The Acculturation Experiences of English Language Learners (ELLs) Within the Classroom Learning Environment in the United States

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Crossref

Abstract

Purpose: This qualitative descriptive phenomenological study aimed to investigate the acculturation experiences of English Language Learners (ELLs) within the classroom learning environment in the United States. The central problem of this study was the acculturation experiences of ELLs within in the classroom environment in the United States. This study aimed to examine the acculturation processes of ELLs in a classroom setting in the United States. Berry's acculturation theory is the framework for the study.

Materials and Methods: Giorgi's descriptive phenomenology technique was utilized to perform the study's data analysis. Eight participants were recruited through purposive sampling, which allowed the researcher to reach data saturation. The sample consisted of public primary school teachers located in the southeast region of the United States. The accuracy of the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews was verified using member-checking procedures, where participants used their descriptions of the phenomenon to validate the transcripts. Giorgi's five-step data processing techniques were implemented afterwards. There were nine constituents that appeared in the data concerning the three research questions in the study. The outcomes of the study confirm that it coincides with other studies as well.

Findings: It is evident that culturally responsive teaching, as well as improved teacher training for its practice, must be brought to the fore to support ELL integration. That study only confirms peer mentoring and parental involvement in the enhancing ELLs' academic and social outcomes. Such findings call for policy reforms that focus on inclusive practices and bilingual resources in schools for all students.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study highlights the challenges English Language Learners (ELLs) face, including language barriers, social isolation, and low academic performance. It recommends teacher training, bilingual resources, peer support, parental involvement, and multicultural education to support ELLs' integration and success. Digital tools like Duolingo and Google Translate are suggested to enhance language learning and classroom engagement. Collaborative efforts from teachers, schools, and families are essential for effective ELL support.

Keywords: _English Language Learners, Acculturation, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Language Proficiency, Classroom Integration_

INTRODUCTION

The most intricate component of education in America is the educational integration of English Language Learners (ELLs). ELLs are students from different ethnicities and cultures and speak different languages, making them to foster the largest sub-population of the public school system of the United States which includes primary and secondary education (Garcia-Borrego et al., 2020; Watkinson et al., 2022). It is estimated that by 2025, one out of every four school-aged children in America would be considered an ELL (Shim & Shur, 2018). Such changes, largely facilitated by transnational migration, constantly keeps the sociocultural and educational concerns of these learners in the limelight (Szymanski & Lynch, 2020; Zhang et al., 2022).

As pointed out by Stark et al. (2021) and Watkinson et al. (2022), ELLs experience challenges when it comes to acculturating into the new school environment, learning English, and achieving satisfactory academic results. Social isolation in regard to the new target culture, is highly possible in cases where the language barrier needs out-of-class emotions like frustration and tension (Parker et al., 2021; Yingling, 2023). Involving oneself in the Acculturative effort leads to a great deal of indifference towards class participation, which ends up in cultural invalidation and ignorance of education (Gilblom et al., 2022; Wang & Yu, 2021).

Negative experiences with acculturation result in low achievement because learners with limited language and cultural understanding are not able to fully participate in learning (Ma & Xia, 2021; Stark et al., 2021). The performance metrics of our ELLs are dire. They graduate at lower rates than their peers and have approximately 10% higher dropout rates than other students. In standardized tests, ELLs obtain scores 30-40 points lower than their peers (Olds et al., 2021). It is noted that lack of English proficiency, new learning contexts, and lowered expectations are contributed to these gaps (Johnson & Thorne-Wallington, 2021; Zhang et al., 2022).

ELLs benefit from education when teachers strive to promote inclusive environments in the classroom (Cho et al., 2019; Dessie & Sewagegn, 2019). The informants' teachers' cultural knowledge and teaching style had significant impacts on the students' ethnographic integration as well as their academic performance (Saito et al., 2018; Hong et al., 2019). Classrooms that support diversity openly encourage engagement from English Language Learners (ELLs), which helps to remove social barriers and facilitates learning (Davis & Tesh, 2022). To support ELLs, teachers must adopt socially and culturally responsive methods which allow learners to optimally perform without being constrained by the language (Cho et al., 2019; Stark et al., 2021; Wang & Yu, 2021).

Language barriers often trigger outside-the-classroom feelings of frustration and tension that undermine students' confidence and willingness to engage in school activities. These feelings may instigate social withdrawal and fear of being embarrassed, which will lower classroom participation. Thus, ELLs find the transition academically and socially into the school environment quite arduous.

Identify problem and solution -specific connections. These findings are to provide a seamless transition between the discussion of challenges and possible solutions. For instance, one could say that having discussed the importance of language, the next recommendation is bilingual resources. The mention of social isolation should be followed immediately with peer mentoring strategies. The cause-effect relationship becomes even stronger with this continuity.

Problem Statement

This study aims to understand the acculturation experiences of English Language Learners (ELLs) within the classroom learning environment in the United States. Because of poor socialization and language issues, ELLs have a significant problem adjusting to new cultures and new academic environments (Bennouna et al., 2021; Hieu, 2023; Meng, 2020). When a student's English proficiency is low, there is a chance that his or her peers may isolate him or her which may further restrict the student's chance of being exposed to the necessary cultural capital and academically productive classroom behaviors as well as school (Zaidi et al., 2021).

Although a significant body of research pertains to the challenges of English Language Learners (ELL), insufficient attention has been paid to realizing these constructs in different typical classroom interactions nor by what extent they benefit from teacher-mediated strategies. Much of the existing research generalizes what ELL students experience rather than concentrating on the contextualized classroom-level acculturation processes that govern academic behavior as well as socialization. This study is a unique inquiry into the lived experience of teachers in public elementary schools located in the Southeastern United States, thereby affording the rich possibility of real-time strategies occurring at the classroom level. In this way, the research narrows the literature gap on how teacher perceptions, cultural responsiveness, and adaptations in instructional practices impact acculturation of ELLs in controlled educational environments.

Purpose of the Study

The qualitative, descriptive, and phenomenological research, as conducted on ELL acculturation experiences, has been carried out in view of the U.S. classroom environment as seen and depicted by their teachers. Some ELLs may not be able to express in English all that they are experiencing or undergoing, since in settings devoid of bilingual instruction, the study used a descriptive phenomenological model designed to present such experiences by way of public elementary school teachers in the Southeastern United Sates. Eight teachers were interviewed in a semi-structured way until saturation of the data was reached. Giorgi (2009) set forth the five-step method of analysis used on the data comprising:

i. Familiarization with the text.
ii. Discernment of meaning units.
iii. Transformation into lived expressions.
iv. Construction of an instructive meaning framework.
v. Extraction of the essence of the phenomenon.

Through a systematic approach, the study presents an understanding of how teachers see ELLs engaging in classroom acculturation. The descriptive phenomenological method by Giorgi was chosen to properly investigate this study, to deeply explore the teachers' lived experiences and perceptions concerning the acculturation of ELLs. With Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method, the narratives of the participants are broken down into meaning units and transformed into rich descriptions, ensuring alignment with the research questions regarding the challenges ELLs face, how teachers address those challenges, and the strategies they engage in when assisting ELLs in their integration. This structural flexibility permits the capturing of the essence of classroom-based acculturation from an informed, experiential perspective.

Introduction to the Theoretical Framework

This research investigates the acculturation processes of English Language learners (ELL) in American classrooms through Berry's (1997) Acculturation Theory. As noted by Berry (1997,

2005), acculturation theory deals with culture and psychological change a person encounters while adapting to a new setting. There are four approaches to acculturation: assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization, the last of which is the most harmful in terms of academic achievement and mental health (Berry, 1997).

ELLs often experience acculturative stress because of language barriers and an entirely different social system. Successful assimilation and integration lead to improved learning outcomes; however, separation and marginalization impede academic and social progress (Berry, 1997). With Dang et al. (2022) and Olds et al. (2021), we emphasize that acculturation theory focuses on the need for cultural, pedagogical, and social support in the classroom for ELLs. Teachers can help create a positive learning atmosphere through culturally responsive pedagogy, affirming the use of students' first languages, and conversations about and acceptance of differences (Mardian & Nafissi, 2022).

Research Questions

> i. What are teachers' lived experiences of the acculturation faced by ELLs within the classroom learning environment in the United States?
> ii. What are teachers' lived experiences addressing the acculturation of ELLs within the classroom learning environment in the United States?
> iii. What strategies do teachers use to address the acculturation experiences of ELLs within the classroom learning environment in the United States?

Significance of the Study

This research is important as it can enrich the understanding of ELLs' acculturation processes in U.S. school settings, enabling school leaders and teachers to help ELLs with academic difficulties. The results may aid in formulating ELLs' integration and academic coping strategies that enhance their integrated and academic classroom participation (Parker et al., 2021; Stark et al., 2021). In addition, this study aims to extend Berry's (1997) Acculturation Theory to the Southeastern region of the United States so that its relevance to different ELL cultures is clearer. These results on bridging ELL achievement gaps can inform school policies and curriculum design. Emphasizing culturally relevant teaching and providing social support can assist ELLs in narrowing the achievement gap.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The journeys of English Language Learners (ELLs) in the United States concerning their ethnocentric, cognitive, and educational challenges are extensively studied. They go through acculturation as referred to by Berry's (1997) integration of cultural contexts before and after movement. Berry's (1997) claims that the form of acculturation change an individual undergoes affects their social and academic life. This literature review focuses on why ELLs face the challenges, the influence of acculturation theory, and the challenges of academic performance, and practices that could augment their classroom environment.

Berry's (1997) acculturation theory explains the challenges English Language Learners face in a new educational system. Berry's (1997) acculturation theory has been developed to identify how students from different cultures adapt to the education system of a new country. Berry's model proposes four distinct strategies which include assimilation and integration (adoption of the new culture and total abandonment of the native culture), Separation, and marginalization (both cultures are rejected). Current evidence shows that many ELLs who integrate perform better socially and academically than those who marginalize or separate. (Mardian & Naftissi, 2022).

One of the examples given is acculturative stress that comes from shifting language use and social distancing as well as bizarre classroom teaching methods (Parker et al., 2021). This type of stress can lead to anxiety, frustration, or even a complete withdrawal from class participation which can greatly affect motivation and performance for ELLs (Gilblom et al., 2022).

ELLs face challenges due to a lack of language skills. Limited English proficiency (LEP) makes it very hard to follow directives, participate in a discussion, and complete assignments (Meng, 2020). Research indicates that ELLs lag in reading as well as comprehension which in turn adversely affects their ability to perform to the desired level (Zaidi et al., 2021). In addition, social ostracism spooned by poor elocution accentuates social solitude and makes the process of secondary assimilation more difficult (Meng, 2020).

Cultural differences, while being factors era frequently considered the sole didactic two cultural, components of ELLs acculturation, represent significant contributions towards students' true motivation. Some ELLs come from diverse educational cultures and value these systems which often lead to the paradox of a taught class, the eyes of the teaching staff, and following the evaluation procedures (Bennouna et al., 2021). Teaching staff unaware of such cultural settings are likely to misinterpret ELLs' actions as apathy or lack of ability, and this very distance from ELLs' cultures contributes to learning disempowerment (Hieu, 2023).

Alongside other factors, socioeconomic issues heavily restrict the opportunities available to ELLs. A considerable number of ELL families struggle financially, which restrains them from getting additional educational assistance in the form of tutoring, books, and necessary technology (Hong et al., 2019). Students from low-income families are more likely to do poorly academically and face a higher probability of failure in completing their education (Soland & Sandilos, 2021).

ELLs lag their native English-speaking peers on standardized test scoring. "...the average ELL student achieves 30-40 points lower than their non-ELL peers on state assessments and tends to have a higher likelihood of dropping out from school…" (Soland and Sandilos 2021 as quoted by Chang et al, 2021). Murphy and Torff (2019) estimate ELLs meet graduation requirements at a rate roughly 10% lower than their non-ELL counterparts.

One of the more pressing challenges in dealing with ELL is the lack of forwarding testing modifications which would dramatically improve results. Many standardized tests are not tailored for students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and as a result, these students find themselves in a very disadvantageous position… (Olds et al., 2021) "Although the effectiveness of the accommodations is also subject to debate, time extensions, bilingual dictionaries, and alternative forms of assessment have been suggested to eliminate the achievement gaps" (Cho et al. 2019 as quoted by Chang et al. 2021). These accommodations also differ from one district to another, and many ELLs are bound to remain unsupported.

Integration within the classroom and teacher guidance positive teacher attitudes and inclusive practices assist in easing the transition for ELLs. Studies indicate that the presence of culturally responsive teaching practices, which integrate the culture of the students with lessons, entails the use of instructional aids and student cooperation, and ELLs are more engaged and confident (Benbaba & Lindner, 2023). These types of responsive teaching practices positively assist students in adjusting to new learning environments (Mills et al., 2020).

Expectations of the teachers also affect the student outcomes of ELLs. Students are more willing to participate in class discussions and complete assignments when they perceive their teachers to be supportive (Roman et al., 2020). Teacher support, on the other hand, is important

in assisting the ELLs who tend to have negative perceptions of the classroom integrating into the classroom (Davis & Tesh, 2022).

Ways to improve experiences of acculturation among ELLs, several suggestions have been made to ease the acculturation stages of ELLs as well as their educational experiences. One of the most successful suggestions is the use of bilingual education. Bilingual instruction has been found to facilitate not only language learning but also enable ELLs to preserve their culture, fostering positive acculturation (Balilah & Archibald, 2022). Other than that, peer support systems also assist ELLs in adapting to their surroundings. Offering bilingual student mentors or assigning buddies enables the ELLs to form social bonds (Kennedy & McLoughlin, 2023). It has been noted that ELLs, who use peer-assisted learning strategies, have better academic and motivational achievements (Hieu, 2023).

Another important strategy is the use of responsive pedagogy. It includes the modification of the curriculum through multicultural inclusion, incorporation of multicultural books, and application of different cultures' examples in the lessons (Dessie & Sewagegn, 2019). Teachers using these approaches reported more positive attitudes and participation of ELLs in classroom activities as well as better academic performance (Wang & Yu, 2021). Equally essential is their involvement in ELLs' education achievements. It is suggested that ELLs fare better academically and in terms of acculturation when the parents are actively engaged with the local school through bilingual newsletters, parent meetings, and greater community involvement (Olds et al., 2021).

The process of acculturation for ELLs saliently poses a variety of problems such as language impediments, cultural barriers, and educational inequities. Berry's (1997) acculturation theory seems to fit best with these issues and the various methods that can be employed to facilitate integration.

One major research absence regarding the acculturation experiences of ELLs would be the voice of the students themselves. It is enriching to understand firsthand their acculturation experience and, thus, analyze the challenges and strategies more thoroughly. Additionally, this study engages elementary teachers in the Southeastern U.S., which does not provide a generalizability of the research findings to include middle and high school educators, who may have different challenges and use completely different pedagogical approaches. And while qualitative data are provided in this study, the absence of any quantitative analysis limits the generalization of findings or statistical correlations of acculturation strategies to academic performance.

What are some hypotheses or research questions that could be generated from these gaps for further inquiry, which include:

i. What do ELL students think of their own acculturation process in U.S. classrooms?
ii. Is there a relationship between culture-responsive teaching and performance on standardized tests for ELLs?
iii. Does school type influence how closely such integration strategies would work for ELLs (rural vs. urban school)?

Defining areas would enable a fuller understanding of ELL acculturation and help to create interventions that could be more tailored-to-fit interventions across diverse educational contexts.

Research Method

This chapter looks at the acculturation experiences of English Language Learners (ELLs) within the classroom settings through qualitative descriptive phenomenology. The research analyzes semi-interviews through teachers, their personal and social experiences. The participants are public elementary school teachers from the southeastern United Stated, who have taught ELL students for a minimum of three years. Participants who have less than three years of experience or have never taught an ELL student are excluded from the criteria.

The primary data collection tool was the semi-structured interview guide designed to obtain a detailed description of students' ELLs acculturation story. This specific focus had complimentary open-ended questions about their work, teaching methods, and the barriers that ELLs face in the process of acculturation and learning the language. The interviews were conducted over a period of 45 minutes to an hour, and participants had the choice of attending them in person or virtually. The interviews were captured through digital recording devices for verbatim transcription. In addition to this, a demographic questionnaire on the years of teaching and the number of ELLs the participants had taught was used to collect background data.

Member-checking was performed on the transcriptions to improve accuracy which involved sending the participants the transcripts of interviews to verify the responses. This was done to make sure participants did not misunderstand the points they were making. Member-checking is recognized as one strategy to improve the trustworthiness of qualitative studies by verifying that the results are true representation of the subject's experiences. Other forms of triangulation such as peer debriefing were used to check the coded data and developed themes to be certain they were accurate and reliable.

Data analysis was conducted by using Giorgi's (2009) five-step descriptive phenomenological method. Initially, the researcher checked all transcripts several times to comprehend the participants' experiences. Next, meaning units were identified pertaining to each participant's statement that was relevant to ELL acculturation. In the third step, the meaning units were converted into expressional outlines where the voices of the Participants were integrated. In the fourth step, the researcher integrated the meaning units into one description about the experiences of ELL acculturation. In the last step, supporting conclusions which became the results of the study were formulated.

Several assumptions and limitations were acknowledged. The study assumed that participants would provide honest and accurate responses. Among the study's limitations was the relatively small sample size, which, while adequate for qualitative research, does not represent all teachers who work with ELLs. The fact that the study was done in the Southeastern United States means that the results may not be representative of teachers in other regions. Ethics were always considered. Every participant completed the consent form which illustrated that they understood the aim of the study and that their participation was voluntary. To protect participant's identity, pseudonyms were used, and all information was kept secured. Data collection commenced only after the research ethics approval was obtained, which supported the ethics research plan.

This study utilized a descriptive phenomenological approach to study the acculturation experiences of ELLs as described by their instructors. All participants in the study were well-informed due to the nature of purposive sampling, and the semi-structured interview format provided rich qualitative data. Giorgi's (2009) data analysis process was used to ensure that the results were accurate and reliable. Participants' identities were protected through ethical measures in place. With this methodology, the challenges and processes of acculturation of

ELLs were more accurately portrayed, aiding educators and policymakers to better understand these challenges.

FINDINGS

This chapter describes the results of the study, incorporating some illustrative excerpts from the qualitative data collected through the semi-structured interviews conducted with elementary school teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs). The focus of this study was the integration into American society of ELL students and the processes that aid or obstruct their integration with particular attention given to the problems, teacher assistance, and the extent of teachers' facilitative integration and achievement within the context of schooling. Giorgi's (2009) five step descriptive phenomenological method reveals three major components; integrated direction of the identified phenomena concerning the problems of acculturation of the students, teachers' understanding the help they provide to the ELLs, and the facilitation of integrated teaching of ELL's. These themes reveal what is possible about the experience of ELLs and how their teachers can help them adapt to a new educational system.

Reliability of the Information

Gaining qualitative research credibility is vital. In ensuring the trustworthiness of the study, member-checking, peer debriefing, and triangulation were employed. In member-checking, participants were given the opportunity to confirm their interview transcripts and ensure their answers were captured as intended. As an external reviewer, peer debriefing also validated that the coding and development of themes were done in an objective manner, thus serving as an additional check. In referential triangulation, themes from multiple participants were consolidated, and their analyses were compared with existing literature on ELL acculturation, thus finding gaps in the literature.

Results

Data from the study was arranged in three main themes that were the answers to the research questions. These themes explain how ELLs undergo the process of acculturation, the problems they face from the teacher's perspective, and the most effective ways of helping ELLs' integrate.

Theme 1: Acculturation Challenges Faced by ELLs

One of the most notable observations that arose was the significant problem of classroom integration that ELLs must deal with. These were mainly related to gaps in the skill-teaching language, social interaction, and learning.

- Gaps in the skill-teaching language: There was a consensus from participants that lack of proficiency in the English language was the most severe problem ELLs faced. Students who did not possess a great deal of English found it difficult to understand the lessons, follow the teacher's directions, and articulate their ideas. This gap hindered the students' academic work, class involvement, and their interactions with peers.

- Social interaction: Some of the ELLs complained of being alienated socially due to their limited ability to communicate with their classmates and teachers. The instructors seen that these students were very quiet, did not actively participate in groups, and were very hesitant to seek help. This detachment had a social dimension that elicited poor self-evaluation, anxiety, and participation in the classroom.

- Struggles in academic performance: Due to ELLs having to learn English while simultaneously learning subject-specific content, their academic achievement usually lagged that of native English speakers. Teachers observed that ELLs usually

underperformed in standardized tests, especially in the reading and writing sections. Moreover, they discovered that many ELLs' unique needs were not adequately addressed through conventional forms of instruction, causing frustration among both pupils and teachers.

Theme 2: Teachers' Perspectives on Assisting ELLs

The teachers assisted the ELLs in coping with a new educational setting. These experiences helped them appreciate the difficulties of the most ELL students while also knowing the strategies to assist these students.

- Culturally relevant pedagogy: Most teachers highlighted the need for instruction sensitive to the culture of the students, which entails teaching school subjects with reference to students' cultures. Teachers noted that by integrating different cultures into the curriculum and recognizing students' backgrounds, ELLs became more willing and eager to participate in learning activities.
- Flexible teaching: Teachers modified their instructional methods often to fit ELLs' different levels of mastery of the English language. A great deal of scaffolding was provided through visuals, simple language, and step instructions. ELLs were also supported through small group teaching in which the instruction was focused on helping these students.
- Engagement of parents: Several teachers struggled with trying to engage parents of ELLs, especially when the family did not speak English. However, parents who were involved reported that their support was vital to the students' academics. Parents took advantage of bilingual newsletters, interpreter services for parent-teacher conferences, and community sponsored events appreciating the culture.

Theme 3: Approaches for ELLs to be Integrated

In dealing with the problems of ELLs, the teachers used a variety of approaches to make their integration and learning experiences better.

- Programs for mentoring: ELLs were partnered with native speakers of English to facilitate communication and provide social support. These mentoring programs fostered friendships and increased the ELLs' self-esteem in using English as a second language in everyday conversations.
- Other forms of teaching: It was noted that ELLs were able to learn other important concepts when using bilingual books, teaching aids and even printed worksheets. Some other schools had the help of language support specialists with the following positions: bilingual instructional aide and teachers of ESL (English as a Second Language).
- Teacher professional development: Many educators recognized the need for continuous training related to ELL instruction. Workshops on second language acquisition, differentiated instruction, and culturally responsive teaching were regarded as the most useful. Teachers who had formally trained in ELL education were more likely to express confidence in their ability to assist these students than those who had not.

Such results converge with existing literature. The language and social integration difficulties fit with Parker et al.'s (2021) identification of acculturative stress as a hindrance to learning. The teachers' use of culturally relevant pedagogy supports Mardian & Nafissi's (2022) stress on inclusivity in teaching. The efficacy of peer mentoring and bilingual support corresponds with Kennedy & McLoughlin's (2023) findings of social and academic gains for ELLs.

Evaluation of the Findings

The results of this study corroborate the predominant literature on ELL acculturation and further support the language-pedagogy and socio-cultural integration model of student achievement, which states that language acquisition, cultural adjustment, and social integration are integral parts of student achievement. Research has shown repeatedly that ELLs are at risk when it comes to social and academic achievement, and that the assistance of an educator is vital in alleviating some of these difficulties (Parker et al. 2021; Gilblom et al. 2022). The conclusions also recognize the importance of culturally responsive teaching and peer support systems that most people consider effective for the integration of ELLs. Despite the problems captured, teachers were positive regarding the prospects of ELLs succeeding in school if the right teaching methods and support systems are made available. Some participants stressed that the phenomenon of initial acculturation difficulty does exist, but students that get support, appropriate teaching, and good social interactions generally do adapt in the long run.

Summary

This chapter analyzes the results of the research, describing the primary issues that ELLs encounter, the teacher's responses, and the outcomes of different types of integration. It was shown that few ELLs were able to identify language barriers, social isolation, or academic failure as particularly important problem domains. In contrast, teachers comprehensively supported these students through culturally responsive teaching, differentiated instruction, and parent involvement. Several strategies were found to facilitate peer mentoring, bilingual materials, and teacher training that help ELLs achieve integration academically.

The results highlighted a concern to improve support provided by the institution to ELLs with specific focus on teacher education, bilingual resource provision, and supportive inclusion strategies. Appreciating the processes and issues ELL acculturation entails is crucial for educators and policy makers in crafting more appropriate strategies that ensure all learners have equal opportunities to participate in the learning environment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter states how the results of the study are discussed and what further research could be conducted in the future and ends with how the study has been significant. The study examined the acculturation processes of ELLs in American elementary school classrooms from the perspective of a classroom teacher. The results describe the barriers that ELLs encounter, the teacher's efforts to assist them, and the need for systematic programs for helping in the processes of acculturation and achievement in education.

Conclusion

This document has enhanced knowledge on the processes of acculturation of ELLs in the United States classrooms focusing on the issues they face, and the responsive pedagogy attempts from teachers. It was found that language, social and academic problems for ELLs remain significant challenges. On the other hand, teacher dependence, peer encouragement, and family engagement are very helpful.

This research highlights the necessity of integrating culturally appropriate instructional strategies with bilingual instructional materials and corresponding sociodemographic focused programming in the context of scaffolding acculturation of ELLs. There is a critical need to implement policies friendly with ELLs in schools so that these children feel valued, welcome, and motivated to learn. By undertaking appropriate interventions, ELLs may be able to achieve more favorable academic results and engage fully in social life. Improvement for the ELLs

education nationwide calls for specific decisions, and these require joint action. Schools are obliged to invest in proper teacher training, resource allocation, and even parental participation. If this level of support is provided, ELLs may improve their acculturation experiences and succeed in their academic endeavors.

Recommendations

The results of the study bring new meaning to the practices and values of all the stakeholders of education, the teachers, policymakers, and school leaders. The challenges faced by ELLs indicate a need for improved teaching quality and management structure. Several ELLs face challenges of not being proficient in English, being socially withdrawn, and not performing well academically, which if not adequately managed within the specific frame might bring long term educational adverse effects. Teachers have an important role to fulfill in overcoming these challenges, however, such work must be supported by broader school and policy frameworks.

Fostering and understanding cultural differences is one of the most important implications when analyzing data which ELLs perform better when their cultural identities are blended within the curriculum. Schools need to actively promote multi culture education, while at the same time providing the teachers with skills to be able to formulate culturally competent instructional strategies. This also supports the notion that peer encouragement in the acculturation has its value. ELLs with strong supportive networks or who participate in structured peer mentoring programs develop language skills and self-confidence more rapidly than learners who do not have such support. This means that institutions ought to provide peer mentoring programs to assist ELLs with issues related to integration.

Parental support was another interesting aspect which influences achievement among ELLs. Most of the parents of ELLs children are from different countries and do not speak the language, which makes it difficult for them to care and engage in their child's education. There is a dire need for schools to facilitate communication and outreach with these bilingual parents using translated materials, workshops, and parent outreach programs to increase their participation. The more parents take part in their child's schooling, the more motivated and academically successful the child becomes.

Recommendations for Practice

To support the acculturation and improve the academic performance of English Language Learners (ELLs), it is recommended to consider the following school practices:

i. Improvement in teacher training in instruction of ELLs: Professional development concerning ELL instruction needs to be sustained. It should include information about second language acquisition and the integration of differentiated and inclusive teaching. Such workshops designed for teachers on ELLs' instruction helped them become more culturally and linguistically sensitive to the barriers that needed to be overcome.

ii. Increased provision of bilingual resources and support services: Budget allocations should be made for purchasing bilingual materials and translation services, as well as for hiring ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) instructors. Providing bilingual books and other digital devices and instructional professional to ELLs helps them to understand and participate actively in classwork.

iii. Increased focus on peer support program: Schools should initiate peer mentoring or buddy systems in which ELLs are paired with more proficient English-speaking students. These programs are helpful in increasing social integration, language skills, and reducing feelings of alienation for ELL students.

iv. Involving parents more: Schools should develop methods to improve the gap between ELLs 'families and teachers. This may involve publishing newsletters in two languages, holding culturally sensitive parent workshops, and using interpreters during parent-teacher conferences. Parent involvement is important because that can reinforce what the students have learned and help improve the performance of ELLs.

v. Teaching in a multicultural perspective: Schools need to promote multicultural and include it in the lessons of the subjects they teach. Students will be motivated to learn and participate in class when they understand that their cultures are part of the curriculum.

vi. Though the suggestion to explore digital tools is excellent, it could be strengthened further by mentioning specific technologies commonly employed for language learning, such as Rosetta stone, Duolingo, or Imagine Learning. In the literature, Google Translate, Flipgrid, and Seesaw are also suggested as effective platforms in fostering bilingual collaboration and classroom participation (Björling et al., 2021; Huang, 2022). Mention of these tools would facilitate further research and classroom planning to some extent.

Recommendations for Future studies

This study suggests that further studies may need to carry out on the impact of acculturation and the challenges from a quantitative standpoint concerning the academic and social achievement of ELLs. Other than elementary teachers, further research may consider the experiences of middle and high school teaching faculty as older ELLs seem to experience some challenges. There are several studies focusing on students belonging to certain distinct regions which make it possible to compare ELLs from differing regions. Such studies illustrate how certain local policies and resources impact the phenomenon of acculturation.

In addition, it is important to analyze the use of digital tools for the teaching of ELLs. Examining the effects of language learning programs, bilingual apps, and online tutoring services would clarify the impact these resources have on the learning outcomes of ELLs. In the end, there is a gap in the literature where quantitative work needs to be done with ELLs to ensure their academic achievement is monitored and understood in relation to what supports their success over time.

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