



The role of translanguaging in EFLL classrooms at primary schools in Sebha/Libya.

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ABSTRACT

The use of L1 in foreign language classrooms is gaining popularity as an effective teaching tool for pupils. Translanguaging is a relatively recent term that is commonly used to describe both the process of shifting between two languages and the philosophy that underlies it. This paper describes the role of translanguaging in EFLL at primary schools in Sebha and the potential advantages/disadvantages of using it as a pedagogical tool in English language teaching. It investigates the use of L1 Arabic in English language classrooms at primary schools in Sebha. This research uses mixed research method, qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, that seeks to evaluate the role of Arabic/English translanguaging in Sebha primary schools' EFLL classes. The analysis of this study shows that translanguaging is spontaneously performed in the setting of EFLL classrooms at primary schools level in Sebha, Libya. It can be concluded that translanguaging in our setting at Libyan EFL classrooms reflects positive linguistic and cultural impacts on both the educators and the learners.

دور التنقل اللغوي في فصول تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFLL) بالمدارس الابتدائية في سبها/ليبيا

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الكلمات المفتاحية:

النقل اللغوي
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طرق التدريس

المخلص

يكتسب استخدام اللغة الأولى في فصول اللغة الأجنبية شعبية كأداة تعليمية فعالة للتلاميذ. يعد التنقل اللغوي مصطلحاً حديثاً نسبياً يستخدم بشكل شائع لوصف عملية التحول بين لغتين والفلسفة التي تقوم عليها. تصف هذه الورقة دور التنقل اللغوي في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFLL) في المدارس الابتدائية في سبها والمزايا/العيوب المحتملة لاستخدامه كأداة تعليمية في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية. يدرس استخدام اللغة العربية كلغة أولى (L1) في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية في المدارس الابتدائية في سبها. يستخدم هذا البحث أسلوب بحث مختلط، ومنهجيات بحث نوعية وكمية، تسعى إلى تقييم دور الترجمة بين اللغتين العربية والإنجليزية في فصول EFLL بالمدارس الابتدائية في سبها. يوضح تحليل هذه الدراسة أن عملية النقل اللغوي تتم بشكل عفوي في فصول EFLL على مستوى المدارس الابتدائية في سبها، ليبيا. يمكن أن نستنتج أن نقل اللغات في بيئتنا في الفصول الدراسية اللببية للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يعكس تأثيرات لغوية وثقافية إيجابية على كل من المعلمين والمتعلمين.

Introduction

Teaching a foreign language requires teachers to choose appropriate methods and processes for each class. While a monolingual approach was formerly thought to be the most effective method to teach foreign languages, increased internationalization and the growth of multilingualism across the world have called for a new approach to

EFLL.

Nowadays, educational activities are usually carried out in a bilingual or multilingual setting, where old techniques and methods become outdated and need to be revised or updated to accommodate the learners' expectations. Researchers in the field of education have

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recently recognized the need for innovative teaching approaches that consider classroom diversity to adapt to developments, regarding the learners' backgrounds and diverse linguistic abilities and capabilities. Even though implementing new methods can be challenging for a variety of reasons (such as a lack of resources, an inadequate number of classes, a curriculum that must be adhered to, etc.), teachers are still expected to adopt a learner-centered mindset that takes into account each foreign/ second language learner's unique needs.

Translanguaging is a teaching method that allows the use of a number of languages in the classroom to enhance the students' foreign/second language learning performance. It acknowledges that multilingual learners may enhance their comprehension and communication via the use of their extensive linguistic resources. In order to facilitate learning, translanguaging encourages students to use all of their linguistic resources, including their mother tongue. This method recognizes and capitalizes on learners' varied language proficiency to support both language growth and academic success.

This study is conducted to find out the role of Arabic/English translanguaging occurring feature in EFLL at schools in Sebha. Moreover, it investigates the positive/negative impacts of implementing Arabic/English translanguaging on EFLL process.

1.1. Research objectives and aims

The objective of this research is to figure out the role of Arabic/English translanguaging performance in EFLL at primary schools in Sebha, Libya.

Additionally, the study aims to investigate the positive/negative impacts of implementing Arabic/English translanguaging on EFLL process.

1.2. Research problem

This paper takes the initiative to investigate such a very recent feature of translanguaging in EFL classrooms in Sebha where Arabic is the mother tongue of the interlocutors (both teachers and students). Language switching in EFLL processes has always been under surveillance and examination.

1.3. Research questions

This paper attempts to answer the following questions:

Key question:

What is the role of Arabic/English translanguaging in EFLL at primary schools in Sebha, Libya?

Sub questions:

- A. How much translanguaging is implemented in EFL primary school classrooms in Sebha, Libya?
- B. What are the teachers' motivations behind using/not using translanguaging in their EFL classes?
- C. What are the positive/negative impacts of implementing Arabic/English translanguaging on EFLL process?

1.4. Significance of the study

Translanguaging is a term that has gained a remarkably increasing attention in the field of bilingual and multilingual education in recent years. It refers to the practice of using multiple languages in communication and learning, rather than keeping them separate. Translanguaging enables students to use their full linguistic resources, including their mother tongue, to assist learning. This strategy acknowledges and capitalizes on learners' varying levels of language ability in order to foster both language growth and academic success. This researcher recognized the importance of exploring the feature of Arabic/English translanguaging performed in EFLL classrooms in Libyan primary schools in Sebha.

2. Literature review

This literature review presents major studies and research on translanguaging, emphasizing its advantages and consequences regarding language learning and instruction. Translanguaging is a theoretical concept that challenges traditional views of languages as separate and distinct entities. It was first introduced by linguist Ofelia García in the early 2000s. Recently, the advocacy of translanguaging has gained more attraction and traction in the field of bilingual education and applied linguistics.

Translanguaging theory suggests that language is a fluid and dynamic system that extends beyond individual languages. It suggests that multilingual people have a linguistic repertoire that includes all of their languages, which they can use to communicate and make

meaning in a variety of contexts.

In the context of bilingual education, translanguaging emerged as a pedagogical approach that values and leverages students' diverse linguistic resources to support learning and academic success. By encouraging students to draw on their full linguistic repertoire, including their native language, translanguaging aims to create a more inclusive and empowering educational environment.

Translanguaging has also gained popularity in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics as means of understanding how language practices reflect social identities, power relations, and cultural exchanges. Scholars have emphasized the importance of translanguaging in encouraging language variety, challenging linguistic structures, and fostering inclusive communication among diverse linguistic communities.

Ofelia García, a major academic in translanguaging, has published one of the key works on the subject. García claims in her book (2009), "Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism, and Education," that translanguaging challenges conventional views of language as distinct and separate things; instead advocating for a fluid and dynamic approach to language use. She highlights the significance of recognizing and valuing students' multilingual repertoires in educational contexts. She postulates that "Translanguaging is not about shifting from one language to another, but about deploying a full linguistic repertoire to make meaning." García (2009:140).

Another noteworthy study on translanguaging is by Li Wei (2018), who investigates the notion from a sociolinguistic perspective in his book "Translanguaging: Origins and Development from School to Street." Wei (2018) examines how social and cultural factors influence translanguaging practices and how they can be used to empower bilingual speakers in a variety of settings. "Translanguaging allows students to draw on their entire linguistic repertoire to enhance their understanding and expression of concepts." Li, Wei and Zhu (2018:680).

According to Cenoz and Gorter, "Translanguaging challenges traditional notions of language boundaries and encourages a more flexible and dynamic approach to language use in educational settings" (2017:2913).

Researchers in language education, including Angela Creese and Adrian Blackledge, have investigated translanguaging in the classroom. Their research indicates how translanguaging can improve students' language learning experiences by allowing them to use their entire linguistic abilities. Creese and Blackledge (2010) argue that translanguaging reinforces a more inclusive and fair approach to language learning, particularly for students with multiple languages. They claim that "Translanguaging involves the use of linguistic resources from different languages as an integrated communication strategy." Creese and Blackledge (2010:106).

Ultimately, the literature of translanguaging emphasizes its potential for transforming language teaching and learning processes by recognizing the complexities and depth of multilingual communication. Educators might create more inclusive and effective learning settings that promote language proficiency and cultural awareness by recognizing and utilizing students' multilingual abilities.

3. Methodology

This paper uses mixed research methods (qualitative and quantitative), aiming to investigate the role of Arabic/English translanguaging in EFLL at primary schools in Sebha. Using mixed research methods can lead to richer insights, more comprehensive conclusions, and valid and reliable evidences to support this research's findings. To find out the role of Arabic/English translanguaging in EFL at primary schools in Sebha/Libya, observation, semi-structured interview and questionnaire methods of data collection have been employed.

Observation allows this researcher to study the subjects' language and interactional behavior in natural settings without artificial manipulation. This can provide a more accurate representation of real-world behavior. Complementarily, the employed interview method allows for in-depth exploration of the issue, as the interviewer can probe further and ask follow-up questions to gain a deeper understanding. Finally, the questionnaires allow for standardization of data collection, ensuring that all respondents are asked the same questions in the same format, which can facilitate data analysis and

comparison. In addition, questionnaires can provide more generalizations to this research's findings.

Regarding this research's subjects, five EFL classrooms have been observed. Based on EFL classroom observations, the questions of the interview have been constructed. Five EFL teachers and five EFL pupils (grades 5 and 6) have been interviewed. Depending upon the findings of the observations and the interviews, the teachers and pupils questionnaires have been designed to maintain accuracy and reliability of the findings.

4. Data analysis and findings

This paper uses mixed research methods, qualitative and quantitative research approaches where observation, semi-structured interviews and questionnaire methods of data collection have been utilized.

The observation shows that most of the teachers use Arabic/English translanguaging inside the classroom. One of the teachers (subject A) suggests that allowing students to use their native language can boost their confidence and motivation, as they can express themselves more freely and participate actively in classroom activities.

Another teacher (subject D) claims that translanguaging helps her to clarify complex concepts or instructions for the students who may struggle to understand English, enabling them to better comprehend and engage with the content.

They (the interviewed teacher) also confirm that translanguaging helps students in making connections between their native language (Arabic) and English, facilitating language transfer and providing deeper understanding of linguistic structures and concepts.

However, one of the interviewed teachers (subject E) argues that translanguaging strategies in education may face criticism from traditional pedagogical approaches that emphasize linguistic isolation and strong language boundaries. Moreover, the relevant educators may require more training and support to effectively apply translanguaging procedures in the classroom. Furthermore, most subjects reveal their fear that using multiple languages in communication might sometimes lead to confusion, misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

In contrast, the interviewed students (subjects) have assured that by encouraging them to use their native language Arabic alongside English, translanguaging creates a more inclusive and supportive learning environment where they feel empowered to engage in more meaningful communications. Results from the questionnaire have assured the validity and reliability of the observation and the interview findings mentioned above. The majority of the questionnaires' subjects have agreed to the importance and functionality of Arabic/ English translanguaging in their EFLL classrooms in primary schools.

5. Conclusion

In support to the advocacy of translanguaging mentioned in the literature chapter, this research concludes that translanguaging is spontaneously performed in the setting of EFLL classrooms at primary schools level in Sebha, Libya. This researcher suggests that motivations behind translanguaging can enhance the pupils' competence to acquire the foreign language in a stress-free context. Allowing the integration of the learners' languages' abilities can increase the richness of their linguistic competence and performance. Finally, translanguaging in this research's context has revealed a number of sociolinguistic characteristics in both teachers and pupils. The application of translanguaging gives the pupils more linguistic confidence as they feel the privilege of their special linguistic competence by being bilingual or multilingual. Finally, translanguaging maintains cultural bridging between the switching languages.

6. Limitations and recommendations

This study has face a significant limitations in time and place. It had to be conduct during the schools short semester where English language classes are few and vary from 1st lecture to 7th. Therefore, this researcher has been forced to come on regular basis according to the schools' timetable. Moreover, this study could not afford to cover more than this number of researched schools and subjects. Accordingly, this researcher strongly recommends more and wider studies to be conducted on translanguaging as a linguistic and pedagogical phenomena in EFLL in Libyan schools and universities.

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