SOCIOLINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION: INSIGHTS FROM A MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOM IN KARAKALPAKSTAN

Madaminova Nilufar Gulumboy qizi
Nukus State Pedagogical Institute named after Ajinyoz
Faculty of Foreign Languages
Trainee-teacher

Understanding the sociolinguistic profile of a classroom is critical for designing effective language education programs in multilingual contexts. Such profiles reveal the interplay of linguistic, cultural, and social factors that shape language learning experiences [2]. This study examines English language education in a 6th-grade classroom in Ellikkal'a, Karakalpakstan, a region marked by linguistic diversity and ethnic heterogeneity. Students in this setting navigate multiple languages, including Karakalpak, Uzbek, Russian, and Kazakh, while learning English as a foreign language. This article analyzes the sociolinguistic characteristics of this learning environment, identifies challenges and opportunities for English acquisition, and proposes pedagogical and assessment strategies to foster inclusive education applicable to similar multilingual contexts [6].

Methodology

Karakalpakistan's multilingual landscape shapes the classroom environment, with Karakalpak as the official language, integrated into the school curriculum, alongside Uzbek, Russian, and Kazakh. Students are typically multilingual, using different languages based on social contexts, a phenomenon prevalent in regions with territorially designated official languages [8]. Uzbek speakers often incorporate elements of the Khorezm dialect, influenced by geographic proximity to the Khorezm region, which affects their pronunciation in both English and Uzbek, particularly with sounds like "k" [10]. Karakalpak speakers, however, encounter fewer pronunciation difficulties in English. Kazakh students frequently rely on Russian as a primary communication language, leveraging structural similarities between Russian and English to facilitate learning. Code-switching is common, with students blending linguistic elements to enhance communication, reflecting dynamic multilingual practices [4]. Dialect leveling also occurs, as peer interactions lead to convergent speech patterns distinct from parental dialects. These linguistic behaviors underscore the influence of regional dialects, multilingualism, and cultural identity on language use.

Research results

1. Subgroups and Socioeconomic Factors

Two distinct learner subgroups emerge based on geographic and socioeconomic contexts:

a) *rural subgroup*: Students from rural, low-income backgrounds face barriers to language learning, including limited access to resources such as tutoring, textbooks, and technology. Low parental education levels and household responsibilities often divert focus from academic pursuits. Limited exposure to diverse linguistic and cultural contexts can reduce motivation and hinder proficiency [3].

b) *urban subgroup:* Urban students benefit from access to intensive language courses, technology, and interactions with native speakers. Their parents, often multilingual and well-educated, provide linguistic support, particularly in Russian, which aligns structurally with English. Urban settings expose students to greater linguistic diversity through media and social interactions, enhancing proficiency [10].

2. Gender and communication styles

Gender influences language use, with male students often employing informal, vernacular speech and female students favoring formal language, consistent with broader sociolinguistic patterns. Karakalpak students exhibit direct, expressive communication styles rooted in cultural norms valuing open interaction, which may be misinterpreted by others as impolite. These differences highlight the role of cultural identity and social norms in shaping communication.

The classroom operates within a multilingual educational framework, with British English as the standard taught variety, shaped by political and ideological priorities. Students use

standardized materials but often incorporate nonstandard dialects and accents, such as Russian-influenced English or American English influenced by media exposure [5]. Limited opportunities for English use outside the classroom emphasize the classroom's role in language development. While equipped with textbooks, bilingual dictionaries, and age-appropriate resources, socioeconomic disparities limit some students' access to supplementary materials, particularly in rural areas

English is taught as a global lingua franca, perceived as a pathway to international opportunities in fields like tourism, diplomacy, and higher education. . Small groups can help students with varying abilities to accomplish separate goals. But still teachers are not satisfied with the situation when the teacher isn't present within the group at all times, groups derive their own dynamic inductively [9]. Students view English proficiency as essential for global engagement, though its promotion may overlook local cultural contexts, potentially limiting educational inclusivity. As 6th graders transitioning to middle school, learners face increasing demands on their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Listening plays a great role in teaching and learning English. It helps to master the language, effective communication, rather than native-like fluency, is critical for success in these contexts.[12]

The sociolinguistic profile of the English language classroom in Ellikkal'a, Karakalpakistan, highlights the complexities of teaching in a multilingual, culturally diverse setting. By embracing linguistic diversity through inclusive pedagogical strategies and equitable assessment practices, educators can create supportive learning environments that value students' linguistic identities and enhance English acquisition. These insights are applicable to other multilingual educational contexts, advocating for sociolinguistic awareness as a cornerstone of effective language education.

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