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FROM PLURICENTRICITY TO TRANSLINGUAL TRANSCULTURAL COMPETENCE – SHIFTING PARADIGMS

Abstract:

Foreign language educators have always had to make decisions on which window on the world of language to present to their students. One such decision concerns the inclusion – or not – of regional variation into their teaching. While teachers may rely on their own linguistic background, experience, or knowledge with particular national standards or local varieties, conceptual grounding can help them make informed decisions. Pluricentricity (Clyne 1992; Muhr 2016) has provided such grounding by illustrating and systematizing the geographical, sociocultural and sociopolitical aspects of language variation on both the national and the regional level. However, in this age of transnational movements of people and resulting superdiversity of linguistic patterns, where learners are confronted with multiple levels of variation, an approach that focuses on learners' perception, reflection, and agency may prove more beneficial. Translingual and transcultural competence as proposed by the Modern Language Association (MLA 2007) provides such a scaffolding by emphasizing the in-betweenness, critical reflectivity, and social sensibility needed in today's globalized society. This paper will trace the development from variation-oriented approaches to learner-oriented approaches, provide illustrative empirical data from three educational sites of intersecting pluricentricities, and suggest the adoption of translingual and transcultural competence as a guiding paradigm in language teaching.

Keywords: translingual ◆ transcultural ◆ pluricentricity ◆ post-native-speakerism ◆ superdiversity

Introduction

Foreign language (FL) teaching has developed in leaps and bounds since it moved from the constrictions of language as a system to the multiplicities of language in use in the 1970s. This focus on the real world and discursive practices (Grabe 2010) has brought with it the quandary of trying to distill a huge variety of naturally occurring linguistic and cultural patterns into a manageable package that can be taught, learned, and assessed. Such variation had traditionally been limited to the registers of formal versus informal or spoken versus written language. With the communicative turn and sociolinguistic appropriateness (Canale and Swain 1980; Hymes 1985), the targeted forms were significantly but purposefully enlarged, and the move towards regional linguistic variation, with concepts such as world Englishes (Kachru 1985), DACHL (ABCD-Thesen 1990) for German, or pluricentricity (Clyne 1992) for a range of languages, a new dimension opened up. Besides purely linguistic considerations, issues of representation, identity, and language ownership came to the fore. This inclusion of regional variation contributed greatly to an awareness of language (and culture) being geographically and historically contextualized and socio-politically contested. However, with the acceleration of globalization, those geographical and historical demarcations became porous and new concepts such as intercultural citizenship (Byram 2008), English as a Lingua Franca (Seidlhofer 2001; Jenkins 2006), and translingual and transcultural competence (MLA 2007) became central in the discussion about what language to teach to whom and for what purposes.

This article will argue that it is the latter concept, translingual and transcultural competence, that is, "the ability to operate between languages" (MLA 2007: para. 9), that reflects most closely the needs of contemporary FL learners. The following pages will demonstrate why that is the case by first tracing the conceptual development from pluricentricity to translingual and transcultural practice. Next, the sociolinguistic developments that support this approach to FL teaching will be outlined, followed by a discussion of pedagogical ramifications of these new patterns of linguistic diversity. To illustrate theory and pedagogy, three brief vignettes of university language programs in China, Spain, and Austria will be analyzed with regard to the multiple levels of linguistic and cultural diversity inherent in their settings and students' experiences at those institutions. Based on those data, the final section will discuss the psychological, social, and geographical dimensions of translingual and transcultural competence and suggest ways to implement it as well as further research needed.

From Pluricentricity to Translingual and Transcultural Competence

Pluricentricity, or the concept of languages with "several interacting centers, each providing a national variety with at least some of its own (codified) norms" (Clyne 1992 as cited in Muhr 2018: 20) has a long tradition in sociolinguistics, albeit under different names. Kloss (1952) built the

foundation of this conceptual model when distinguishing between *Ausbausprachen* and *Abstandsprachen*, "languages of development" and "languages of distance". While *Ausbausprachen* refer to varieties that are over time and repeatedly remodeled by language planners into what are now called pluricentric languages, *Abstandsprachen* describe varieties that are linguistically rather than sociolinguistically distinct and thus less contested. Kloss (1967) provides a range of examples of how some of the distinctions between *Ausbau-* and *Abstandsprachen* may be rather arbitrary and depend more on political considerations than linguistic features, which renders them less stable and more susceptible to unilateral claims. In fact, in German linguistics, the concept of pluriareality has been suggested as a counter model to pluricentricity to avoid the linkage of language with nation (e.g., Scheuringer 1996), and Dollinger's (2019) recent juxtaposition of the two models and his strong case for pluricentricity and against pluriareality show how contested this debate remains. As regards the early period of pluricentricity from the 1950s to the 1970s with its focus on structure and function giving way to language policy and planning, this development is mirrored in the field of applied linguistics, which has also moved towards including multilingualism and language minority rights, needs analyses in local contexts, and research tools such as corpus linguistics (cf. Grabe 2010). In the context of FL teaching, it was arguably mainly those teachers who were representatives of a so-called non-dominant variety – a variety with fewer speakers and less recognition (see Muhr 2012 for the full 27 defining features for non-dominant varieties) – who strived to integrate pluricentricity into their classrooms.

The next period in the history of pluricentricity can be divided into two realms: world Englishes and other languages. While Smith and Kachru launched the journal "World Englishes" in 1981 and founded the Association for World Englishes (IAWE) in 1992, Kachru (1985) designed the most widely cited model of "world Englishes" (in his spelling, without a capital "w"), composed of three concentric circles (inner, outer, and expanding) that refer roughly to English as a native, second, and foreign language. At the same time, Clyne (1984) published his early work on the sociolinguistic varieties across German-speaking countries, which was later updated and greatly expanded to include political and social changes in Central Europe at the time (1995). It was Clyne's (1992) edited volume on pluricentric languages though that would lay the foundations for the study of languages other than English that follow this pattern by including 17 different languages from around the globe. In the field of applied linguistics, according to Grabe (2010), this period coincided with both a division into subfields and an extension into supporting disciplines, including an emphasis on language awareness and on the role of critical studies. At that time, some FL textbooks in the US started to include language and culture clusters (e.g., *Dímelo tu!* for Spanish; Rodriguez Nogales, Samaniego, Blommers, and Chuffe 1994). Inspired by Seelye's (1993) culture capsules and culture clusters (a series of capsules), *Dímelo tu!* introduced one Latin-American country per chapter and included both cultural and linguistic

information for the respective nations such as Guatemala or Peru. The following editions were closely aligned with the ACTFL Standards first published in 1996 (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project 1996).

Considering the current theoretical state of pluricentricity, Muhr (2016), in his review of the first five years of research of the "International Working Group on Non-dominant Varieties of pluricentric languages (PCL)" further developed the concept. He introduces first- and second-level pluricentricity: the former refers to national varieties and the latter to regional subvarieties within a national variety or to diglossic situations. He furthermore lists six criteria of PCLs: occurrence, official status or strong ethno-linguistic awareness, linguistic distance, acceptance of pluricentricity, relevance for identity, and codification of norms. Finally, he identifies ten types of pluricentricity, while emphasizing the status question of non-dominant varieties (NDV): nationless pluricentricity, formal pluricentricity, PCLs with varieties lacking the appropriate formal status and waiting for recognition, languages where the pluricentricity is denied by speakers of the dominant variety or by the language as a whole, languages where the status of pluricentricity is acknowledged by the "dominant/mother" variety, languages where the pluricentricity is deliberately practiced by model speakers of the respective national variety, PCLs where the national varieties are (a) taught in schools and (b) the linguistic differences are made aware of, PCLs that act as "*dachsprache*" (roof language) for (a) many so-called "mother tongues" and (b) as a PCL towards the other standard varieties, nativized pluricentricity and migrant pluricentricity. Muhr's (2016) further development of pluricentricity is only one contribution of many that were collected in the volume published by the Working Group of Non-dominant Varieties of PCLs (Muhr, Fonyuy, Ibrahim, and Miller 2016). The publications demonstrate the current reach of pluricentricity, including previously understudied PCLs such as Euskera/Basque, Asian Englishes, as well as the multilingual and nativized situation in Cameroon, which includes nativized English and French, Cameroon Pidgin English, Franglais, Camfranglais, and mixed codes with Cameroon's 279 regional indigenous languages (Fonyuy 2016).

Pluricentric approaches are also discussed and generally integrated more and more in FL pedagogy, for instance in textbooks for German or English (e.g. *Ja genau!* (Böschel, Giersberg, and Hägi 2009) or *Menschen* (Glas-Peters, Pude, and Reimann 2012) for German or *Top Notch* (Saslow and Ascher 2006) for English, see also Naji Meidani and Pishghadam 2013). Publishers of coursebooks either integrate speakers from various pluricentric backgrounds or produce specific localized textbooks adaptations such as, for German, *Schritte Plus Neu Österreich* (Boverman, Niebisch, Penning-Hiemstra, Pude, Specht, and Mayrhofer 2016) and *Schritte Plus Neu Schweiz* (Boverman, Niebisch, Penning-Hiemstra, Pude, Specht, and Pepe 2015) for second language contexts. These special editions complement *Schritte Plus Neu* and *Schritte Plus Neu International* and are unique in recognizing different needs and standards in different German speaking contexts.

In contrast, *Dimensionen* (Jenkins, Fischer, Hirschfeld, Hirtenlehner, and Clalüna 2003), one of the very first truly pluricentric textbook series, whose authorial team was composed of textbook authors from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, is not published anymore. Standardized language tests feature native-speakers from different varieties (Cambridge English n.d.) or both listening and reading materials from different countries (Österreichisches Sprachdiplom Deutsch (ÖSD n.d.) for German). In the case of German, a CEFR B1 level standardized exam, *Zertifikat Deutsch,* was jointly developed by Austrian, German, and Swiss language testing institutions in the 1990s. Albeit limited in numbers, these examples of pluricentricity in materials design and testing demonstrate an awareness of the issue in the FL teaching field and a commitment to being more diverse.

As can be seen, pluricentricity as a conceptualization of language variation from a sociolinguistic standpoint continues to gain not just territory but depth. It is also an important impulse to move the field of applied linguistics forward in terms of critical language awareness, and its principles of linguistic diversity should be included in teacher training, materials development, and assessment practices. At the same time, globalization has led to an increase in multilingual speakers among learners, teachers, and members of the target language community, making interactions among non-native speakers the default as opposed to native-non-native encounters, particularly in urban metropoles around the world. Taking German as an example, demographics show the percentage of residents of migratory background as 31.6% in Berlin (BPB 2019), 35.7% in Zurich (Statista 2019) and 40.7% in Vienna (Stadt Wien 2019), trending upwards. Depending on the district, this percentage can be considerably higher (53.9% for Berlin Mitte; BPB 2019). In this context, learners' needs may be multiple, changing or unforeseeable, which favors a learner-centered, skill-focused, and awareness-based approach to language (and culture) in all its manifestations. That is why in this paper, the translingual transcultural approach, which was first postulated by the Modern Language Association (MLA, 2007), is proposed as the overarching principle for language teaching.

The translingual transcultural approach, that is, the development of translingual and transcultural competence (MLA 2007), seeks to enable students "to operate between languages" (para. 9), which creates space for encounters and encourages flexibility, "to reflect on the world and themselves through the lens of another language and culture" (para. 9). This should prompt them to notice, rethink and adapt their own assumptions, "to relate to fellow members of their own society who speak languages other than [their own]" (para. 9), which fosters understanding for diversity within their own familiar surroundings. Learners should "consider alternative ways of seeing, feeling and understanding things" (para. 9), which opens up possibilities for intellectual and emotional growth. Finally, translingual and transcultural competence is about the development of "critical language awareness, historical and political consciousness, as well as social sensibility" (para. 9). These are

all essential attributes to critically examine discourse in the current age of misinformation, notice and question existing inequalities in society, and engage in community building and civil society.

This translingual transcultural approach is embedded in a larger paradigmatic shift from *cross* to *inter* to *multi* to *pluri* to *trans* in applied linguistics. "Trans-perspectives", as demonstrated in the special issue on trans in the Journal of Applied Linguistics (2018), move beyond boundaries. Li Wei (2018) specifically addresses the fluid and arbitrary boundaries between named languages, language variation, and other semiotic systems, which indicates in which direction pluricentricity could move. Mori and Sanuth (2018) emphasize the applicability of such concepts to FLs and not only world Englishes, Lingua Franca, and bilingual education. They deconstruct the monolingual utopia of language programs and juxtapose it to the multilingual realities their students faced in their host communities. Canagarajah (2018) gives equal importance to language, non-verbal communication, and context and opens up space and time for students to embed their communicative practice into a framework that includes imperfect multilingual spaces, contextualized performativity, and a web of referents, channels, and possibilities. Hawkins (2018) discusses repertoires, multimodalities and critical cosmopolitanism, which all go beyond language proper. According to the editors of the special volume, trans-perspectives straddle the language/context divide, the cognition/practice divide, and the disciplinary divide. Most importantly, they involve criticality, transcending and transgressing structures and ideologies (Hawkins and Mori 2018).

At the same time, "pluri" is just one of the relevant prefixes in language and culture teaching relevant to FL studies, emphasizing a simultaneous existence without directional impetus. It can be found also in the plurilingual pluricultural competences described in the Companion Volume (Council of Europe 2018) to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Council of Europe 2001), which aims at building a linguistic and cultural repertoire of mother tongue plus two (MT+2) among Europeans for the sake of mobility and social cohesion. Needless to say, plurilingualism here may also require a certain plurivarietal or pluridialectal competence (i.e., the ability to accommodate (to) national, regional, and local varieties). Along these lines, pluricentricity can be helpful by highlighting the plurality of points of reference, the language/context nexus, and the emergence of new phenomena such as migrant pluricentricity. It can encourage translingual and transcultural practices by providing a multi-layered image of an erstwhile monolithic entity, the target language/community. At the same time, it can create critical awareness and social sensibility by contextualizing language and power both in historical terms and as part of current multicultural societies' imaginary and struggles.

The Globalization of Sociolinguistics

Globalization with the related movements of people, goods, information, and capital has impacted the global linguistic landscape in a variety of ways. On the one hand, it has created more multilingual spaces (e.g., signs and announcements in Japan, where the author lives, are increasingly quadrilingual, i.e., Japanese, English, Chinese, and Korean) (cf. Backhaus 2010). On the other hand, individuals are increasingly multilingual, from the immigrant convenience store worker to the naturalized president of a university. At the same time, there is diversity within diversity, superdiversity (Vertovec 2007), where immigrants from one particular nationality, ethnicity or language group, can comprise individuals of different socio-economic background, immigration status, linguistic repertoire, and previous migratory experience. According to Blommaert and Rampton (2011), linguistic superdiversity is facilitated by both migration patterns and access to mobile technology. The resulting communicative practices may not be easily categorized by language or speech community, but are rather emergent, performative, indexical, and often mixed and multimodal. Relevant to the context of language teaching, Blommaert and Rampton (2011) emphasize that these new communicative events involve non-shared knowledge and thus limited negotiability. That means that learners of a foreign, second or additional language need less knowledge input but more awareness-raising regarding the contextual embeddedness of an exchange, more decoding practice for unexpected or non-standard interactions, and strategy training to compensate for lack of shared background. Finally, the authors highlight the increased level of reflexivity among superdiverse communicators, which relates to one of the components of translingual and transcultural competence, namely "to reflect on the world and themselves through the lens of another language and culture" (MLA report 2007 para. 9), and the multi-layered and multi-scalar nature of context (time, place, network) of communicative events.

While superdiversity addresses the fact that diversity is not limited to traditional categories along ethnic, national, or geographical lines anymore, but emerges in unpredictable ways along several dimensions and in a variety of combinations, a related set of concepts that has been shaping FL discourse is the notion of "trans". Three trans-concepts in particular are relevant for a FL pedagogy that centers around pluricentricity as well as translingual and transcultural competence. The first of these concepts, transnationalism, is described by Vertovec (1999) "as a social morphology, as a type of consciousness, as a mode of cultural reproduction, as an avenue of capital, as a site of political engagement, and as a reconstruction of 'place' or locality" (1). In other words, transnationalism is not limited to physical relocation but implies a social, psychological, cultural, economic, and political sphere where a sense of groundedness is created anew. From the perspective of transnationalism, the make-up of communities is fluid and their codes are mixed and constantly changing; individuals conceive of themselves as belonging to more than one group, community or nation simultaneously, switching code according to situation, interlocutors, and positionality, and interacting with their current environment based on their accumulated life-experiences, be they linguistic, economic, political. This understanding of transnationalism leads

to the second concept, translingualism as spatial repertoires (Canagarajah 2018) that moves language from a structuralist paradigm to a time-space orientation, including a focus on indexicality instead of predetermined meaning, performativity instead of representational thinking, and distributed practice instead of a focus on the individual. That is to say, meaning is intentionally generated according to circumstances, identity is created rather than replicated, communication emerges from a web of related contextual features. The final relevant concept, transculturalism or transculturality (Wesche 1999) denotes the changing landscape of cultural signification. Rather than focusing on the mosaic of multiculturalism (cf. Fleras 2011) or the bridge of interculturalism (cf. Aman 2015), the transcultural is not only adaptive but permeable and syncretic.

From a sociolinguistic standpoint, pluricentricity can thus be used as a first step to approach superdiversity since it moves the idea of language from a monolithic decontextualized essence to a variable expression of sociolinguistic realities. However, in its quest to codify, it is still trying to pin down languages, speakers, and communities, tending towards an arboreal rather than rhizomatic development (cf. Canagarajah 2018). In other words, pluricentricity remains in a structuralist mode that sees branches developing from one root rather than a network of speakers whose repertoires have multiple roots. What is needed to prepare learners for communicating successfully in today's superdiverse society is a dynamic analysis of interaction among complex players in shifting situations creating new codes as they communicate. Thus, L2 learners, who for the purposes of this article include foreign, second and additional language learners, need to be exposed to not just varieties of pluricentric languages but non-native, mixed-code and allegedly imperfect productions of the language they attempt to study. While this may happen naturally in a heterogeneous second or additional language setting, FL studies can encourage students to use their entire linguistic repertoire, engage in creative language use, and make meaning from complex multi-modal mixed-code messages. Using multilingual multimodal music videos (Helland 2017), bilingual literature (Tawada 2010), or migrant magazines can serve as resources in this process.

Language Teaching in the Post-Native-Speakerist Paradigm

Language teaching in the age of globalization has come a long way. Taking communicative language teaching as a springboard to liberate teachers and students from the strictures of grammar translation or the audiolingual methods, contemporary language teaching has focused alternately or jointly on whose language and culture to teach, how to teach it, and for what purposes. On the whose-language-and-culture-to-teach side, we can find world Englishes (Kachru 1985), English as a Lingua Franca (Seidlhofer 2009; Jenkins 2017; Kirkpatrick 2016), English as an International Language (McKay 2018), post-native-speakerism (Houghton and Hashimoto 2018), translanguaging (García and Li 2018), pluricentricity (Clyne 1992; Ammon 1995; Muhr 2016; Shafer 2018) or localism (Tam 2019), the Hong Kong counterpoint to globalism. What these

approaches have in common is that they support speakers to reclaim mostly English but also other languages for themselves against an arbitrary centralized authority, be it the native speaker, the dominant variety speaker, or another the gatekeeper. Under the umbrella of post-native-speakerism (Houghton 2018), a new approach to FL pedagogy that moves away from categorizing teachers into native or non-native speakers, the multilingual proficient user becomes the default. By the same token, when bilingual students engage in translanguaging, i.e. use both their home language and their language of education co-equally, they "use language as a dynamic repertoire and not as a system with socially and politically defined boundaries" (García and Li 2018: 1). Thus, multilingual teachers and students are encouraged to make full use of the entire spectrum of the linguistic and cultural resources they hold. Drawing on a range of native and non-native, local and non-local sources and interlocutors to engage with, students can access their own repertoire and learn from other competent or developing multilinguals. The ultimate purpose of learning will depend on the individual student but can be circumscribed as being prepared to engage with a range of situations, speakers and varieties, including non-native, with critical awareness, reflectivity and social sensitivity.

Pluricentricity plays an important role in the way language teaching has evolved and continues to do so. The foundations were laid by Kachru (1985), who pluralized English into world Englishes and highlighted the legitimate use of different standards of reference for speakers and learners from three concentric circles (inner or native, outer or L2, expanding or FL). For languages other than English, a major milestone can be found in the 17 different pluricentric languages described in Clyne's (1992) seminal work, a number that was expanded to 41 by Muhr (2016) and his collaborators. The latter volume demonstrates the wide-spread existence of this phenomenon across the globe and contributes new patterns such as migrant pluricentricity to PCL theory. Scetti (2016), for example, describes how in Montreal, European Portuguese and Brazilian Portuguese interact with the local English and French to form a new contact variety. Based on these groundbreaking changes in descriptive theories, which have liberated languages from a centralized prescriptive linguistic authority, pedagogical models that reflect the needs and interests of pluralized communities of stakeholders have been proposed. In the case of English, research on English as an International Language (McKay 2003; Matsuda 2012) and English as a Lingua Franca (Seidlhofer 2001; Jenkins 2006; Kirkpatrick 2010) has been documenting the way English is used by non-native speakers who interact with other non-native speakers, and suggested implications for language policy and pedagogy. By focusing on how language norms are created in interaction, these paradigms transfer agency to local actors, allow for hybrid, dynamic forms of communicating, and embody the superdiverse conditions of society across the globe. Migrant pluricentricity, localism, and non-native-speakerism all support this move from the linear center-periphery model to a pluricentric model, whose mobile actors may be local, glocal, or global. While much of this shift in pedagogy has occurred within the realm of English, pluricentricity

reminds us that other languages offer a similar potential, obviously so in the case of wide-spread ones such as Chinese and Spanish (Tien 2016; Lebsanft, Mihatsch, and Polzin Haumann 2012), but also with other languages in major urban areas (cf. Pennycook and Otsuji 2019), DACHL for German (Shafer, Middeke, Hägi-Mead, and Schweiger 2020), and *la francophonie* for French (Gallimard/OIF 2019) being among the well-documented.

Translingual and transcultural competence shifts the perspective towards spatiality ("operate *between* languages", my emphasis), co-constructed reality ("reflect upon the world and themselves through the lens of another language and culture"), and transgressive potential ("critical language awareness and social sensibility"). This approach seems to capture best the nature of our superdiverse world while being applicable to second, foreign and additional languages. It allows multilingual subjects (Kramsch 2009) to shape their multi-layered, dynamic identities by understanding and acquiring symbolic power, and be ready for intercultural citizenship (Porto, Byram, and Houghton 2018). In other words, the translingual transcultural approach is based on the development of a multilingual subjectivity with a reflective, a performative, and a co-constitutive aspect. It emphasizes the critical awareness, interpretive, and relational skills as well as the discovery and interaction orientation of Byram's (1997) intercultural communicative competence while being on a loop between languages, varieties, and mixed cultural phenomena. With regard to intercultural citizenship, it fosters criticality, cosmopolitanism, and community orientation.

Sites of Intersecting Pluricentricities

In this globalized world, where English has evolved into Englishes, pluricentricity is also subject to layering in contact zones between local languages or varieties, regional languages or varieties, national languages or varieties, mixed codes, additional languages, or foreign languages. Similar to the example of migrant pluricentricity illustrated above, where European Portuguese and Brazilian Portuguese interact with Canadian English and Canadian French, several pluricentric languages may intersect, leading to an ever-increasing complexity of variation. The following section aims to illustrate this development using the example of three sites where pluricentricities intersect with teachers, students, and surrounding areas that display a range of varieties. These multiple levels of intersection suggest a need for translingual practices, which can hone the ability to engage with the intention of communicating and coming to an agreement across perceived linguistic barriers. In this context, focusing on the interlocutor, accommodating and incorporating their mixed codes, may be more conducive to understanding than worrying about which variety to foreground. This approach can be applied both, when teaching or learning a language, and when attempting to use it outside of class. Similarly, a focus on transcultural awareness that emphasizes noticing, reflection, and openness to revise one's communicative pattern accordingly can prepare

learners to participate in current society where cultural signposts are changing, disappearing, or being reinvented by its diverse members. One example for shifting cultural signposts might be asking guests for dietary preferences instead of serving the "typical" local meal, as some locals, residents of the area - if they can even be identified as such - may be vegetarian, for example. That applies alongside any perceived religious dietary restrictions that may or may not be adhered to by its transcultural members depending on the setting and company they find themselves in. Forms of address also often become negotiable in a transcultural work environment, yet not necessarily along gender, ethnic or other apparently obvious lines.

In order to illustrate those intersecting pluricentricities, this article will draw on data from a qualitative/explorative research project whose overall aim was to compare the development of translingual and transcultural competence in internationalized universities at various locations. Data were collected over the period of one year in 2018/2019 and are part of a grant-funded multi-site, multiperspectival research project conducted at institutions in Austria, China, Spain, and the US. The project compares stakeholders' experiences with and expectations of the development of translingual and transcultural competence across higher education institutions with a particular emphasis on internationalization. During that time, I spent several weeks or months at each site as a visiting scholar, I collected survey data from students with the help of local classroom teachers and conducted interviews as well as focus group discussions with students, teachers, and administrators. Survey items, interview and focus group questions were the same across institutions with the exception of a brief middle section on third languages in the surveys. Document analysis and participant observation provided additional insights into the particularities of each setting. Data were collected and analyzed from a constructivist grounded theory perspective (Charmaz 2017).

The subset of data that this paper draws on consists of a total of 278 student surveys (150 for China, 62 for Austria, and 66 for Spain) that contained the same questions. The surveys comprised a total of 35 questions that combined open-ended and closed-ended items, and were administered in pencil/paper format by the teachers of the students. The surveys were all administered in English (with a choice between English and German at the Austrian site) and key terms such as translingual or transcultural were provided with a brief definition, that is, defining plurilingual/pluricultural as fluent in a number of languages/competent in a number of cultures, whereas translingual/transcultural was defined as operating between languages and cultures effectively and appropriately. While the surveys and interviews overall covered a range of issues such as exploring awareness and attitudes towards language and culture in relation to in-class and out-of-class experience, including reflections on one's first language, the following findings come from a section on multilingual identity, agency, ambiguity, and community. Specifically, participants were asked to describe themselves regarding their linguistic and cultural identity, evaluate their

linguistic and cultural skills, explain difficulties they were experiencing, and comment on their participation in a community of practice. In line with the general purpose of the paper, connecting sociolinguistic developments with language learning contexts, the following section will provide the reader with a short language profile of each region, describe the specific features of the educational institution and present student data that aim to illustrate the state of their translingual and transcultural development.

China

Chinese as a pluricentric language has different levels. Tien (2016) reviews the various viewpoints on Chinese from the mainland, Greater China and the diaspora, comparing norm-setting institutions, Western and Chinese linguists' as well as the people's conceptualizations of what Chinese means or stands for. While the Mandarin dialect has become synonymous over the years with Chinese, pluricentricity can relate to either different norm-setting centers of this dialect (Beijing, Taipei, Singapore) or different dialects or varieties of the Chinese language, such as Cantonese, which actually stands in for Mandarin as the main Chinese variety in places such as Hong Kong, Macau, and others. The educational setting of this brief vignette is a public comprehensive university in Southern China. Its linguistic environment on and off campus is of a triglossic, or polyglot (Kielman 2019) nature. Teochew, the local variety, is incomprehensible to Mandarin speakers; Cantonese, the regional (lingua franca) variety, is slightly more accessible to them due to its wide spread via television channels and pop music, and Mandarin (or Putonghua), the national variety, serves as the lingua franca among most Chinese speakers. In addition to these three languages or varieties, speakers of Greater China and diasporic varieties are represented among the university's faculty.

Based on participant observation and document analysis, English is taught at the university language center by both Chinese and international faculty of a variety of linguistic backgrounds. Chinese teachers of English come from all over China, including those who speak the local and/or regional dialect, where international faculty include inner circle English native speakers from mainly the US, but also from Australia, Britain, and Canada, as well as outer circle voice trainers from India, and proficient users of English from a variety of countries around the world. Alongside the English-language interaction with the institution's faculty, students are most likely to interact locally with exchange students from Canada or Ireland as well as Israeli students from the adjacent joint Technical Institute. In addition, and despite the Great Firewall, as Chinese internet censorship and the resulting self-censorship is commonly called (Zhong, Wang, and Huang 2017), students engage in English on social media and in online gaming contexts that represent localities removed from any considerations of a linguistic "center". With a view to their future exposure to and interaction with English, their closest contact zone would be Asian Englishes (Kachru 2005), that

is, using English to communicate with Asian speakers of other languages such as Korean, Japanese, or Vietnamese. In fact, the high degree of regional awareness is also apparent from the survey, where most students name Japanese or Korean as an additional language that they have been studying.

From the survey data and regarding their linguistic and cultural identity, two thirds of Chinese first-year students consider themselves bilingual/bicultural with competence in two Chinese varieties or one Chinese variety and English; close to one third list a third language or dialect as part of their language background. Over 40% agree that they are able to use their various languages for academic and/or social purposes; over 50% agree that they are aware of their own cultural value and communication style and prepared to engage with other cultures; and 50% agree that they are members of a multilingual multicultural community of practice that they can benefit from and contribute to. When asked about the challenges of being culturally aware and ready for interaction, students mention "cultures changing everytime", "not understanding their own culture well", and "finding the balance". Conversely, their various language skills give them the potential to "develop and expand relationships", make them "consider problems not only from their cultural perspective but also from others", and "not be afraid to travel, to study or to live overseas, but even eager to go out to learn". Students thus show an understanding of culture as a dynamic concept, of self and other, of relationships, of conflicting identities that can be put to use to further develop their translingual and transcultural competence. While some are still at the level of generating awareness (e.g., "cultures changing everytime"), others have reached a level of reflexivity (e.g., "consider problems not only from their cultural perspective but also from others") or grapple with in-betweenness (e.g., "finding the balance").

Spain

Before delving into the specific setting of this vignette, it should be noted that multi-level pluricentricity in Spanish is not limited to Spain. Latin American countries display a similar complexity of regional (e.g. Caribbean Spanish), national, or external, as well as internal or second-level pluricentricities. In addition, indigenous languages predating the Spanish incursion as well as more recent arrivals such as Japanese in Peru or German in Argentina all contribute to a multi-layered linguistic picture of the continent. While early Latin American lexicography focused on a perceived difference from the standard of Peninsular Spanish, recent approaches support a pluralist or pluricentric perspective based on community identity (Garatea Grau 2006) and autonomy from Spain (Lara 2009).

Spain, the mother/dominant entity, can be considered a mosaic and melting pot of second-level pluricentricities in its own right. On the one hand, as alluded to in the preceding paragraph, it has historically been the norm-setting center for Spanish varieties although separate language

academies in Latin America were established, which have been collaborating on language documentation since 1999 (ASALE n.d.). On the other hand, Spain itself contains both different languages such as Galician and Catalan, etymologically Romance languages with ties to Portuguese and Occitan respectively, and Basque, a language unrelated to others on the Iberian peninsula, which has recently been studied for its internal pluricentricity, that is, variation within its national borders (Edelmann 2016). At the same time, dialectal variation of the dominant variety, Castilian, can be observed across the territory (Thompson 1992). For historical reasons, internal linguistic divisions carry a huge psychological, ideological, and political weight and continue to challenge social cohesion. This multiplicity of variation can also be observed in Madrid, the capital, which, although pertaining to the Castilian variety, is home to a large number of Latin American speakers of Spanish, 50% of foreign residents (Madrid 2020), speakers of Spanish regional languages and varieties, as well as foreign residents and refugees from a wide range of language backgrounds. Metrolingual codemixing (cf. Otsuji and Pennycook 2010), especially among the young generation, can thus be observed in many social settings.

The university with Jesuit roots, which is presented here as a brief example of multilingual settings that encourage the development of translingual and transcultural competence, offers several double majors or degrees, a phenomenon not uncommon in the Spanish university sector. While often criticized by educators for watering down the depth of knowledge acquired in either of their constituent parts (Fernández-Villaverde 2017), these double degrees allow for *trans*versality, a key feature of modern education. At the same time, in accordance with internationalization of higher education, particularly the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), languages are foregrounded. A case in point, International Relations is offered in English in combination with Global Communication or Global Communication in combination with Translation and Interpreting. Students thus have to combine their subject with the language of instruction, English, and one additional language, such as Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, or Portuguese. With a compulsory year abroad as sophomores, which can be spent in any country with an official partner university, students will potentially have to juggle their subject, English as the language of instruction, and a community language such as Hakka in Taiwan, which could be a variety of a language previously studied. Short term summer programs in countries with their own pluricentric situations illustrate the superdiverse linguistic and cultural combinations that arise in contemporary FL studies. These places can include Arabic in Morocco or Tunesia, where students will sometimes codemix repertoires of Spanish, French, English, Standard Arabic learned in class, and the local dialect.

Regarding their linguistic identity, an overwhelming majority of students consider themselves plurilingual/pluricultural (54%), bilingual/bicultural (21%), or translingual (18%), with the remaining 7% seeing themselves as (still) monolingual/monocultural. Similarly, 95% of students

agree that they can make use of their skills in various languages for academic and/or social purposes. Regarding culture, 93% of students agree that they are aware of their own cultural values and communication style and prepared to engage with other cultures. Slightly fewer, 73% agree or strongly agree to be part of a multilingual/multicultural community of learners that they can benefit from and contribute to. In the open-ended comments, students share the difficulties that they still encounter such as "eliminating unconscious customs that in some language seem natural but in others disrespectful", "accepting that my own cultural values are not better than others", and "adapting the strong Spanish personality to, for example, Eastern Asian cultures that are more closed and private". Among the benefits students are deriving from being able to use various languages are the feeling of greater involvement, feeling natural about it, gaining from each cultural experience and being more confident and adaptable. While they display awareness ("unconscious customs") and reflexivity ("own cultural values not better than others"), some students still struggle with attaining an in-betweenness that would enable them to overcome cultural dichotomies ("Spanish personality … East Asian cultures").

Austria

Austria also represents various levels of pluricentricity. On the one hand, Austrian German is a non-dominant standard variety within the German language that is widely researched and documented by variationists (e.g., Clyne 1984, 1995; Ammon 1995; Ammon, Bickel, and Lenz 2016; Muhr 2018; Ille 2016), on the other, the spoken language divides the country and adjacent German-speaking regions grosso modo into Bavarian dialects that include Bavaria in southern Germany and all of Austria except the Bundesland of Vorarlberg, which is considered part of the Alemannic varieties spoken in south-western Germany, the German speaking parts of Switzerland as well as German-speaking Alsace (cf. Scheuringer 1995; Dürscheid, Elspaß, and Ziegler 2019). In addition, the constitution of Austria recognizes Hungarian, Burgenland Croatian, Czech, Romani, Slovak, and Slovenian as official minority languages via the Ethnic Group Act of 1976 (BMEIA n.d.). While the Roma are equally protected as an ethnic group, their socio-cultural, socio-political, and linguistic internal diversity has so far prevented Romani from becoming an equal language due to the lack of a generally accepted standard (Halwachs 2005). Austrian sign language was finally added to the languages officially protected by the constitution in 2005 (Vetter 2015). Demographically, Vienna stands out with 40% of residents of foreign background (Stadt Wien 2019), which leads to a far more diverse linguistic landscape than in the rest of Austria. While this has led to linguistically superdiverse situations across schools (Garnitschnig 2019), where in some districts the percentage of students with first languages other than German outweighs that of L1 German speakers, higher education also experiences some multilingual challenges. Depending on the field of study, a rising percentage of international students is joining

either the limited number of English-taught programs or regular degree programs in German. That is to say, linguistic diversity is on the rise across the board.

The university language center where data have been collected during the three months of summer school – a period when German classes comprise both long-term second/additional language learners and short-term FL sojourners – offers regular German language classes, university preparation courses, and 33 other FLs, the latter more widely available during the academic year. Due to the above mentioned mix of student backgrounds and range of study purposes, students attending German language classes during summer sessions may to some degree need to develop both a pluricentric approach to German and a translingual approach to English as a Lingua Franca and their own first language to be successful in their studies, work situations, or social life. They are taught by instructors who have a range of backgrounds, including a number of bilingual teachers, teachers from across the inner-Austrian local variety spectrum, as well as teachers representing the dominant variety of Germany. While students may expect to study the dominant variety of German, they will most likely be exposed to a mix of dominant and non-dominant varieties, depending on textbook and teacher. At the same time, they may to some extent develop what could be called a German as a lingua franca variety in interaction with their classmates of different language background and the superdiverse local community. Depending on their proficiency level, own language background, (lack of) opportunity, confidence, or motivation, some may obviously revert to English (as a lingua franca) outside of class as mentioned by some students.

In contrast to the previous vignettes, participants in this cohort were more heterogeneous. Their ages ranged from under 18 to in their 50s, with one third falling into the 18-21 age range. They represented 25 different L1s with Spanish (8), English (7), Japanese (7), and Russian (6) as the most widely represented languages. Regarding their linguistic identity, the students attending summer school in German were almost equally split among monolingual (28%), bilingual (28%), plurilingual (24%), and translingual (20%). Accordingly, 77% agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to make use of their skills in various languages for academic and/or social purposes, 76% agreed or strongly agreed that they were aware of their own cultural values and prepared to interact with other cultures, and 64% agreed that they were part of a multilingual/multicultural community of learners that they could benefit from and contribute to. Difficulties that were mentioned included language barriers but more often cultural issues such as "struggling to tolerate cultures that resist conflict at all cost", "when disagreements arise due to different upbringings", and "experiencing the multicultural environment as surface level without real exchange." Regarding the benefits, skills in various languages offer increased opportunities on many levels, such as personal, academic, and work-related, and, in their own words, enable students to "navigate many different environments successfully", establish a "strong network with different

backgrounds", and using two languages in parallel, English for scholarly work and German for living in Vienna. While students are aware of their potential and challenges, they may require more guidance on how to operate comfortably in transcultural encounters.

From Pluricentricities to Translingual Dispositions

What has emerged from the data analysis and what I have tried to illustrate through the above sketches of intersecting pluricentricities, is that the needs and experiences of contemporary language and culture learning defy traditional approaches on various levels, in particular geographical, social, and psychological. On the geographical level, languages have traditionally been seen as tied to a place and being the unique representative of that place, to the detriment of other local or newly localized languages or varieties. Conversely, a specific place was considered the sole legitimate authority on a language, regardless of other varieties of the same language being used in other places near or far. Pluricentricity has started to undermine this concept by first offering several locations competing or cooperating for ownership of and authority over language. More recently, by including migrant pluricentricity (Muhr 2016), researchers working within a pluricentric framework have been paying attention to the dynamic factor of language spread. However, languages can become portable or even geographically detached such as English as a Lingua Franca, they become borrowed, such as *wasei-eigo* (Miller 1998), common loan words in Japanese, or can also be modified and integrated into a mixed code, a common phenomenon in superdiverse settings. With the translingual perspective, a foreign/second/additional language can be absorbed and reused later in a different context; it can be used in combination with one's dominant or other languages to achieve a communicative purpose; it is linked to a specific time-space event rather than place alone. In the vignettes above, Chinese students with multivarietal backgrounds interact with a range of different Englishes in class, on campus or online, absorbing, appropriating, and adapting a variety of codes. Exchange students from Ireland, Canada, and Israel in turn need to engage with a triglossic environment off campus, a range of varieties and translanguaging in their major classes, and the dominant variety in their Chinese language classes, besides any online communication they share with their home networks. Participants in this community of practice will naturally import and export linguistic, paralinguistic, and cultural information, develop strategies for decoding and responding, and map out and negotiate the linguistic and cultural space (Kunschak and Girón 2013). Geographically speaking, a translingual and transcultural paradigm would include not only the specific location where languages, varieties, or codes intersect, but also the complex geographies of interactants, teachers, students, and community members, as well as the wider geography of mobile technologies that provide resources, a platform for exchange, and a stage to present an image to the world.

On the social level, individuals were traditionally seen as belonging to a speech community with certain linguistic and cultural parameters; learning a FL entailed familiarizing oneself with the sociolinguistic rules of that particular community. In the age of globalization, communities tend to be made up of individuals with diverse histories of language, culture, and place (cf. Blommaert and Rampton 2011). These complex and dynamic communities require more diversified skills of accommodation, negotiation, and reflection as the target community may defy simple delimitation. As can be seen from the comments in the previous section, students in the Austrian vignette were struggling with culture clash as well as with non-confrontational cultures, all the while developing strong networks and navigating different environments successfully. They were managing to engage with the various communities – family, classroom, professional and public domains, Viennese and beyond – emphasized the opportunities that came with it, but also expressed their discomfort. From a translingual transcultural perspective, they reported being able to operate between languages, specifically English and German besides their first language, and were aware of their specific sociocultural challenges without attaching them to a specific culture. That is, they noticed cultural dimensions rather than labeling representatives of a particular culture. However, they might benefit from a clearer transcultural focus, developing reflective practices and actual strategies to feel more comfortable among conflict-averse individuals and groups or even adopt such a stance for themselves in certain situations. Socially speaking, communities can be communities of practice (Wenger 1998) such as teachers and learners, who in the cases presented in this paper are redefining the very notion of such a community by questioning the idea of center and periphery due to their varied linguistic and cultural background (Kunschak 2015). Center and periphery are blurred between languages, varieties, people, cultures, and places in different domains like work, study, everyday life, or affinity groups as they present different mixed-code experiences, overlapping rather than moving inward. At the same time, translingual transcultural socializing and socialization can happen on social media, where kinship, friendship, and mentorship communities are extended across time and space, as was mentioned both by Chinese and Spanish participants. Yet, at the very basic level, in the ongoing local community, consisting of various fixed and mobile units, from the host family or dorm to the market or shops, newcomers and long-time residents interact and create the neighborhood on a daily basis.

Regarding the psychological dimension of translingual and transcultural competence, the latter can be considered additive instead of subtractive, flexible instead of static, exploratory instead of foregone. Students can feel their experiences as having been enriched; they can see several options for themselves as well as develop increased understanding for others; they are able to design their multiple selves (Kunschak and Girón 2013) and transform their linguistic and cultural position from outsider to member. Students in Spain critically reflected on their own feeling of cultural superiority, tried to unearth their unconscious customs to check them against their potential to offend, and considered adapting their culturally shaped personality. At the same time, they felt

more confident, more involved, more natural, and reported gaining something with each cultural experience. These changes may have emerged in different ways for different students depending on their personal background and trajectory, but they are embedded in a program that requires operating between languages on a daily basis, encourages reflection on multiple levels of diversities, and prepares students to critically engage with language, culture and social issues. The development of translingual and transcultural competence can thus be seen as a highly involved process that puts the individual on a linguistic and cultural trajectory of transformation through engagement with diverse others. Psychologically speaking, and hinted at by the data from Spain, learners who are engaged in translingual and transcultural practice in their major, their language study, their extracurriculars, and student life in general display the potential to become more grounded, self-aware, confident, which in turn provides the basis for reaching out, readjusting behavior and expectations, creating not just an imagined L2 self (Dörnyei 2005) but co-creating a translingual transcultural version of themselves that integrates self and other in the exchange. Ultimately, this process can lead them to develop translingual transcultural dispositions (cf. Lee and Canagarajah 2019) that celebrate difference as an asset not a liability.

Implications for Pedagogy and Research

Comparing the three settings of the vignettes, affordances and challenges with regard to developing translingual and transcultural competence clearly abound. Based on the self-reported data provided by the participants, they feel generally confident about participating in multilingual communities, are aware of the challenges, and reflect back on their own situation. In order to increase their comfort with in-betweenness both linguistically and culturally, the affordances of the local environments need to be brought into the classroom. For example, a language class in the Chinese setting focuses on intercultural communication and has among its course goals awareness raising of generalizations and application of multiple perspectives, analysis, interpretation, and response to concrete examples of intercultural miscommunication, as well as reflection of students on their own cultural norms and practices. While the textbook hinges on critical incidents between Chinese and North American characters, it is supplemented with localized cultural interviews with teachers of varying backgrounds. Extending out from this framework, teachers and students can add a translingual and transcultural perspective. Recognizing, discussing, and highlighting intra-group variability based on the students' own background is a first step, sketching the back-and-forth moves between their home languages and cultures and campus languages and (sub)cultures. Beyond that, ethnographies on and off campus, or online exchanges with other students (Lee and Kunschak 2016) can provide further opportunities for engaging in communicative and reflective translingual and transcultural practice. Mixed-heritage artists or community members can also serve as a springboard for developing translingual and transcultural perspectives. Chinese-American cartoonist Messycow (Weng n.d.) or Austro-Persian comedian Michael Niavarani

(Niavarani 1998) are some examples of multilingual multicultural subjects who regularly switch back and forth between their selves. Their hybrid identities allow them to transcend linguistic or cultural demarcations effortlessly. For students, keeping notes on their own code-switching behavior and considering "foreign" elements – which the students have already incorporated into their transcultural selves or would like to adopt – can illustrate the fluidity of linguistic and cultural categories (Kunschak and Girón 2013). Becoming comfortable rather than frustrated with partial understanding and developing strategies to incorporate different codes should be among the learning objectives for language learners in a translingual transcultural paradigm. Teachers and returning students can provide guidance on how to achieve this as can the community in service-learning projects.

From a methodological perspective, the following limitations and suggestions for further research may serve to frame the approach to translingual and transcultural competence in this article and beyond. As it was the purpose of the paper to draw a line from the general developments in sociolinguistics and language teaching to concrete settings of educational institutions from a variationist perspective, specific causal claims of certain pedagogical interventions that result in particular student gains in translingual or transcultural competence were not the object of this study. Rather it was my intention to highlight certain parallels that can be mined for exploring more in-depth the connections between localized teaching practices and students' transcultural and translingual development in future studies. In particular, it would be helpful to examine students' application and integration of specific perspectives and strategies developed in class and on extended assignments into a proactive, interactive and reflective repertoire based on concrete localized translingual and transcultural learning objectives. A second limitation of the study is its convenience sampling of institutions described in the study. By providing a background on linguistic superdiversity and the concomitant need for translingual and transcultural competence in each location, institution and student cohort, it was my intention to draw a multidimensional sketch that could be applied to other settings. It would be desirable to see more combinations of pluricentric languages intersecting in other settings to be able to draw more generalizable comparisons. From a qualitative perspective, another direction for future studies would be to examine one location in more detail, including a comparison of regular students' experiences with exchange students' experiences or a community-based learning project that would document students' application of the concepts learned in class.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to propose a paradigmatic shift from the pluricentric to the translingual in FL theory and practice, with the pluricentric perspective enhancing the development of translingual and transcultural competence. Besides illustrating the social, historical, and political

embeddedness of language, pluricentricity serves to demonstrate both the boundedness and the permeability of language and culture. Operating between languages naturally can be extended to operating between varieties. But rather than focusing on specific native varieties, a translingual approach would foreground the engagement with text, interactions, and performative stances that may contain references that are mixed-code and require interpretation of meaning within a specific communicative event. As can be seen from the data presented in this article, the superdiversity of geographical locations in today's globalized world is reflected in the educational institutions, teaching faculty, and student cohort in countries as diverse as China, Spain or Austria. While students embrace their multiple linguistic and cultural identities, feel empowered by networking, and reflect on their own linguistic and cultural embeddedness, some also struggle when confronted with patterns they are not familiar with. That is why FL pedagogy could benefit from a variation-based focus on translingual and transcultural competence, which might enable students to develop a broader repertoire of cognitive, affective, and behavioral strategies to deal with unfamiliar and/or uncomfortable encounters. Exposing students to a wider range of non-mainstream material, asking them to contribute their own significant experiences, and creatively grapple with multiple perspectives may increase both their resilience and their resourcefulness. This paper can thus be read as an invitation to FL teachers and researchers to try out ways of combining variationist approaches with a focus on translingual and transcultural competence.

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