

Plurilingual education and pedagogical plurilanguaging in an elementary school in Japan

A perspectival origami for better learning

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Abstract

In this article, we examine a plurilingual practice in Japan – a country traditionally described as being extremely monolingual. The contribution explores innovative teaching that disrupts monolingual ideologies and how we view TESOL practice. The context of the study is a public elementary school situated in western Japan. We follow the classes of one teacher to discuss her use of pedagogical plurilanguaging as intentional instructional strategies that integrate several languages and cultural viewpoints to support the development of language and content learning, plurilingual awareness and multiperspectivity. We explain how we think it echoes with, and differs from, the concept of translanguaging. Data sources include audio and video recordings of classroom interactions, visual documentation, researchers' field-notes, teachers' and learners' reflective journaling, as well as learners' productions. The study has implications for teacher training and curriculum design and resituates the teaching of English as a world language in a more complex and multifaceted way.