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Problematizing linguistic integration of migrants: the role of translanguaging and language teachers

Abstract: This paper problematizes the concept of linguistic integration of migrants, by proposing an alternative way of posing the question. It reviews the transformations of sociolinguistics in the 21st century, and offers a critical perspective on the ontology of language, native speakers and bilingualism. After introducing the concept of translanguaging, the paper poses principles of language education for adult migrants, which take into account this different conceptualization of language, bilingualism and education. It ends by proposing a renewed vision of language education for migrants, and calls for language teachers to take up different roles from those in the past.

Résumé : L'article problématise le concept d'intégration linguistique des migrants en proposant une autre approche de la question. Il examine les transformations de la sociolinguistique au XXI^e siècle et pose un regard critique sur l'ontologie du langage, du locuteur natif et du bilinguisme. Après une présentation du concept d'apprentissage translinguistique, l'article pose des principes de l'éducation linguistique des migrants adultes en prenant en compte cette conceptualisation différente du langage, du bilinguisme et de l'éducation. En conclusion, il propose une vision nouvelle de l'éducation linguistique des migrants et invite les enseignants à changer de rôles par rapport à ceux qui étaient les leurs par le passé.

1 Introduction

Displacements and movements of people into different spaces characterize the world today. Sometimes people flee war, other times economic poverty, yet other times religious and ethnic discrimination or oppressive political systems. As a result of this movement, national languages have become deterritorialized (Canagarajah 2005): languages considered “national”, are increasingly spoken in diasporic communities all over the world. In this increasingly interconnected

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Download Date | 11/23/17 2:21 PM

world developed nations still wield significant power and authority and may use what is considered the “standard” national language as a tool of differentiation between migrants who are welcomed and integrated, and those who are not.

This paper starts out by problematizing the concept of linguistic integration of migrants, and posing a different question that takes into account conceptual advances in our understandings of language and language education. It briefly reviews the transformations of sociolinguistics in the 21st century and proposes principles of language education for adult migrants which take account of these different conceptualizations. It also calls for a renewed vision of language education and for language teachers to take up different roles from those in the past.

2 Reframing language

Linguistic integration often means no more than ensuring that migrants speak the language of the political state into which they come. The rationale for this position is that adult migrants cannot participate in the national society and its economy unless they speak the national language. But what is the “national language”, and why is it used as the basis for deciding who is welcomed and who is not?

Since the mid-20th century, sociolinguists have insisted that language and speakers form an assemblage; language cannot exist without speakers, and speakers cannot speak without language. The founders of sociolinguistics – Joshua A. Fishman, John Gumperz, Dell Hymes, William Labov – certainly understood that language is a deeply personal and social affair, tied to an individual’s lived experience. Poststructuralist and post-colonial sociolinguists have gone one step further, focusing on language as appropriated by speakers and questioning the concept of a “*named*” national language (Makoni and Pennycook 2007; Mignolo 2000; Pennycook 2010). Arguing from a linguistics position, Otheguy, García, and Reid (2015: 286) emphasize that named languages have been invented, even as linguistic objects:

A named language *cannot* be defined linguistically, cannot be defined, that is, in grammatical (lexical or structural) terms. And because a named language cannot be defined linguistically it is not, strictly speaking, a linguistic object; it is not something that a person speaks.

Many sociolinguists today propose that “*linguaging*” might be a sufficient term to capture the plural linguistic practices of speakers as they move across differ-

ent contexts, “a social process constantly reconstructed in sensitivity to environmental factors” (Canagarajah 2007: 94).

By advancing the view that language belongs to the speaker rather than to the nation state, critical poststructuralist sociolinguists aim to break out of static conceptions of language that keep power in the hands of the few (Flores 2013; Flores and García 2014). The constructed national language matches the linguistic features of those who wield power, guaranteeing their authority. The different linguistic features of others, especially migrants, and by necessity their fluid language practices – the product of being forced to interact in a new communicative context – are then stigmatized (García and Li Wei 2014).

3 Reframing speakers

If language is constructed and inhabited by people, it cannot be limited to the descriptions and conventions adopted by nation states (or national groups) and their academies and educational institutions. The language of a particular geographic space is increasingly inhabited today by people of many provenances and with very different language practices, and the categorization of speakers as native/non-native has been increasingly questioned (see, for example, Canagarajah 1999; Cook 1999; Doerr 2009; Leung, Harris, and Rampton 1997; Martin-Royo 2010; Piller 2002).

Who then is a native speaker? Is Luis, born to a migrant family from Andalusia in Catalonia, a native speaker of what we call Spanish, Catalan, or both? And how about Zineb, born in Catalonia to a migrant family from Morocco, who is growing up speaking what are called Berber, Moroccan Arabic or Darija, Catalan and Spanish? What is it that Luis and Zineb speak natively? From a societal perspective, they are called bilingual or multilingual. They are said to speak different named languages and are considered to be simultaneous bilinguals/multilinguals. In the schools that they attend in Barcelona, they are not considered “native speakers” of Catalan, although they have spoken it fluently since they started speaking as babies, for they attended a *llar d’infants* (‘nursery’) from the age of four months. Luis and Zineb speak, they have language, their own, which they use efficiently to communicate with the very different communities with which they come into contact. They know how to activate different features of their unitary language system (and suppress others) to communicate successfully with various speakers in the Barcelona context. The question of whether they are native speakers of Catalan or not, or of Spanish, Berber, Darija, is a question that doesn’t pertain to Luis and Zineb’s lives or to a world that is increasingly inter-connected. The category of native speaker is just another

way to keep power in the hands of the few and exclude those who are different. It reifies the linguistic practices of the powerful class within the state as the only legitimate practices, and thus ensures that only the powerful have access to the material goods that it distributes. As Canagarajah has said: “We are all translanguals, not native speakers of a single language in homogeneous environments” (Canagarajah 2013: 8).

4 Reframing the linguistic integration of migrants

If we do not conceive of languages as real linguistic entities spoken in a political state, and do not accept the notion of native speakers, then we must ask whether the linguistic integration of migrants should be the focus of our attention as language scholars. We know that migrants need to participate meaningfully in society. But linguistic integration of migrants who are minoritized, given the narrow definition of national language and native speaker considered above, cannot be the goal for that participation. History all over the world has confirmed that a shift to dominant language practices has not led to the structural incorporation of minoritized groups in the dominant society’s economic, political, and social life. Perhaps the most important example of this is the history of enslaved people who were brought from the African continent to the Americas. Although the US African American population has shifted completely to English, they have continued to be subjected to discrimination. Their complete relinguification has not led to their structural incorporation; they remain victims of racism and what Flores and Rosa call the “eyes of whiteness”, and its “mouth” and “ears”. Flores and Rosa’s *raciolinguistic perspective* focuses on how listening subjects hear and interpret “the linguistic practices of language-minoritized populations as deviant based on their racial positioning in society as opposed to any objective characteristics of their language use” (Flores and Rosa 2015: 151). What Flores and Rosa propose is that scholars and teachers must go beyond the national constructions of appropriate language in order to pay attention to what is being said and why it is being said, that is, in order to give voice to migrants.

As critical poststructuralist sociolinguists and language teachers embroiled in the dynamic movements and unequal treatment of migrant families in the 21st century, we need to pose and attempt to answer the following questions: Have language teachers a role to play in reversing the effects of “the coloniality of power and knowledge” (Quijano 2000) that has been installed within under-

standings of language and language education? And if they have, what might that role be?

In the rest of this article, we attempt to answer these questions. We start by reviewing traditional understandings of languages and bilingualism that need to be disrupted in order to move forward.

5 Traditional tools of the trade: languages and bilingualism

Language teachers are often at the forefront of issues dealing with migrants. They are called upon to alleviate what is seen as the “language problem” caused by population displacement and movement. But they are given tools that were developed before the dynamic migrations that reflect today’s “superdiversity” (Vertovec 2007). Among the most obsolete of these tools is the framing of languages as L1/L2 and of bilingualism.

Despite the sociopolitical and sociolinguistic transformations of the world in the 21st century discussed above, conceptions of language education remain unchanged. Language teachers continue to speak about “second” language education and “second” language acquisition, even though many scholars have problematized the concepts of language and native speaker and have unmasked the reasons for their appeal at the level of the political state and its institutions. We continue to speak about “additive” and “subtractive” bilingualism, as if languages were whole units that can be added or subtracted. And we rely on “second” language pedagogies that build on diglossic separation models, without recognizing the more dynamic language practices characteristic of the world today. A monolingual model of language and bilingualism is promoted, even though the world is highly multilingual and language practices are heteroglossic.

Because languages continue to be posited as autonomous structures or boxes that are L1s, L2s, L3s, etc., bilingualism/multilingualism is seen as the addition (or subtraction) of those boxes. The distinction between “additive” and “subtractive” bilingualism was first made by Wallace Lambert in 1974. Whereas additive bilingualism was the goal of Canadian French immersion programs for anglophone children in Quebec, French being added to English, programs to teach Spanish-speaking children in transitional bilingual education in the US aimed at subtractive bilingualism, replacing their “native” language by English. This was before the changes in immigration policy which started to take effect in the 1970s and brought speakers with very different language practices to Canada and the US. Whether bilingualism was seen as additive or subtractive, it was con-

ceptualized from a monolingual national perspective. Students had to become either two monolingual persons in one (Grosjean 1982) or had to shift to the dominant language (Fishman 1966).

Ways to teach what were seen as “second” languages relied on pedagogies that maintained the separation between “languages”, and the languages taught were handed down in grammar books and according to the conventions determined by the authoritative bodies of nation states, without too much regard to how people actually spoke them.

When language teachers are asked to participate in the linguistic integration of migrants, they come equipped with these traditional concepts of language, bilingualism and pedagogy. They often respond to the nation state’s demands for linguistic integration without thinking of the sociopolitical and sociolinguistic changes that are fueling the demand for their expertise. The next section offers a view of language education focused not on the traditional notions supported by nation states, but taking into account the migrants themselves as bilingual/multilingual speakers with legitimate practices and voices.

6 Beyond languages and with speakers: translanguaging as tool

The term *translanguaging* was coined in 1994 in Welsh (*trawsieithu*) by Cen Williams and translated into English by Colin Baker (2011). Originally, it referred to a pedagogical practice where students in bilingual Welsh/English classrooms alternated languages for the purposes of receptive or productive use. Since then, the term has been used to refer to the complex and fluid language practices of bilinguals and the pedagogical approaches that leverage those practices.

It is interesting to note that translanguaging was coined and developed “in the border”, by minoritized bilingual communities and with a bilingual lens. The purpose was not for a monolingual anglophone community to acquire a “second language”, as in French immersion programs in Quebec: nor was it for a monolingual language-minoritized community like the Spanish-speaking one in the United States to acquire English, also as a “second” language. The purpose of translanguaging was to augment the pupil’s activity in *both* languages (Lewis, Jones, and Baker 2012a, 2012b). García has described translanguaging as “an approach to bilingualism that is centered not on languages [...] but on the practices of bilinguals that are readily observable” (García 2009: 44). These practices, in which bilinguals “intermingle linguistic features that have hereto been administratively or linguistically assigned to a particular language or language variety”

(García 2009: 51), are “the normal mode of communication that, with some exceptions in some monolingual enclaves, characterizes communities throughout the world (García 2009: 44). In education, translanguaging goes beyond code-switching and translation because it refers to the *process* by which bilingual students perform bilingually in the myriad multimodal ways of classrooms.

Going beyond named languages as autonomous linguistic structures, “Translanguaging is the deployment of a speaker’s full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state languages)” (Otheguy, García, and Reid 2015: 281). It is constructed and inhabited by people who see themselves as speaking *their* own language, and not simply the languages of one or another national group. By posing a going *beyond* named languages (Li Wei 2011) translanguaging dwells with, and around, the bilingual speaker in the entanglement of worlds and words created by the coloniality of power.

Again, translanguaging does not refer to bilingual speakers’ ability to go across named languages (what is often called code-switching), which gives legitimacy to the construct of named languages. Seen from the speaker’s internal perspective, translanguaging gives agency and legitimacy to the bilingual speaker. The bilingual/multilingual speaker’s repertoire is not simply made up of two or more languages; instead it consists of a unitary language system. In posing a unitary language system from which bilinguals select different features according to the communicative situation at hand, translanguaging acknowledges the dialogic nature of the features, with none of them in a hierarchical position. Thus, translanguaging works against the power differential of languages as controlled by dominant nation states. All speakers control the features they use, and the work of language teachers then consists not in adding a whole language system separate from that which the speaker already holds, but in making new linguistic features available which the speaker then integrates and appropriates into their own language repertoire. This builds a multilingual identity that does not necessarily correspond to two or more national identities. Because it gives the agency to speakers, translanguaging is a most promising theory for the language education of adult migrants.

7 Translanguaging in the language education of adult migrants: Why? What? How?

Language teachers who take up translanguaging start by enabling migrants to recognize their full language repertoire and helping them incorporate new fea-

tures into their own language system. This is an important shift because migrants are not simply acquiring a “second” language. To illustrate this point, let’s compare Christine and Carlos. Born in France to educated middle-class parents, Christine has spoken French since birth. In school she learned English, and then Spanish. Now 36, she considers French her L1, English her L2, and Spanish her L3. She is secure in her identity as a francophone and uses French personally and professionally in her daily life. She seldom uses English, although she often reads reports in English for work; she says that she likes Spanish better than English, but uses it only to sing songs she loves. Christine considers only French as her own language. The others are simply “gifts” which she borrows.

In contrast, Carlos was born and grew up in Peru and is now 43. In the home where he was raised, he spoke Spanish and Quechua. However, at school only Spanish was taught, although Quechua was frequently used. Carlos is a talented musician, and in Peru he was part of a bilingual musical group that sang songs in Quechua and Spanish. He considered himself a bilingual Peruvian, with neither language identified as L1 or L2. At the age of 38, because of economic hardship, Carlos migrated to Germany. When he first arrived, he took a German language “integration” course. Two years ago, he married a German-speaking woman. He is required to use German as his everyday lived language, both at home and at the Peruvian restaurant where he works and sings in Spanish and Quechua. German is not his L2 or L3; it has become his own (although not his sole) *everyday lived language*.

The difference between Christine, a “second” language learner, and Carlos, a migrant who must live every day by using new language features, is telling. Second language learners like Christine are learning the language of “the other”. Migrant learners like Carlos, however, must gain new features to integrate into their *own* language repertoire and appropriate for everyday lived use. They must become bilingual/multilingual German-speakers, not just speakers of German as a “second” language.

In taking up a translanguaging lens to teach Carlos German, his teacher, Hildegard, understands the difference between teaching a “second” language and teaching an everyday lived language. She knows she must focus not on teaching the German language, but on giving Carlos “voice”. And she understands that in teaching Carlos, she must redress the power differentials that are installed in German, Spanish, and Quechua. To do so, Hildegard focuses not on Carlos’ limited proficiency in German or his learner status, but on his strengths, on what he already knows, on his ways of making meaning and engaging with the world. In Hildegard’s classroom, students are grouped according to home languages or languages that they understand, to ensure they understand the German language class. On his first day, Carlos joins the Spanish-speaking group and Hilde-

gard asks them to talk to him and find out who he is, what he knows, and what he is engaged in doing. Hildegard needs the group’s help because she speaks neither Spanish nor Quechua, and members of the group can already use some features of German to make themselves understood.

Carlos tells the group that he plays the *quena*, the traditional flute of the Andes, in a Peruvian restaurant. Many of the Latin American students in the group do not know what a quena is; Carlos tells them it’s a word in Quechua. Some of them do not know what Quechua is, and wonder how it is that Carlos also speaks Spanish. Carlos explains that Quechua literally means “people’s language” and is used to refer to the ways of speaking of some people in the Andes. He explains that in Peru it is an official language, along with Spanish, and was spoken in the Inca Empire. The students communicate all this to Hildegard, who asks Carlos to bring his quena to class. The group translates this request for Carlos.

Hildegard goes home and looks up quena in Wikipedia. The next day she brings the handout shown in Figure 1 and Carlos brings his quena. Hildegard begins by doing a shared reading exercise with the whole class. She first shows the quena that Carlos has brought in and points to the notches as she reads the first sentence; she counts the holes it has as she reads the second sentence; and she points to plastic and wood in the room as she reads the third sentence. She then asks the students to read along with her, and repeats this three times.

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| <p>Die Quena ist eine Kerbflöte.</p> <p>Ursprünglich wurde die Quena mit 3 oder 5 Löchern in Dur-Tonleitern gespielt; heute hat sie meistens 7 Löcher.</p> <p>In Peru und Bolivien kostet sie zwischen 50 Cent (aus Bambus oder Plastik) und 80 Euro (hochentwickelte Modelle aus hartem Holz, teilweise mit einem Mundstück aus Knochen).¹</p> | |
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Figure 1: Hildegard’s handout

¹ The quena is a notched flute. Originally the quena was played with 3 or 5 holes in major scales; today it usually has 7 holes. In Peru and Bolivia it costs between 50 cents (bamboo or plastic) and 80 euros (sophisticated models made of hard wood, some with a mouthpiece made of bone)

Hildegard then tells the students to get into their home language groups. She asks them to look up the electronic translation of the German text using the iPad that each group has, to edit the translation if need be, and to copy it

next to the German text in the handout. Carlos' group comes up with the following electronic translation:

La quena es una flauta dentada. Originalmente la quena se juega con 3 o 5 agujeros en las escalas mayores; hoy cuenta con la mayoría 7 agujeros. En Perú y Bolivia que cuesta entre 50 centavos (de bambú o de plástico) y 80 euros (modelos sofisticados de madera dura, algunos con una boquilla de hueso).

Because Carlos is a newcomer in the Spanish-speaking group, Hildegard sits with that group and observes Carlos carefully. Of the translation, Carlos says: “Uno no juega la quena, uno la toca” (‘You don’t “play” the quena, you play it’), and a discussion ensues in Spanish about the difference between *jugar* (used to play games) and *tocar* (used to play instruments). Carlos participates fully. This tells Hildegard that he is a competent speaker of Spanish and knows how to be persuasive.

The group struggles to match the translation to the German text. They annotate the German text with Spanish words. They frequently use Google Translate to find the meaning of individual words and improve their understanding, which they share with each other (for example, Carlos learns that nouns in German are capitalized). The students work assiduously together. They make a vocabulary list, and those who speak more German ask Hildegard many questions about German language structures, sharing her answers with the rest of the group.

The group is then asked to copy the Spanish text they have agreed on next to the German in the handout, and then to answer some questions in whichever language they can. Hildegard watches Carlos write the text with ease, which tells her he is practiced in writing Spanish.

When all home language groups are secure in their understanding of the German text and how it works, Hildegard asks them to pose questions in German about the quena. They come up with:

- Was ist ein Quena? (‘What is a quena?’)
- Wieviele Löcher hat die Quena? (‘How many holes does the quena have?’)
- Wieviel kostet sie? (‘How much does it cost?’)

Hildegard then tells all the groups to devise some interview questions for Carlos and his group about the quena. With much help from each other, electronic translations, and the teacher, the groups come up with the following questions, which Hildegard puts on the electronic whiteboard:

- Wo hast du auf einer Quena spielen gelernt? (‘Where did you learn to play the quena?’)
- Wie alt warst du? (‘How old were you?’)

- Wo spielst Du die Quena zur Zeit? ('Where do you play the quena now?')
- Ist es schwierig oder leicht auf der Quena zu spielen? ('Is it difficult or easy to play the quena?')

Carlos answers each question in Spanish, and some of his group members translate as best they can for the class. Hildegard helps them.

Hildegard then asks Carlos to play the quena. She tells the students that the quena makes her feel sad, and asks them how the melody they have heard makes them feel. Student after student offers words of emotion, some in German, but others in Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian, Spanish, and other languages. Overall, the students feel that the sound of the quena makes them *traurig* ('sad'). Carlos learns the word *traurig*, and Hildegard and others in the class learn the word *triste*. All of them learn the Turkish word *üzgün*, and the Arabic *hazin*. For homework, Hildegard asks the students to find people in their communities who play an instrument and ask them at least one question.

Carlos' first lessons in this German language class bring much more than he expected. Instead of being given structures of a new and isolated language to acquire, he is allowed to interpret new linguistic features as part of his own expanding language repertoire, and not simply as an add-on. In so doing, Carlos begins to transform his engagement with the German-speaking world that surrounds him. German is no longer just the language of Germans and books; "German" language features start to be internalized into his linguistic repertoire and appropriated and used as his own linguistic features.

The principles of this translanguaging pedagogy for adult migrants are easy to identify:

- Give migrants "voice" and help them to develop it.
- Build on their strengths and interests.
- Make sure that students are "doing" language, performing genuine and authentic tasks, not just that they "have" language structures.
- Recognize the entanglements of migrants' worlds and words and use them in the process of finalizing the product that you intend.
- Ensure that they appropriate new features into an expanded repertoire that is their own, and not just that of a nation state or specific national group.

Although it is Carlos, as an engaged and interested speaker, who guarantees that there has been learning, Hildegard as the teacher has an important role, and it is to the teacher's role that we now turn.

8 Translanguaging and the role of language teachers

To teach adult migrants, language teachers must take up a translanguaging stance, shed their authoritative position, and adopt different roles. We summarize these four teacher roles as *the detective*, *the co-learner*, *the builder*, and *the transformer*.

The detective. Four questions frame this role:

- What does this adult person know?
- Why does this adult person want to “invest” (Norton 2000) in using new features?
- What are this adult person’s preferred ways of making meaning?
- How does this adult person use language?

Language teachers need to know their adult students: what motivates them, and how they use language and make meaning in life. There is a difference between being able to perform linguistically only with features of the national language being taught, and speakers’ ability to perform linguistically. García, Johnson and Seltzer (2017) refer to these different performances as *language-specific performances* and *general language performances*. Teachers need to understand whether students are able to express complex thoughts, explain, persuade, argue, compare and contrast, give directions, recount events, and do other things with language, regardless of whether they could do this only with the features of the language being taught. They also need to know if students are able to make inferences, identify key ideas, and associate ideas from multiple texts when reading, and are able to produce written texts of opinion, information, explanation and narration, regardless of the language features used. Teachers’ detective work needs to happen in collaboration with others – other speakers in the class, other teachers, outside agencies, the community of speakers; and with other resources – multilingual texts and electronic translators.

The co-learner. Teachers who take up a translanguaging stance must also become co-learners (Li Wei 2014). In that respect, they need to ask themselves two questions:

- What can I learn from this adult person? From his/her interests? From his/her funds of knowledge (Moll et al. 1992) and funds of languaging?
- How do I distribute agency equally in the classroom?

To carry out the role of co-learner, teachers must be interested in the different worlds and words of their students. They engage their students in collaborative research and linguistic ethnographies of the community. They are curious about students' worlds, their words, and their entanglements. And as teachers of migrants, they are also interested in social justice.

Teachers who consider themselves co-learners engage their adult students in representing and producing their worlds and words using all the features of their repertoire. Some of the ways in which this might be achieved are:

- interviewing each other and others in the community of speakers;
- asking students to share and write their life stories;
- producing video-documentaries with the students.

The builder. Teachers of adult migrants must be more than detectives and co-learners, they must also be builders. They must ask themselves:

- How do I build an affinity space (Gee 2004) that bridges differences in age, class, race, gender and educational level, and in which people can participate in various ways according to their interests and abilities?
- How do I build a space that reflects the entanglement of different worlds and words and their power differentials, and is flexible enough to accommodate differences?
- How do I provide language affordances that capture and express interests? Engagement?

To do so, teachers give adult learners freedom to work within affinity groups and participate freely in selecting the topics and features that they would want to share.

The transformer. This is the role that makes teachers who take up translanguaging effective in teaching migrants. Informed by translanguaging theory, they ask themselves:

- How can I make visible the rhetorical narrative of modernity/coloniality, and dwell in the border with adult migrants as they expand their repertoire with new features and practices?

To transform the social reality of migrants, teachers must be ready to build on the human ability to re-mix and recontextualize; that is, to inscribe language performances and identities into new contexts. Teachers who take up translanguaging must transform the vision of what it is to teach a “second” language to migrants. They must make visible how permitting only the dominant language in a “second” language classroom is an act of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1991), that

is, violence exercised in a group with their complicity. These teachers must transform this reality by making explicit how the construct of national language, and the rhetorical narrative of modernity/coloniality that has produced it, serves to oppress, rather than liberate, migrants. Teachers who aim to transform the migrants' social realities must teach them to become critical sociolinguists (Rymes and Leone 2014) so that they can analyze language and understand how it is lodged with power, and why and how some language practices are delegitimized and those of the mythical “native speakers” of an “L1” are held up as the sole exemplars.

9 Conclusion

Translanguaging disrupts the modernist/colonial logic of national languages and focuses on the available features and practices of people and especially migrants to make meaning, free of the constraints and defined boundaries of named languages. It also acknowledges that national languages have had, and continue to have, real and material effects on people. Thus, migrants must also perform linguistically with features that many describe as the “other” language.

The advantage of educating adult migrants with translanguaging theory and pedagogy in mind is that in focusing on the practices of *people*, it gives agency to minoritized speakers, decolonizes linguistic knowledge, and engages all of us in the social transformations that the world so sorely needs today. Translanguaging offers a way of capturing the expanded complex practices of speakers who cannot avoid having had languages inscribed in their bodies, and yet live between different societal and semiotic contexts. Adult migrants are the best example of this living between and beyond borders – national, political, linguistic, social, ideological. Translanguaging theory offers language teachers a way to engage them.

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