


Chapter 7

Translanguaging as a Socio–Critical Practice in Korean EFL Classrooms: Identity, Agency, and Emotional Well–being

Michael Rabbidge

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3262-5294>

University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand

ABSTRACT

The teaching of English as a foreign language in Korea has traditionally framed English as an academic skill within monolingual and neutral models. However, socio-critical EFL highlights the need for pedagogies that foster personal growth, critical awareness, and self-empowerment. This chapter explores translanguaging as a dynamic, learner-centered approach that supports identity, agency, and emotional well-being, aligning with socio-critical EFL. The chapter examines how translanguaging positions EFL learners as agents drawing on their full linguistic resources, challenges hierarchical language ideologies, and promotes emotional well-being by reducing foreign language anxiety. Using narrative inquiry and positioning theory, it explores how translanguaging influences Korean EFL students' perceptions of self and identity. This chapter contributes to socio-critical EFL by illustrating how translanguaging fosters linguistic and civic competencies. It offers practical strategies for educators to create inclusive, multilingual classrooms that promote critical engagement and social justice.

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores translanguaging in the Korean context as a means of implementing socio-critical EFL, offering a dynamic, learner-centered perspective that addresses identity, agency, and emotional well-being, thus aligning with the larger goals of socio-critical EFL as identified by Crookes (2021) and Pennycook (2021). It examines how students use translanguaging to navigate their linguistic identities, assert agency, and enhance emotional well-being. By drawing on narrative inquiry and positioning theory, the chapter highlights the potential of translanguaging to disrupt monolingual norms and create spaces where multilingual learners can thrive academically and personally. Through this lens, translanguaging emerges not just as a pedagogical tool but as a political stance that advocates for equity, inclusion, and social justice in language education.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Ideological Foundations and the Case for Socio-Critical Pedagogy

Translanguaging as a socio-critical practice refers to the use of translanguaging not just as a pedagogical tool but as a means to challenge dominant ideologies and transform inequitable societal norms. Translanguaging, in this context, goes beyond the cognitive or linguistic benefits of leveraging multilingual resources. Instead, it positions language practices as a way for language users to critique and resist power structures, while also empowering marginalized individuals to assert their cultural and linguistic identities (García & Wei, 2014).

One critical aspect of translanguaging as a socio-critical practice is its capacity to challenge monolingual ideologies. Societies and educational systems often privilege monolingualism as the norm, thereby marginalizing speakers of minority languages and dialects. This reflects broader societal inequalities where certain languages are elevated over others in terms of status and access to opportunities (Canagarajah, 2011). Translanguaging disrupts these assumptions by legitimizing multilingual practices and demonstrating how individuals naturally draw on their entire linguistic repertoires to make meaning. By fostering such an approach, educators and institutions can question the underlying power dynamics that reinforce linguistic hierarchies.

Furthermore, translanguaging provides a platform for empowering marginalized voices. Traditionally, education systems have suppressed the use of home languages, particularly in formal settings, framing them as obstacles to academic success

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