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Introducing translanguaging space to teach writing in year-9 EFL classrooms: observation, student interactions and interviews.

(299 words)

Translanguaging and the communicative practices of students of all ages have been well researched as of late (Leung & Valdés, 2019). Building on the results of said research, mainly emanating from the US and the UK, translanguaging is now thoroughly endorsed through the Swedish National Board of Education, providing articles with guidance on how to adopt a translanguaging pedagogy (for instance Svensson et al., 2018). In the Swedish context, only one study has researched translanguaging in EFL classrooms to date (Källkvist et al., 2022) and none have centered on the use of translanguaging space in the teaching of writing to year-9 EFL students. The skill of writing is crucial in year 9, as the students have national tests in English, a gate-keeping test which may impact on their entry into upper secondary school. Following a sociocultural approach to teaching and learning, the current study addresses the research gap in EFL writing in Sweden through a design intervention covering six lessons. Using the curriculum cycle (Derewianka, 1991) as a starting point, lessons were planned taking into account recent findings of classroom translanguaging research and executed by researcher and lead teacher conjointly. In the first five lessons, the students were presented with writing tools, the main tool being their previously learnt languages, to assist them in the process of generating ideas and solving problems in their writing, while the sixth lesson was reserved for essay writing. Video- and audio-recorded interaction in the classroom shows students speaking Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian, English, French, German and Spanish to carry out tasks when translanguaging space was offered. Preliminary results from observations and interviews suggest increased motivation and interest in fellow students as a result of low status languages being made legitimate in the classroom. The paper ends with reflections about pedagogical implications.

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