

Year-9 Students Writing in English: The affordances of translanguaging and writing tools on students' ability to cope with a high-stakes task

Tina Gunnarsson, Lund university

Multilingual students' communicative practices and use of translanguaging has kept researchers' interest for years (see Leung & Valdés 2019 for overview). However, most of this research stems from English-speaking countries where target language and societal language is the same and students frequently share language backgrounds (Leung & Valdés 2019). In Sweden, the heterogeneity of the student population, and a traditional support for an English only policy, has made it difficult for teachers to know when and how to implement other named languages (Hult, 2017). Although the Swedish National Board of Education endorses translanguaging, research focusing on student interactions in our classrooms is scarce. The aim is to address this gap by looking at multilingual students' use of translanguaging space, the mediation of writing tools and how this mediation shapes the writing process in English. Using Derewianka's (1991) curriculum cycle as the basis, a design intervention spanning six lessons was completed focusing on different tools to use in the writing process of English. The writing tools included both physical tools, such as mind maps, and psychological tools, such as previously learnt languages. Following a sociocultural approach, the present study set out to answer: a) What are the affordances of allowing translanguaging space in two English classrooms?, b) What do the different writing tools introduced in the lessons prior to the writing task mediate? and c) How does the mediation of writing tools shape the writing process? A sociocultural discourse analysis showed students naturally translanguaging in classroom interactions, using several named languages to engage in *exploratory talk*, the type of talk conducive to learning (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). The mediation of writing tools was analyzed in two steps, using a latent content analysis and a thematic analysis on students' interview responses resulting in six mediational themes: *idea generation*, *memory*, *lexical access*, *affirmation* and *organization*. Tentative results suggest that the mediation of different tools shaped the writing process by providing content, lexical variation, problem solving, structure and a sense of security.