

‘Authentic’ Spices and Translanguaging in the Multicultural Classroom

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Abstract

The efficacy of using authentic materials within the framework of Task-Based Language Teaching is well-documented (Guariento & Morley, 2001; Nunan, 2004). Such materials allow learners to encounter and use language for real-world purposes by providing them with the tools required to “engage ... in the kinds of cognitive processes that arise in communication outside the classroom” (Ellis, 2003, p. 336). This paper describes the use of a graphic text on spices from a brochure on Ayurveda to teach an integrated-skills lesson on reading comprehension, speaking and vocabulary to a group of multicultural, multilingual EFL adults. With the use of translanguaging, the lesson enables students and teachers to discover cultural and linguistic commonalities and differences vis-a-vis cuisines and culinary practices. The use of first languages provided students with a sense of ownership and helped to develop “the weaker language in relationship to the dominant one” (García & Wei, 2014, p. 64).

Keywords: authentic materials, task-based materials, translanguaging, ESL/EFL context

Introduction

Knowledge of more than one language is to be viewed as a rich resource and an advantage enabling learners to encode experiences in multiple codes and literacies. By motivating students to engage their whole beings in interacting with texts, we create opportunities for minority learners to fairly engage in literacy practices and provide them access to a knowledge base that helps them access better education and a better life.