

Enabling Translanguaging in the EFL Classroom, Affordances of Learning and Reflections

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Abstract : Translanguaging pedagogy suggests a new perspective in language education relating to multilingualism; multilingual learners have one linguistic repertoire and not two or more separate language systems (García and Wei, 2014). When learners translanguange, they are able to draw on all their language features in a flexible and integrated way (Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2015). In the Foreign Language Classroom, however, the tendency to use the target language only is still advocated as a pedagogy. This study attempts to enable learners in the English as a foreign language classroom to draw on their full linguistic repertoire through collaborative reading lessons. In observations prior to this study, in a classroom where English only policy prevails, learners still used their first language in group discussions yet were constrained at times by the teacher's language policies. Through strategically enabling translanguaging in reading lessons (Celic and Seltzer, 2011), this study has revealed that learners showed creative ways of language use for learning and reflected positively on this experience. This case study enabled two groups in two different proficiency level classrooms who are learning English as a foreign language in their first year at University in Saudi Arabia. Learners in the two groups were observed over six weeks and were asked to reflect their learning every week. The same learners were also interviewed at the end of translanguaging weeks after completing a modified model of the learning reflection (Ash and Clayton, 2009). This study positions translanguaging as collaborative and agentive within a sociocultural framework of learning, positioning translanguaging as a resource for learning as well as a process of learning. Translanguaging learning episodes are elicited from classroom observations, artefacts, interviews, reflections, and focus groups, where they are analysed qualitatively following the sociocultural discourse analysis (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Mercer, 2004). Initial outcomes suggest functions of translanguaging in collaborative reading tasks and recommendations for a collaborative translanguaging pedagogy approach in the EFL classroom.

Keywords : translanguaging, EFL, sociocultural theory, discourse analysis

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