Translanguaging as a literary device in post-secondary EAL writing instruction

In this talk, I will present preliminary findings from my doctoral research: a teacher action research study in the form of an eight-week long English/translingual creative-writing workshop for high-intermediate English learners. This goal of this study is to interrogate the impact of implementing translingual writing pedagogy through personal narrative writing. Post-secondary students living in Montréal, Québec and coming from a variety of language backgrounds will be invited to explore the genre of personal narrative writing taught through a translingual writing stance. My previous teaching experiences have suggested the potential of personal narrative for creating what Garcia and Li Wei (2014) call a translanguaging space in mainstream EAL instruction. Personal narrative is a genre of writing that invites students to write stories based on their own memories and experiences (Kittle, 2008) and the workshop I have developed teaches personal narrative through analysing mentor texts; practicing writing strategies in low-stakes environments; giving and receiving peer feedback; and reflecting on language identities. The workshop focuses on fluency rather than grammatical accuracy and teaches translanguaging both as a theory of language (Li Wei, 2018) that challenges perceptions of language hierarchies, and as a literary device to enhance voice, authenticity, and expression in additional language writing. Researchers such as Selzer (2020), Prada (2022), Kim and Park (2020) and Burton and Van Viesen (2021) have shown that creative and personal forms of writing are conducive to translanguaging. My research will expand on previous work by exploring personal narrative as a genre for implementing translingual pedagogies, as well as critically evaluating participant perceptions of translanguaging in terms of their language identities, perception of their bilingualism and multilingualism and confidence in their writing skills – both in English and beyond. Data will include classroom observation, teacher-researcher reflections, writing samples, and in-depth interviews with participants.

SPEAKER

APRIL PASSI

April est enseignante d’anglais au niveau cégep au Québec et aussi un PhD Candidate at McGill University in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education. Her research is heavily informed by her expériences as a teacher, puis ses approches pédagogiques sont influencées par sa passion pour la recherche. She is currently interested in the interaction between translingual approaches to teaching creative writing in academic spaces et la bonification des identités multilingues.