Constructs of knowledge about language in HE and multilingualism
Should we really get rid of named languages?

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handout: https://homeweb.unifr.ch/berthele/Pub/berthele-handout-constructs.pdf

First plurilingual wave: Focus on the repertoire

Rationale: psycholinguistic construals need to be 'applied', implemented in pedagogy
- "Decompartmentalize languages", learn/teach them in an integrated fashion
- "Take into account all languages" (e.g. in diverse classrooms)
- "Multilingual boost": Positive transfer in TLA/additional language learning
- bi- and multilingual norms instead of monolingual norms

Second wave: Postmodern deconstruction

But as multilingualism became more visible in the deeply interconnected world of the 21st century, sociolinguists started to question the conventional wisdom of studying the behavior of bilinguals through the lens of named languages, increasingly seen as mere social constructions. [...] This "human turn in sociolinguistics" [...] has led sociolinguists to coin terms that capture the dynamic human interactions of bilinguals in other than purely dually named languages—metrolinguism [...], polylingualism [...], and translanguaging [...] or translingual practices [...]. An important aspect of the term translanguaging that we adopt is the "trans." This prefix implies that when bilingual speakers translanguage, they transcend named languages by going beyond them [...]. (Kley and Garcia, 2019, 71, my emphasis)

Second plurilingual wave: Deconstruct named languages, translanguaging

- not codes-switching, "translanguaging"
- get rid of 'named languages' and construe fluid repertoire holistically
- social justice by translanguaging
- native-speakerism is racist

"Rather than taking the named language as the unit of analysis ... it is far more productive analytically to focus on the very variable ways in which linguistic features with identifiable social and cultural associations get clustered together whenever people communicate ..." (Creese and Blackledge, 2015, p. 21)

"What makes translanguaging different from other fluid language practices is that it is transformative, with the potential to remove the hierarchy of language practices that deem some more valuable than others. Translanguaging ... is about a new language reality, a new way of being, acting and language in a different social, cultural, and political context, allowing fluid discourses to flow, and giving voice to new social realities" (Creese, Blackledge, and Hu, 2018, p. 842)
Re-engineering of bi-/multilingualism: natural categories (Berthele, 2021)

Language as a natural category, along the two dimensions of recognition (x) and linguistic distance (y).

References I


Berthele, Raphael, Peter Lenz, and Elisabeth Peyer (accepted, in press). « Predicting Foreign Language Skills Based on First Languages: The Role of Lexical Distance and Relative Morphological Complexity ». In: Poznan Studies in Contemporary Linguistics.


References II


