Written narratives by adult Chinese plurilingual students: Participants’ perceptions of code-switching and the (re)shaping of identity by Wales Wong

This study explores the experiences and intentions for code-switching with Chinese adult students in Ontario who attended an ESL or English course in a continuing education program. Three participants were given the task of writing a short story with the option to incorporate an experimental pedagogical strategy of code-switching. Using a qualitative method, data was collected from their written narratives, followed by semi-structured interviews to discuss their experiences with code-switching. The data provides a deeper understanding of code-switching’s role in language learning and identity (re)shaping of adults during the process of acquiring English skills. The findings suggest that the participants’ rationalizations for code-switching in the development of writing are influenced by the teacher as an authority figure, an active engagement in learning, and the desire for conciseness and efficiency. Furthermore, code-switching in written narratives supports identity (re)shaping through the ownership of words, reflexivity in memories, and accommodation for the reader.