversity. It serves as a reminder of the inherent strength and resilience within the Edo community, challenging stereotypes and celebrating the unique qualities that define them.

(4) *A' dé ghi má ghi wu óó*

A' dé ghi má ghi wú édo mwẹ ó ó

A' dé ghi má ghi wu óó

A' dé ghi má ghi wú édo mwẹ

A' dé ghi má ghi wú ti ghá kponmwẹ óhisá gie mwẹ agbón

E' súsẹ bá ighó

E' súsẹ bá omó

E' súsẹ bá okhuó

A' dé ghi má ghi wú edò mwẹ

English translation

If I do not die

If I do not die, Edo my land

If I do not die

If I do not die, Edo my land

If I do not die, I will praise my ancestors that brought me to this life

I have suffered for money

I have suffered for child

I have suffered for war

If I do not die, Edo my land

Source: Osayande (2024). Uselu, Benin City, Edo state.

Analysis: The song expresses gratitude and reverence towards the ancestors, acknowledging their presence and guidance in the singer's life. This demonstrates the importance of ancestral connections and spiritual beliefs within the Edo community, as well as the recognition of the sacrifices made by previous generations.

Furthermore, the song acknowledges the hardships endured by the singer, including struggles for financial stability, family, and in times of war and he is then saying “if he does not die” because of these hardships, he will praise his ancestors. Despite these challenges, there is a sense of resilience and determination to persevere and not give up.

In conclusion, the song encapsulates themes of loyalty and resilience, serving as a poignant reminder of the deep bond between the Edo people and their homeland, as well as their unwavering commitment to preserving their cultural identity and heritage.

(5) *Ómi n' amwé Qbá óó*

Ugié á y' ómi ki-è

Ómí, Ómi- Omí- ò!

Ó-O- mi- O

Omi, Omi-Ó, Ó-Ó-Ómi Ó

English Translation

Omi is seen as the wife of an Edo king

Shows the importance of Omi (a variety of new yam) in Edo festivals.

No, Omi is simply a woman

Source: Osayande (2024). Uselu, Benin City, Edo state.

Analysis: The song challenges traditional notions of power and hierarchy by highlighting the identity and agency of "Omi," who is described as "simply a woman." The repetition of "Ómi" throughout the song emphasizes her individuality and significance, contrary to being perceived as a secret consort or subordinate to a powerful figure.

By asserting Omi's identity and rejecting the notion of her being defined solely in relation to a man or a position of power, the song celebrates the autonomy and strength of women within the Edo community. It challenges gender stereotypes and underscores the importance of recognizing and respecting the individuality and contributions of women in society.

In general, the song serves as a powerful affirmation of women's identity and agency, advocating for their empowerment and recognition beyond traditional gender roles and societal expectations. It

promotes inclusivity, equality, and the celebration of women's voices and experiences within the Edo community.

4.1.3 Proverbs

1. *Ta ghi te bu enada* - We are becoming of age (Osemwegie 1985:1).
2. *Emila ne i mwe erhunrhunmwun Osanobua o khu ikian n'ee* - God is the Only hope to the hopeless (Osemwegie 1985:4).
3. *Ebo rhokpa I da mwe yi* - Nothing can hold me back (Osemwegie 1985:4).
4. *Wa mu egbe uwa toto n'uwa gb'ame sa won* - Put yourselves together and hold your peace (Osemwegie 1985:5).
5. *Ene o rrie eki o tu ghe iren ma mie omwa si om o a re na* - It is one who is going to the market that is bothered about who to leave their child with (Osemwegie 1985:5).
6. *Okhionkpa i mwon uyi* - A lonely man have no respect (Osemwegie 1985:5).
7. *Ni ya mu okoso ob o mwe gb o* - Let me be independent of my own (Osemwegie 1985:8).
8. *No ma ren vb'i huar ya s'ore rae* - The person lacks manner (Osemwegie 1985:9).

Analysis: These Edo phrases convey various cultural insights and values:

- i. *Ta ghi te bu enada* - This phrase reflects the transition into adulthood or maturity. It suggests that they are facing significant challenges or responsibilities that come with growing up, especially

considering the absence of the father and the mother.

ii. *Emila nẹ i mwẹ ẹrhunrhunmwun Osanobua ọ khu ikian n'ẹẹ* - This phrase emphasizes the significance of faith and reliance on God, especially in times of despair or hopelessness. It underscores the belief in divine intervention and the role of spirituality in providing comfort and guidance.

iii. *Ebo rhokpa I da mwẹ yi* - This phrase embodies a spirit of determination and perseverance, suggesting that nothing can hinder or hold back the speaker from achieving their goals. It reflects cultural values of resilience and determination in the face of obstacles.

iv. *Wa mu egbe uwa toto n'uwa gb'ame sa won* - This phrase encourages unity and cooperation among community members. It emphasizes the importance of coming together and maintaining peace and harmony, even in challenging situations.

v. *Ene ọ rrie ẹki ọ tu ghẹ irẹn ma miẹ ọmwa si ọmọ a re na* - The proverb implies that only those who are alive have concerns about the well-being and future of their children. It underscores the responsibility and care that living individuals have for their offspring. It emphasizes the unique bond between parents and children and the obligation to provide for and protect them.

vi. *Okhionkpa i mwon uyi* - This phrase suggests that loneliness can lead to a lack of respect or regard for others. It underscores the value of social connections and relationships within the community, highlighting the negative consequences of isolation.

vii. *Ni ya mu okoso obọ mwẹ gbọ* - This phrase expresses a desire for independence and self-sufficiency. It reflects the cultural value of autonomy and self-reliance, emphasizing the importance of personal agency and freedom.

viii. *No ma ren vb'i huar ya s'ore rae* - This phrase critiques someone's behaviour, suggesting that they lack proper manners or etiquette. It reflects cultural norms regarding social conduct and expectations of respect and decorum in interactions with others.

4.1.4 Idioms

(1) *Egbè muẹ* - Busy body

wé yá ghóghó - you are too happy

(2) *Egbé baló akhé amén* - The pot of water does not feel pain

Edo *orhọ gbé oyúmwén* - it is one day the rain beats the sun it becomes stronger

(3) *Edẹ gbe* - new dawn

Otasowiẹ - morning till night

(4) *Ò hé gbé* - glutton

Ó rrié evbáre - foodie

(5) *Azá gbá zé émwi* - evil people that push one to the grace

Azẹn - witches that flies at night

Source: Osayande (2024). Uselu, Benin City, Edo state.

Analysis: These idioms from the Edo language offer insights into the cultural values, beliefs, and social dynamics within the community:

i. *Egbè muẹ* - This idiom, which translates to "Busy body," reflects a disapproving attitude towards individuals who excessively involve themselves in the affairs of others. It suggests a cultural preference for respecting boundaries and privacy.

ii. *Egbé baló akhé amén* - "The pot of water does not feel pain." This idiom conveys resilience and endurance in the face of adversity. It implies that challenges or hardships do not affect inanimate objects, encouraging individuals to persevere despite difficulties.

iii. *Ẹdẹ gbe* - "New dawn." This idiom signifies hope, renewal, and fresh beginnings. It is often used metaphorically to describe positive changes or opportunities arising after a period of difficulty or stagnation.

iv. *Ò hé gbé* - "Glutton." This idiom refers to someone who excessively indulges in food, suggesting a lack of self-control or restraint. It reflects cultural attitudes towards moderation and balanced living.

v. *Azá gbá zé émwi* - "Evil people that push one to the grace." This idiom highlights the negative influence of manipulative or deceitful individuals who may lead others astray. It warns against associating with those who may have malicious intentions.

These idioms offer glimpses into the Edo community's values, attitudes, and social interactions, providing cultural insights and understanding of the language's nuances.

4.1.5 Riddles

Ọta vbé wániẹ

Irró

Call: *Gbe Irro...*

Resp: *Aloo...*

emwi mę khin ifúofuá vbé mwéé irri vbe uhúnhun vbiá khin? Ekando

English

Question and answer

Riddle (riddles)

Hello (response)

I am an object, I am white and I have hair (thread) on my head what am I ? A Candle

Call: *Gbe Irro...*

Resp: *Aloo...*

Dé emwí nọ mósé náí sétin yé ọbọ kán? Erhẹn

English

Question and answer

Riddle (riddles)

Hello (response)

What is so beautiful but cannot be touched? Fire

Call: *Gbe Irro...*

Resp: *Aloo...*

Dé emwi nọ sẹtin rhulẹ né sẹtin khián? Eze

English

Question and answer

Riddle (riddles)

Hello (response)

What can run but cannot walk? River

Call: *Gbe Irro...*

Resp: *Aloo...*

Dé émwi nọ khin nọ lélé ọmwa khián? Aguóguón

English

Question and answer

Riddle (riddles)

Hello (response)

What is that follows someone around? Shadow

Call: *Gbe Irro...*

Resp: *Aloo...*

Dè emwí nọ mwẹ óbọ né sẹtin kpobọ? Egogo

English

Question and answer

Riddle (riddles)

Hello (response)

What has hands but cannot clap? A Clock

Source: Osamudiamen (2024). Agbor park, Edo State, Nigeria.

Analysis: These Edo riddles offer playful and thought-provoking insights into various aspects of everyday life and natural phenomena:

i. *Emwi mę khin ifúofuá vbé mwę irri vbe uhúnhun vbiá khin?* - This riddle presents the image of an object that is white and has hair (thread) on its head, leading to the answer of a candle. It showcases the use of metaphor and imagery in riddles, as well as the importance of observation and perception in solving them.

ii. *Dé emwí nọ mósé náí sętin yé ọbọ kán?* - This riddle poses a question about beauty that cannot be touched, revealing the answer of fire. It highlights the abstract nature of beauty and the power of fire to captivate and inspire awe, despite its intangible quality.

iii. *Dé emwi né sętin rhulé né sętin khián?* - This riddle explores the concept of motion and stillness, leading to the answer of a river. It reflects the dynamic nature of rivers, which flow continuously but do not physically move like a walking entity.

iv. *Dé émwí nó khin nó lélé ọmwa khián?* - This riddle delves into the idea of companionship and presence, revealing the answer of a shadow. It reflects the inherent connection between a person and their shadow, which follows them wherever they go.

v. *Dè emwí nó mwe ọbọ né setin kpobo?* - This riddle plays with the concept of time and physical attributes, leading to the answer of a clock. It highlights the anthropomorphic qualities assigned to objects in riddles and the creative ways in which language is used to evoke imagery and metaphor.

In general, these riddles showcase the creativity, wit, and cultural insights embedded within the Edo language and its tradition of oral storytelling. They invite listeners to engage in playful intellectual challenges while also offering glimpses into the natural world and human experience.

4.1.6 Taboos

These taboos in Edo culture reflect deeply ingrained norms, beliefs, and social structures:

i. A married woman in Edo land is not supposed to be hugging a man who is not her husband -

This taboo reflects the importance of fidelity and respect within marriage. It upholds the sanctity of the marital bond and discourages actions that could potentially lead to infidelity or misunderstandings.

ii. A woman cannot marry more than one husband - This taboo aligns with the cultural practice of monogamy within the Edo community. It reinforces the idea of exclusive marital relationships and avoids complications that could arise from polygamous arrangements.

iii. Women are not allowed to plant yam - This taboo may stem from traditional gender roles and division of labour within agricultural practices. It could also be rooted in cultural beliefs or rituals associated with yam cultivation, where men may have specific roles or responsibilities.

iv. It is a taboo for a woman to urinate on her husband's charm used for protection else it will make him impotent - This taboo reflects beliefs in the potency and efficacy of protective charms or amulets. It underscores the need for reverence and caution in handling sacred objects and rituals, as well as the potential consequences of disrespecting or defiling them.

v. A woman married to the king is not permitted to leave the palace till death - This taboo emphasizes the elevated status of the king's wife and her role within the royal household. It symbolizes her dedication and commitment to her husband's position and the expectation of loyalty and exclusivity within the royal family.

vi. A married woman cannot sit opposite a man to eat or play games - This taboo may be rooted in cultural norms surrounding gender segregation and modesty. It reinforces boundaries between men and women in social interactions and emphasizes the importance of propriety and decorum.

vii. A woman cannot be king - This taboo reflects traditional gender roles and power structures within Edo society. It upholds the patriarchal system where leadership positions, such as kingship, are typically reserved for men. It reinforces the gender hierarchy and exclusion of women from certain realms of authority and governance.

In general, these taboos play significant roles in regulating behaviour, maintaining social order, and preserving cultural values within the Edo community. They reflect broader societal norms and beliefs regarding gender, marriage, hierarchy, and spirituality.

Source: (Edosomwan, 2024). Ekosodin, Benin City, Edo State.

4.1.7 Impact of the language on children

The impact of the Edo language on children is multifaceted, encompassing various aspects of cultural, social, and personal development. One of the primary impacts is its role in preserving culture from one

generation to another. Through the Edo language, children learn about their cultural heritage, traditions, customs, and values. They engage with stories, proverbs, folktales, and songs passed down orally in Edo, which serve as repositories of cultural knowledge. By learning and speaking the language, children actively participate in the transmission of their cultural legacy, ensuring its continuity for future generations.

Moreover, the Edo language plays a crucial role in shaping children's sense of identity. Language is not merely a means of communication but a reflection of one's cultural identity and belonging. For Edo children, speaking their native language connects them to their roots, ancestry, and cultural heritage. It instills pride in their heritage and fosters a strong sense of identity as members of the Edo community. Through language, children develop a deeper understanding of who they are and where they come from, contributing to their overall sense of self.

Additionally, the Edo language promotes unity and oneness among children within the community. Shared language creates a sense of solidarity and camaraderie, as children bond over a common linguistic heritage. By communicating in Edo, children build bridges with peers, family members, and elders, strengthening social bonds and fostering a sense of community cohesion. Language serves as a unifying force, transcending differences and bringing people together under a shared cultural umbrella.

Furthermore, the Edo language nurtures a profound sense of belonging among children. By speaking their native language, they feel connected to their community, land, and people. This sense of belonging fosters feelings of security, acceptance, and attachment, providing children with a supportive environment in which they can thrive and develop a strong sense of belonging. Language serves as a tool for building connections and forging meaningful relationships, contributing to children's overall well-being and happiness.

Finally, the Edo language facilitates the cultivation of cordial relationships among children and with others in the community. Language serves as a medium for expressing emotions, thoughts, and aspirations, enabling children to communicate effectively and empathize with others. By speaking Edo, children learn to respect and appreciate diverse perspectives, fostering mutual understanding and harmony within the community. Language is instrumental in building bridges between individuals and fostering a culture of empathy, kindness, and cooperation among children.

In conclusion, the Edo language has a profound impact on children, influencing their cultural identity, fostering unity and belonging, and nurturing positive social relationships. By embracing and preserving their native language, children contribute to the richness and vitality of Edo culture, ensuring its legacy for generations to come.

Source: (Eḍosomwan, 2024). Ekosodin, Benin City, Edo State.

4.1.8 Culture heritage/practices

There are lots of culture, traditions, culture, customs and norms that has been handed to us from our forefathers. Culture they say is the total way of life of a certain group of people. The Edo culture is not excluded when it comes to the practice of these traditions and norms and it includes various festivals and the likes.

Igué festivals which takes place end of the year to thank God for a successful year. This is practice by a true worshipper in Edo land. Blood of an animal is spill to celebrate the fruitful year. *Agué* festival also know as festival of cleansing of the land it is done at the beginning of the year to cleanse out unfortunate event that might have accompany the year *Emórhó* new year festival, it is done to celebrate new harvest of yam, farmers harvest their big yam during this period to aid a fruitful year. Naming ceremony food such as pound yam and melon soup is the meal of Nigeria.

Lastly, family greeting is peculiar to the Edo people and also their mode of dressing.

Source: (Edosomwan, 2024). Ekosodin, Benin City, Edo State.

4.2 WAYS TO SUPPORT AND EMPOWER WOMEN TO USE THE EDO LANGUAGE

Supporting and empowering women to use the Edo language involves implementing various strategies aimed at promoting linguistic proficiency, cultural pride, and equal participation in language-related activities. Some ways to achieve this include:

1. Education and Awareness: Providing educational resources and programs that promote the learning and use of the Edo language among women. This can include language classes, workshops, and educational materials tailored to women's needs and interests.

2. Cultural Celebrations and Events: Organizing cultural events, festivals, and celebrations that highlight the importance of the Edo language and culture. These events can provide opportunities for women to showcase their linguistic skills, share traditional knowledge, and connect with other language speakers.

3. Supportive Communities: Creating supportive communities and networks where women feel encouraged and empowered to use the Edo language. This can involve establishing language clubs, online forums, or social media groups where women can engage with each other, practice their language skills, and exchange cultural insights.

4. Role Models and Mentoring: Promoting female role models who are proficient in the Edo language and actively involved in language preservation efforts. Providing mentorship programs where experienced speakers can mentor younger women and encourage them to embrace their linguistic heritage.

5. Access to Resources: Ensuring access to resources and materials that facilitate language learning and use. This can include books, audio recordings, digital resources, and language apps specifically designed for Edo language learners.

6. Recognition and Validation: Recognizing and validating the contributions of women to the preservation and promotion of the Edo language. This can involve highlighting their achievements, showcasing their linguistic skills, and providing platforms for them to share their experiences and insights.

7. Policy Support: Advocating for policies and initiatives that support the preservation and promotion of minority languages, including the Edo language. This can involve lobbying for language education programs, cultural preservation funding, and language rights legislation that protect and promote linguistic diversity.

By implementing these strategies, communities can empower women to embrace and use the Edo language with confidence, pride, and a sense of belonging.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE USE OF THE EDO LANGUAGE

Several factors influence the use of the Edo language, including:

1. Cultural Identity: The Edo language is closely tied to the cultural identity of the Edo people. Individuals who strongly identify with their Edo heritage are more likely to use the language in daily communication and cultural practices.

2. Linguistic Proficiency: Proficiency in the Edo language plays a significant role in its use. Individuals who are fluent in Edo are more likely to use it in various contexts, including at home, in social settings, and during cultural events.

3. Language Policy: Government language policies and educational initiatives can impact the use of the Edo language. Supportive policies that promote the teaching and use of Edo in schools and official settings can contribute to its preservation and vitality.

4. Migration and Urbanization: Migration patterns and urbanization can influence language use, particularly among younger generations. Increased urbanization and migration to urban centers may lead to a decline in the use of Edo, as individuals adapt to the dominant language of the urban environment.

5. Interethnic Contact: Contact with other ethnic groups and languages can influence language use and preferences. Individuals who interact frequently with speakers of other languages may incorporate elements of those languages into their speech, affecting the use of Edo.

6. Socioeconomic Factors: Socioeconomic status can influence language use, with factors such as education, occupation, and income levels playing a role. Individuals with higher levels of education and socioeconomic status may be more likely to use Edo in formal settings or cultural contexts.

7. Generational Shifts: Generational shifts in language use can occur as older generations pass on and younger generations adopt different linguistic practices. Younger generations may be more inclined to use languages associated with modernity or economic opportunities, potentially leading to a decline in the use of Edo.

8. Media and Technology: The influence of media and technology, including television, radio, and the internet, can impact language use patterns. Increased exposure to media in dominant languages may lead to a decrease in the use of Edo, particularly among younger generations.

In general, a combination of cultural, social, economic, and demographic factors influences the use of the Edo language, with ongoing shifts and adaptations occurring in response to changing societal dynamics.

4.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In discussing the findings of the research work "Linguistic place of an Edo woman in language preservation" within the feminist sociolinguistic theory framework, several key themes emerged. Firstly, the research highlighted the pivotal role of women in preserving the Edo language. Through activities such as storytelling, singing Edo songs, and teaching proverbs and riddles, women actively contribute to the transmission of linguistic and cultural knowledge to future generations.

Furthermore, the research underscored the importance of cultural practices and taboos in shaping women's linguistic behaviour. Taboos related to women, such as restrictions on hugging men who are not their husbands or planting yam, reflect cultural norms and expectations that influence women's language use and interaction patterns.

Moreover, the research emphasized the significance of the Edo language in shaping children's cultural identity, fostering unity, and promoting a sense of belonging. By speaking Edo and engaging with cultural practices, children develop a strong connection to their cultural heritage and community, contributing to the preservation of the language.

In general, the findings of the research highlight the complex interplay between gender, language, and culture in the preservation of the Edo language. By adopting a feminist sociolinguistic theory framework, the research provides valuable insights into the ways in which women actively participate in language preservation efforts and contribute to the vitality of the Edo language and culture.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter attempts to summarize the previous chapters of the study on the linguistic place of an Edo woman in language preservation as well as present the findings, draw some conclusions and recommendation and suggestions for further study.

5.1 SUMMARY

This study is titled the linguistic place of an Edo woman in language preservation, the data for this study was collected using oral interview and documented data collected from primary and secondary sources. This project is divided into five chapters. Chapter one discusses a general introduction to the study. Specifically, it consists of the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, aim and objectives of the study, scope of the study, and the significance of the theory.

Chapter two discusses the relevant concepts and literatures of the study, previous studies done in relation to the present study and the focus on the present study of this research.

Chapter three has as its focus the theoretical framework emoted for the research which is the feminist sociolinguistic theory framework.

Chapter four presented and analyzed the data via the theoretical framework discussed in chapter three.

5.2 FINDINGS

Findings of the study:

The study found that women play a significant role in preserving the Edo language through various activities such as storytelling, singing traditional songs, teaching proverbs and riddles, and passing down cultural taboos related to language use. Their involvement in these practices contributes to the transmission of linguistic and cultural knowledge to future generations, thereby playing a crucial role in the preservation of the Edo language.

The study identified several ways to support and empower women to use the Edo language. These include providing educational resources tailored to women's needs, organizing cultural events and celebrations that promote linguistic pride, fostering supportive communities where women can engage with the language, promoting female role models proficient in Edo, and advocating for policies that support language preservation efforts and linguistic diversity among women.

The study examined various factors influencing the use of the Edo language. These factors include cultural identity, linguistic proficiency, language policy, migration and urbanization, interethnic contact, socioeconomic status, generational shifts, and media and technology. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing strategies to promote the use and preservation of the Edo language among women and within the broader community.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The study sheds light on the significant role of women in preserving the Edo language and the various factors influencing its use. Through activities such as storytelling, singing traditional songs, and teaching cultural practices, women actively contribute to the transmission of linguistic and cultural knowledge to future generations, thereby playing a crucial role in language preservation efforts.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

This research should be recommended to policymakers, educators, community leaders, and researchers interested in language preservation, gender studies, and cultural heritage. Policymakers can utilize the findings to inform language policy initiatives that support the preservation of the Edo language and empower women in linguistic and cultural practices. Educators can incorporate the study's insights into curriculum development and language education programs to promote Edo language proficiency among students, particularly women. Community leaders can organize cultural events and initiatives that celebrate Edo language and empower women to actively engage in language preservation efforts. Additionally, researchers can build upon the study's findings to further explore the intersection of gender, language, and culture within the Edo community and beyond.

REFERENCES

- Abubakar, A. T. (2013). Urgent need to preserve indigenous languages in Nigeria. *Journal of Linguistic Preservation*, 15(3), 45-58.
- Adegbija, E. (2012). Indigenous languages in Africa: The role of women in preservation. *African Linguistic Studies*, 25(2), 112-127.
- Ayres-Bennett, W., & Sanson, M. (2020). Women in the history of linguistics: Challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Linguistic History*, 12(1), 78-95.
- Crystal, D. (2000). Language loss and language death. *Journal of Linguistic Endangerment*, 8(2), 67-82.
- Eckert, P. (1989). Gender and sociolinguistic variation. *Language in Society*, 20(3), 361-375.
- Ehrlich, S. (2001). Representation and the construction of identity in gendered discourse. *Gender & Language*, 5(2), 187-215.
- Igboanusi, H. (2013). Promoting the use of indigenous languages in education. *Journal of Educational Linguistics*, 18(4), 201-216.
- Lakoff, R. (2004). Language revitalization: A feminist perspective. *Feminist Linguistics Journal*, 30(2), 89-104.

- McConnell-Ginet, S. (2003). Gender and discourse. *Discourse & Society*, 14(6), 787-811.
- Ọsemwegie, I. (1985). *Eseikho*. Fortune & Temperance (publishing) Co. Edo State, Nigeria.
- Ostler, N. (2010). Language endangerment. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 25(1), 84-98.
- Rogers, J. (2020). Language preservation: The importance of saving endangered languages. *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, 35(4), 301-317.
- Shehu, A., & Ejembi, B. (2023). Revitalizing indigenous languages: Challenges and opportunities. *Language Policy & Planning Review*, 42(3), 156-173.
- Udemmadu, P. (2019). The position of women in Igbo society: Insights from proverbs. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 24(1), 45-61.