

# Constructs of knowledge about language in HE and multilingualism

Should we really get rid of named languages?

Raphael.BERTHELE@unifr.ch

University of Fribourg

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

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A multilingual turn?

## 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 simply dual named languages—**metrolingualism** [...], **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 translanguag, they transcend named languages by going beyond them [...]. (Klein and García, 2019, 71, my emphasis)

A multilingual turn?

## 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



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A multilingual turn?

## 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 languaging practices is that it is transformative, with the potential to remove the hierarchy of languaging practices that deem some more valuable than others. Translanguaging ... is about a new languaging reality, a new way of being, acting and languaging 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)

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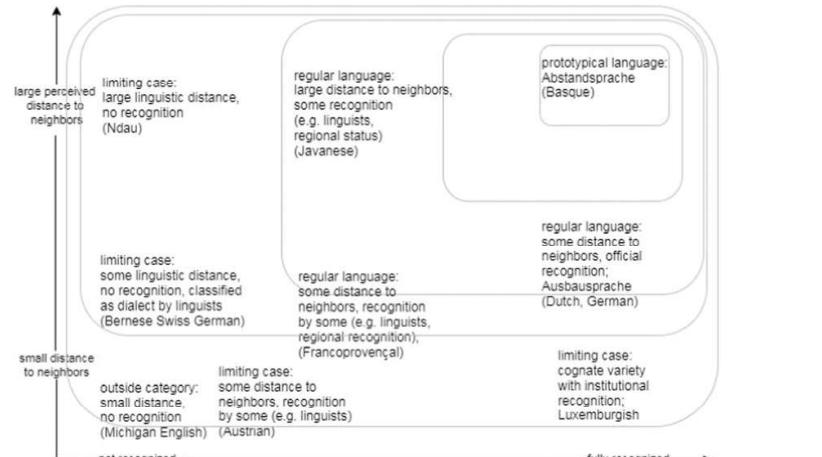
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## Re-engineering of bi-/multilingualism: natural categories (Berthele, 2021)

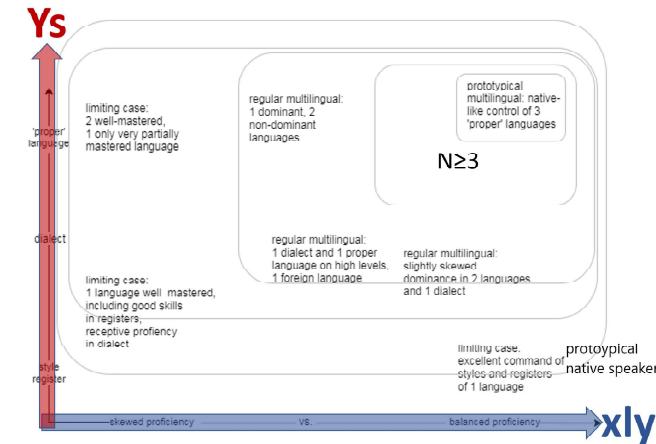


Language as a natural category, along the two dimensions of recognition (x) and linguistic distance (y).

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## A multilingual is a speaker-hearer who **xly** masters **N** **Ys**



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