

## Investigating Translanguaging Practices and Attitudes of International Students in Higher Education at an American University

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### Abstract

Using all linguistic repertoires is an advantage for bilinguals. Students have different attitudes towards using their first language (L1) in a second language (L2) instructional setting. This explanatory sequential mixed-methods research paper investigated the students' perception with regards to the use of their L1 to facilitate their writing in the L2 (English) and examine its influence on the quality of their writing. For this study, the participants were seven learners in tertiary level education from different social sciences majors who voluntarily agreed to participate in the survey and the semi structured interviews. The researcher analyzed seven writing samples collected from the participants. The findings of this study indicate that most participants believe the use of first language has a negative impact on the second language (English) improvement. However, four of the participants who stated that they usually use their first language at the composing stage had a different perception; they perceived their L1 as a supportive element to writing in L2. Additionally, this study concluded that the use of the first language is a helpful strategy that helps students generate ideas, understand the content and get deeper in a topic. Furthermore, the use of first language does not weaken the quality of the learners' writing in most cases.

**Keywords:** Bilingualism, first language (L1), second language (L2), translanguaging

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