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► **To cite this version:**

Isabelle Léglise, Mathieu Daure. Students' multilingual repertoires as resources for plurilingual approaches in French Guianese classrooms. AILA, Symposium on Plurilingual approaches in the language classroom, Aug 2021, Groningen, Netherlands. hal-03370395

HAL Id: hal-03370395

<https://hal.science/hal-03370395>

Submitted on 8 Oct 2021

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Students' multilingual repertoires as resources for plurilingual approaches in French Guianese classrooms

(Léglise Isabelle, Daure Mathieu)

Belongs to symposium S110: Plurilingual approaches in the language classroom

Abstract text

This contribution reports on using students' plurilingual skills by students and teachers in French Guiana classrooms based on the analysis of multilingual classrooms interactions.

French Guiana is a French overseas territory located on the mainland of South America where some 40 languages coexist. Children often grow up in a multilingual environment being the family or the school and roughly two thirds do not speak French, the only official and instruction language, before going to school (Léglise 2013). Experimental bilingual education (French / French Guianese Creole 12 hours each) do exist. One experimental program has also been created for minority languages (Launey 1999). It exists only in the first years of primary school and operates as a language instruction class with the help of Mother tongue facilitators. These programs, as well as Foreign Language teaching, insist on separating languages and they often lead to two solitudes (Cummins 2005). French education system commonly erases students' plurilingual skills and their intimate living experience, *spracherleben* (Busch 2015), of plurilingualism, a sort of multilingual Ubuntu (Makalela 2016).

Research already showed that the integration of children's languages in school teaching should be necessary to meet the needs of plurilingual pupils. In line with previous publications, we will show that children's languages are often used by pupils themselves as a resource for learning, and sometimes also by teachers as a resource for teaching (Alby and Léglise 2018), regulating or improving comprehension, despite explicit prohibitions. Translanguaging (Garcia 2009) is thus seen an asset for teaching. In this presentation, we will highlight how plurilingual surroundings can be put into the classroom and how students' multilingual repertoires are used as resources for teaching and learning various subjects, including Foreign Languages. Secondly we will show how plurilingual practices and activities, as tongue comparison, may promote plurilingual language awareness (Sanz 2012).

A 50-word summary

Education systems commonly erase students' plurilingual skills and their intimate living experience of plurilingualism. We will highlight how students' multilingual repertoires may be used as resources for teaching and learning in French Guiana, including in FL classrooms, and how plurilingual activities, as tongue comparison, may promote a plurilingual language awareness.