

Translanguaging as a Pedagogical Tool to Enhance Under-graduates' Language skills: A Study on the Higher Education Sector in Sri Lanka

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Translanguaging can be considered as a metalinguistic tool that can be effectively utilised in the higher education sector of Sri Lanka due to its multilingual nature, where the utilitarian languages of the majority are either Sinhala or Tamil. This study focuses on the research problem pertaining to the lack of interest exhibited by students in learning English and their lack of competency in English. This is a result of both teachers and students indicating resistance in the use of their first language in the English language classroom, owing to the second language learning and teaching culture and some other issues surrounding English language teaching in Sri Lanka. Thus, the objectives of the study are to examine the perspectives of students and language teachers on the utilisation of translanguaging in language classrooms and to measure its effectiveness in improving the students' English language competency. This research study was conducted with the participation of a focus group of 60 students who belong to the higher education sector in Sri Lanka. Moreover, data has also been gathered from 30 educators who engage in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) within the field of higher education. The results of the study revealed that the students are willing to alternate between languages for the purposes of communication, meaning making and to acquire a better understanding of language pedagogy. However, 15 teachers have stated that the target language (L2) should be taught while excluding the use any other languages comprising their mother tongue (L1) as well, arguing that it may negatively affect the accuracy and standards of second language acquisition. Therefore, this study attempts to explore the ways in which translanguaging can be utilised as a pedagogical tool to enhance the language skills of the students, by perceiving it as a point of mediation in language learning.

Keywords: English as a Second Language, Higher education, Multilingualism,
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