

**CLASS PROFILE OF SECONDARY EFL LEARNERS IN TASHKENT:
SOCIOLINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

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Annotation: *This paper profiles a secondary English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, emphasizing its linguistic and socioeconomic diversity. Two key learner subgroups are examined: students from low-income backgrounds and heritage Russian-speaking learners. Drawing on sociolinguistic theory, the article analyzes how these social factors affect language learning outcomes, engagement, and classroom participation. The paper proposes differentiated pedagogical strategies tailored to the needs of each subgroup and advocates for inclusive, equity-oriented instruction aligned with CEFR and IELTS preparation goals.*

Keywords: *EFL learners, sociolinguistics, differentiated instruction, Uzbekistan, equity, CEFR, multilingualism, low socioeconomic status, heritage language learners.*

Аннотация: *В статье рассматривается профиль класса английского языка как иностранного в средней школе в Ташкенте, Узбекистан. Особое внимание уделяется социолингвистическому и социально-экономическому разнообразию учащихся. Анализируются две подгруппы: ученики из семей с низким доходом и носители русского языка как наследственного. На основе социолингвистической теории предлагаются дифференцированные методы преподавания, учитывающие потребности каждой подгруппы, с акцентом на равенство, инклюзивность и соответствие стандартам CEFR и подготовке к IELTS.*

Ключевые слова: *изучение английского языка, социолингвистика, дифференцированное обучение, Узбекистан, равенство, CEFR, многоязычие, низкий социально-экономический статус, носители наследственного языка*

Annotatsiya: *Ushbu maqola Toshkent shahridagi umumta'lim maktabida ingliz tilini chet tili sifatida o'rganuvchi o'quvchilar sinfini tahlil qiladi. Unda til va ijtimoiy-iqtisodiy turfa xillikka urg'u beriladi. Asosiy ikki guruh – kam ta'minlangan oilalardan chiqqan o'quvchilar hamda rus tilini meros til sifatida biluvchi o'quvchilar – batafsil yoritiladi. Maqolada sotsiolingvistik nazariyaga asoslangan holda ushbu omillarning til o'rganishga ta'siri ko'rib chiqiladi va guruhlarning ehtiyojlariga moslashtirilgan, CEFR va IELTS talablariga mos o'qitish strategiyalari taklif qilinadi.*

Kalit soʻzlar: *ingliz tili oʻrganish, sotsiolingvistika, differentsial oʻqitish, Oʻzbekiston, tenglik, CEFR, koʻp tillilik, past ijtimoiy-iqtisodiy holat, meros til oʻrganuvchilari.*

Class Profile: Secondary EFL Learners

This assignment centers on a secondary school English class located in Tashkent, the capital city of Uzbekistan. The class includes 28 students aged between 15 and 17 years old. These learners attend a state-run public school that follows a national EFL curriculum informed by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), with most students performing between the A2 and B2 levels. English is taught as a foreign language for four hours per week, with an increased emphasis in the final two years of school as students prepare for higher education or international opportunities. The classroom is multilingual and culturally diverse. While the majority of learners speak Uzbek as their first language, others speak Russian or Tajik at home. This diversity shapes language attitudes, proficiency levels, and participation styles.

The school is situated in an urban district of Tashkent and serves a mixed socioeconomic population. The classroom is moderately resourced: students have access to printed textbooks and a projector, but technology such as computers, personal tablets, and high-speed internet is limited. Students are preparing for external language assessments such as the IELTS and the national university entrance exams, which adds pressure and structure to classroom instruction. This dynamic environment demands differentiated teaching strategies that consider both linguistic variation and social context.

Subgroup 1: Learners from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds

One significant subgroup in this classroom comprises learners from low-income families. These students often experience reduced access to extracurricular support such as private tutoring, online resources, and English-language exposure beyond school. Some are responsible for household responsibilities or part-time work that limits their time for homework and self-study. As Wardhaugh and Fuller (2014) highlight, socioeconomic factors directly influence educational attainment and language learning investment. Students from this background may face greater difficulties in developing academic literacy and test-taking strategies, but many show high oral competence in their home language and strong motivation when lessons are practical, communicative, and clearly linked to real-life goals.

To support this subgroup, instruction is adapted to be inclusive and resource-sensitive. Activities that rely on oral interaction, visuals, or cooperative learning (e.g., think-pair-share, group projects, storyboarding) allow these students to participate fully. Scaffolding writing tasks in class—such as guided sentence frames, collaborative brainstorming, and peer feedback—helps bridge the gap between oral fluency and

academic writing. Teachers also integrate low-stakes formative assessments and provide clear models of successful tasks to build learner confidence and familiarity with test formats.

Subgroup 2: Heritage Russian-Speaking Learners

Another subgroup consists of heritage Russian speakers who typically come from middle- or upper-middle-class backgrounds. These students often have strong literacy in Russian and some receive additional instruction in Russian-language programs outside school. They tend to show more confidence in academic discussions and reading comprehension tasks. According to Mesthrie et al. (2009), language variety and identity can affect learning by influencing both linguistic behavior and classroom participation. In this context, Russian-speaking students may also have distinct syntactic or lexical transfer issues when learning English due to typological similarities between Russian and English, which contrast with the more agglutinative structure of Uzbek.

This subgroup benefits from more cognitively demanding tasks such as reading authentic texts, analyzing arguments, and writing structured essays. Teachers incorporate contrastive grammar activities to draw attention to Russian-English differences and help prevent common transfer errors. These students are often encouraged to take leadership roles in group tasks or help peer-edit writing assignments. At the same time, it is essential to ensure that the classroom fosters linguistic equity by not favoring the prestige associated with Russian fluency—thus ensuring an inclusive space where all language backgrounds are valued.

Pedagogical Implications for Inclusive Language Instruction

The social and linguistic diversity in this Tashkent classroom presents both challenges and opportunities. Differentiated instruction is central to meeting learners where they are—whether that means simplifying materials for some or increasing task complexity for others. Teachers must consider how students' social identities, language backgrounds, and learning needs shape their classroom experiences and language development (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2014). For instance, students from lower-income families may need more teacher feedback, more guided practice, and greater support in building academic confidence. Meanwhile, heritage language speakers can benefit from enrichment tasks that challenge their critical thinking and deepen their language awareness.

Creating a classroom that values all voices requires an understanding of sociolinguistic realities and a commitment to equity. Instruction is aligned with both CEFR descriptors and IELTS preparation goals, balancing communicative language teaching with form-focused instruction. Grouping strategies are intentionally mixed to promote peer learning across subgroups. Ultimately, using a sociolinguistic lens to

understand learners' needs supports better decision-making about classroom methods, materials, and assessments.

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