

LANGUAGE ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS IN MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract. This article explores the language attitudes of students in multilingual classrooms and examines their influence on academic achievement, classroom interaction, and social integration. In contemporary educational contexts characterized by linguistic diversity, students' perceptions and emotional responses toward different languages significantly shape learning outcomes. The study adopts a theoretical and analytical approach, drawing on sociolinguistic and educational frameworks to analyze key factors influencing language attitudes, including sociocultural background, language status, teacher practices, and institutional language policies. The findings suggest that positive language attitudes contribute to higher academic engagement and social cohesion, while negative attitudes may result in marginalization and reduced educational performance. The article emphasizes the importance of inclusive language policies and pedagogical strategies to foster respect for linguistic diversity in multilingual educational settings.

Keywords: language attitudes, multilingual classrooms, sociolinguistics, education, language policy, social integration.

Introduction

In recent decades, globalization, migration, and internationalization of education have led to an increase in multilingual classrooms worldwide. Educational institutions are increasingly faced with learners who speak different native languages and come from diverse cultural backgrounds. In such environments, language is not only a medium of instruction but also a powerful symbol of identity, social status, and belonging. Consequently, students' attitudes toward languages play a crucial role in shaping both educational processes and social relations within the classroom.

Language attitudes refer to individuals' beliefs, feelings, and evaluations of languages and their speakers. In multilingual classrooms, these attitudes influence students' motivation, participation, and interaction with peers and teachers. Positive attitudes toward the language of instruction and toward linguistic diversity can enhance learning outcomes and promote social integration. Conversely, negative attitudes may lead to linguistic discrimination, reduced self-esteem, and academic underachievement. Therefore, examining language attitudes in multilingual classrooms is essential for understanding how educational systems can respond effectively to linguistic diversity.

This article aims to analyze the language attitudes of students in multilingual classrooms and to highlight their implications for education and social integration. The study is grounded in sociolinguistic theory and aligns with the requirements of the Higher Attestation Commission (OAK) by providing a structured, analytical, and academically relevant discussion.

Theoretical Framework of Language Attitudes

The concept of language attitudes has been extensively studied in sociolinguistics and social psychology. According to Gardner (1985), language attitudes are closely linked to motivation and play a key role in second and foreign language acquisition. Attitudes encompass cognitive,



affective, and behavioral components, reflecting what individuals believe about a language, how they feel about it, and how they act in relation to it.

In multilingual classrooms, language attitudes are often shaped by broader social ideologies and power relations. Languages associated with political authority, economic opportunity, or national identity tend to enjoy higher prestige, while minority or regional languages may be undervalued. These hierarchies influence students' perceptions and can result in unequal participation and access to educational resources. From a sociolinguistic perspective, language attitudes are not merely individual preferences but socially constructed phenomena influenced by institutional practices and societal norms.

Factors Influencing Students' Language Attitudes

Several interrelated factors influence language attitudes in multilingual classrooms. One of the most significant factors is students' sociocultural background. Learners' home language practices, family values, and community attitudes toward languages shape their perceptions from an early age. Students whose native languages are recognized and respected in educational settings are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward both their mother tongue and the language of instruction.

Language status is another critical factor. Languages perceived as useful for academic success, employment, or social mobility often receive more positive evaluations. In contrast, languages associated with minority groups may be stigmatized, leading students to distance themselves from their linguistic heritage. Teacher attitudes and classroom practices also play a decisive role. Teachers who value multilingualism and adopt inclusive teaching strategies can positively influence students' attitudes and foster a supportive learning environment.

Language Attitudes and Academic Achievement

A substantial body of research demonstrates a strong relationship between language attitudes and academic achievement. Students who hold positive attitudes toward the language of instruction are more motivated, participate actively in classroom activities, and demonstrate higher levels of comprehension. Positive language attitudes reduce anxiety and increase learners' confidence, thereby facilitating cognitive engagement and academic success.

In contrast, negative attitudes toward the language of instruction or toward one's own native language can hinder learning. Students who feel that their linguistic identity is marginalized may experience frustration, disengagement, and lower academic performance. Multilingual classrooms require pedagogical approaches that recognize and value students' linguistic repertoires, enabling them to draw on their full linguistic resources in the learning process.

Language Attitudes and Social Integration

Beyond academic outcomes, language attitudes significantly affect social integration in multilingual classrooms. Language serves as a marker of group membership, and negative attitudes toward certain languages can lead to exclusion and social division. Students may form social networks based on shared linguistic backgrounds, limiting intercultural interaction and mutual understanding.

Positive language attitudes, on the other hand, promote respect, cooperation, and empathy among students. When linguistic diversity is viewed as an asset rather than a challenge, students are



more likely to engage in meaningful interaction across linguistic boundaries. Educational institutions play a vital role in shaping these attitudes by implementing inclusive language policies and promoting intercultural education.

Implications for Language Policy and Teaching Practice

The findings of this analysis highlight the importance of addressing language attitudes in multilingual classrooms through informed language policies and teaching practices. Educational policymakers should develop frameworks that support multilingual education and protect linguistic diversity. Teacher training programs should include components on sociolinguistics and language attitudes to equip educators with the skills needed to manage linguistic diversity effectively.

In classroom practice, teachers should encourage inclusive communication strategies such as translanguaging, collaborative learning, and culturally responsive pedagogy. Creating a safe and supportive environment where students' languages are acknowledged and respected can significantly enhance positive language attitudes and improve both academic and social outcomes.

Conclusion

Language attitudes are a central factor in the functioning of multilingual classrooms, influencing students' academic achievement, social integration, and identity development. Positive attitudes toward linguistic diversity contribute to inclusive and effective educational environments, while negative attitudes can exacerbate inequality and exclusion. By recognizing the importance of language attitudes and implementing inclusive policies and pedagogical strategies, educators and institutions can better respond to the challenges of multilingual education. Future research should focus on empirical investigations of language attitudes in specific educational contexts to further inform policy and practice.

References.

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