# Fostering Compassion through Translanguaging Pedagogy in the German *Willkommensklasse*

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## Abstract

This paper identifies human compassion as an integral component of translanguaging practices that can meaningfully inform pedagogical approaches in linguistically and ethnically diverse and potentially highly fraught learning environments such as German language classes for migrants (Willkommensklassen). Derived from part of an ethnographic study of two different Willkommensklassen in Berlin that integrate translanguaging approaches, the authors examine what happens in the classroom through the lens of compassion, showing how it validates learners' experiences and background knowledge, engages their full linguistic repertoires, and promotes socially just interactions in and potentially outside of the classroom. Activities that foster compassionate language and behavior through translanguaging are analyzed, and from these, guidelines are offered for a translanguaging pedagogy oriented toward creating affordances for compassionate language and behavior that can obtain in a variety of settings.

**Keywords:** Translanguaging; compassion; language pedagogy; inclusive pedagogy; multilingualism; migrants; ecological approaches; language learning

## Abstract

In diesem Artikel wird für menschliches Mitgefühl als integraler Bestandteil von Translanguaging argumentiert, was die Möglichkeit bietet, didaktische Ansätze in linguistisch und ethnisch vielfältigen und unter Umständen emotionsbeladenen Lernumgebungen, wie z.B. in sog. Willkommensklassen, zu untermauern. Als Teil einer ethnografischen Studie zweier Willkommensklassen in Berlin, in der Translanguaging in den didaktischen Ansatz integriert wurde, wird hier dargelegt, wie einfühlsame Sprache und fürsorgliches Verhalten durch Translanguaging das volle sprachliche Repertoire der Lerner einsetzt und die soziale Anerkennung der Schüler, wie auch sozial gerechte Interaktionen im Klassenraum und möglicherweise außerhalb des Unterrichts, herbeiführen können. Mehrere Klassenaktivitäten werden beschrieben und analysiert, bei denen einfühlsame Sprache und Handlung durch Translanguaging gefördert werden. Daraus abgeleitet werden didaktische Richtlinien für eine auf Translanguaging basierten Didaktik, die solche Sprache und solches Verhalten ermöglichen.

**Schlüsselwörter:** Translanguaging; Mitgefühl; Fremdsprachendidatik; Inklusionspädagogik; Mehrsprachigkeit; Migrantinnen und Migranten; kontextsensible Ansätze; Sprachenlernen

## 1. Introduction: For a warm welcome

The primary aims of classes for adolescent migrants in Germany, frequently known as *Willkommensklassen*, are for the pupils to learn the language of their new home, acquire knowledge of the culture and values of German society, and transition into the mainstream curriculum. In essence, they are

intended to help them feel *willkommen*.[1] The pedagogies that obtain in these classes are nearly as diverse as the body of learners themselves, yet they have in common a primary focus on the acquisition of linguistic knowledge and skills in standard German. However, recent ecological and poststructuralist approaches to language and language learning (Levine, in press; van Lier, 2004) require that teachers begin to take better into account the human factor within these richly multilingual and multicultural classroom contexts and attend to the subjective experiences of the individual learners as part of a greater pedagogical approach that ultimately situates linguistic knowledge within in the broader frame of meaning-making in a complex, globalized world (Block, 2010; Blommaert, 2010; Kramsch, 2009).

As a uniquely fraught educational and social space intended for language and culture learning, the *Willkommensklasse* in particular should align with a human ecological orientation, for it is comprised of learners who come together from a wide variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, range in age from the pre to late teenage years, have potentially experienced a variety of hardships and/or traumas, and are well aware that they are in a high-stakes learning environment, insofar as their subsequent success in the German general and professional educational tracks hinges on their ability to succeed in this introductory course. Given the intermingling of disparate identities, experiences, and uncertainties about the future that coexist alongside concretely articulated learning objectives and activities in these spaces, learners' distress and anxiety can easily be brought into relief as they struggle to voice their experiences, thoughts, and feelings, or worse, seldom have the chance to do so. Understandably, the classroom for these young adults represents a place in which the learner may feel inferior, or at the very least tongue-tied and inadequate as communicators in standard German, particularly when, in home language settings, those same learners feels like social equals, validated, even eloquent and culturally savvy.

In the day to day of *Willkommensklassen*, teachers often implement strategies gleaned from their classroom experiences in order to mitigate anxiety and distress and support students' learning and wellbeing. Relatedly, with the goal of systematically dismantling the inherent power differential of the language classroom environment and foster greater inclusiveness, some researchers have recently called for translanguaging practices to be explicitly brought to bear in multilingual and multicultural spaces such as the language classroom (Canagarajah, 2017; García & Li Wei, 2014; Kleyn & García, 2019; Pacheco & Miller, 2016). This paper builds on this scholarship to argue that translanguaging practices should be envisioned within a greater pedagogical framework explicitly centered around creating space for the manifestation of compassionate interactions.

Indeed, the project of fostering compassion and ensuring learner validation and equity in the *Willkommensklasse*, takes on particular prominence given the current socio-political climate in Germany, where migrants may suffer discrimination and prejudice, whether through direct exchanges or indirectly, via news stories concentrating on violence of migrants against Germans, the increasing prevalence of far-right activities and demonstrations, and the gradual normalization of anti-immigrant sentiment through official political party platforms, such as that of the AfD. As Spivak (2013), Barnett (2000, 2007), Walker (2006), Walker & Wilson-Strydom (2017) and others remind us, educational institutions hold the potential to address some of the suffering in the world, and teaching for compassionate behavior in this symbolically important space offers a way to peacefully confront the inequity and social injustice that migrants often face (Oxford, 2017).

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[1]   According to the Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Familie und Jugend of Berlin (2018), in the school year 2017-18 there were approximately 6,300 students in *Willkommensklassen* in Berlin, which includes both primary and secondary schools. The focus of this article is exclusively on the secondary school level.

In the following, we clarify our understanding of translanguaging for this particular German-as-a-second-language setting. Thereafter, we unpack recent theoretical understandings of compassion as they may be applied to such classes and then detail activities and practices that provide affordances for fostering and modeling compassion, which often appears to be an implicit, strived-for aspect of translanguaging practices described in the scholarship (e.g. Kleyn & García, 2019) but has not yet been articulated as such. Based on the examples we describe, we then offer a set of guidelines for structuring classroom interactions in ways that promote compassion through translanguaging alongside the usual linguistic and cultural aims of the instructed setting. We close by entertaining possibilities for the more formal integration of compassion within a greater, scaffolded, curricular trajectory.

## 2. Translanguaging towards compassion

Translanguaging, which was first coined and described by Williams (1994) and has since received a great deal of scholarly attention, entails a range of practices in which more than one autonomous language is used in a given social context. It includes both traditional understandings of code-switching as well as other social activities and practices such as blended language usage in situated contexts (Levine, 2011). Translanguaging represents a "dynamic and fluid repertoire" in which languages and other semiotic tools are mobilized by and for the language user (Kleyn & García, 2019). These both index as well as enact social relations in a range of ways (Blommaert, 2010; García, 2014). Cognitively, as Grosjean (1984) originally observed, bilingual people do not possess two separate systems in the mind. Rather, the full range of knowledge of bilingual or multilingual individuals is always active (Kroll and Bialystok, 2013). Translanguaging also has an implicitly activist agenda, as it "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" (García, 2017, p. 24).

In many *Willkommensklassen*, the default expectation appears to be that German as the 'target language' is used at all times, with translanguaging behavior either avoided or overtly policed and prohibited by the teacher.[2] However, translanguaging organically occurs nonetheless, manifesting primarily in unmonitored communication during or outside the scope of the lesson. Given that translanguaging exists within the classroom environment and is part and parcel to learners' natural communicative practice, Kleyn and García (2019; see also García & Kleyn, 2016) argue that teachers should embrace translanguaging in language pedagogy. They explain that

> we start from a place that leverages all the features of the children's repertoire, while also showing them when, with whom, where, and why to use some features of their repertoire and not others, enabling them to also perform according to the social norms of named languages as used in schools (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 15).

For García and colleagues in a range of publications on the topic, translanguaging aims to promote equity, grant learners a sense of authority on their own terms, and validate them as equal members of society. In our view, these various purposes—the linguistic/semiotic, the political, and interpersonal—imply but never name one central aim of engaging translanguaging in an educational setting: the fostering of compassion in the classroom, and ultimately in society at large.

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2   This observation is anecdotal, but it is based on conversations with several teachers of *Willkommensklassen* around Berlin, within the context of Levine's ethnographic study (see below).

Before describing how translanguaging can provide students opportunities for the development of compassion, we must first differentiate the term from a range of associated emotional responses, such as sympathy and empathy. In common parlance, these feelings may often be invoked given their seemingly synonymous relationship to compassion; however, whereas compassion indeed subsumes all of these emotional states, none alone serves to conceptualize compassion. As Nussbaum (2001) maintains, compassion as a concept allows for and is informed by feelings of sympathy, empathy, or pain that result from a given stimulus; yet the concept also extends well beyond emotions insofar as it entails human faculties of cognition and rationality. Identified as an "intelligent emotion" that is "occasioned by awareness of another person's suffering" (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 301; Scarry, 1998), compassion can be understood as a response that combines emotion with deliberation, discernment, and reasoning, and therefore implies that any behavior or action taken as a result of this response be informed and morally appropriate. Therefore the cognitive faculties that compassion requires are essential. As Peterson notes, "to act on the basis of emotion alone, and without reason, [...] is to act with folly" (2017, p. 19). Bloom (2016) would take this assertion even further and caution that acting on emotion alone, such as empathy, might not only be unwise, but even deleterious, as it can motivate indifference and cruelty, when individuals become too wrapped up in their emotional response to suffering to make logical, sound decisions that will affect long-term change (and may cause pain in the short term). For him, what he identifies as "rational compassion" allows for emotions to exist but entails that they are also rationally framed for possibly doing good for those who are suffering.

It is this perspective of compassion—as emotion combined with rational and potentially critical thought—that relates to the instructional aims of the *Willkommensklasse*. We would emphasize that it is not about intentionally involving or provoking emotions in the classroom. Rather, it is about acknowledging the unique setting of the *Willkommensklasse* in comparison to conventional foreign language learning contexts. As mentioned in the opening of this article, the stated objective in *Willkommensklassen* is to help the learners integrate into and ostensibly become 'productive' members of German society. In these terms, it has a fairly utilitarian purpose, one might even say aligned with neoliberal trends in education overall (Del Percio & Flubacher, 2017). Yet, while some teachers' actual practices may make room for the learners' lived experiences as newcomers to German society, formal pedagogical approaches seldom explicitly consider the fact that the various languages learners know are part and parcel of the very social order in which they are expected to participate. In terms of compassionate translanguaging pedagogy, integration functions not as a one-way process but as a *mutual* social and political transformation. While the learner integrates into German society and is transformed in the process, German society also is affected by the cumulative individual engagements and interactions involving these new users of German, extending across the timescales of their lives in their new home. In this understanding of integration as it relates to the aims of the *Willkommensklasse*, compassion already exists as a crucial element in the classroom ecology and should be addressed as integral to the pedagogy.

## 3. Affordances for compassion through translanguaging

To say that compassion embodies a desired aspect of contemporary social interaction in the Western world that should be fostered in the *Willkommensklasse* still remains rather theoretical: what does it look like in practice? What forms can affordances take within the context of daily interactions and activities in the *Willkommensklasse*? And how can an explicit learning objective oriented toward fostering compassion then be utilized to formalize and systemize such activities and interactions in a larger curricular trajectory? To illustrate how translanguaging practices can be implemented for

fostering compassion, we first scale the focus down to the moment-to-moment of classroom activity. In what follows, we present in the form of vignettes three examples drawn from classroom observations done by Levine in the context of an ethnographic study of two *Willkommensklassen* in Berlin during the winters of 2017 and 2019. The aims of the study were to gain insights into the ways that German learners in *Willkommensklassen* as well as adult *Integrationskursen* (integration courses) make use of their respective first and other languages in the classroom, and how the teachers facilitate communication in German and achieve their instructional goals while also responding to or accommodating the heterogeneity that characterizes these sorts of classes.

After presenting each vignette, we unpack the pedagogical aims and outcomes of the activities. For this, we draw upon two sets of guidelines that we believe lend themselves well to fostering compassion through translanguaging in the language classroom. The first is García and Sylvan's (2011) core principles for dynamic bilingual practices in a multilingual international high school. The other is an adapted set of Osborn's (2006) tenets for teaching languages for social justice. After analyzing how these pedagogical moments can enable and promote the development of compassionate behavior, we then distill targeted principles for creating activities that promote compassion and finally turn our attention to ways in which curriculum can be structured based on these guidelines.

### Vignette 1: Acknowledging home languages as a useful resource for student validation, motivation, and collaboration

*The instructional setting is a* Willkommensklasse *in the Wedding section of Berlin. We will call the teacher Frau Simon. The class has 13 students, with six different languages represented, and for eight of the 13, German is their third or fourth language. A few of the students also can use English conversationally. The students who share a home language frequently converse in that language for off-task communication, and code-switching and mixing of German with the other languages known by class members is common. As it happens, the teacher also knows three of the languages used in the classroom: Turkish, French, and English. The students who know those languages regularly address her in any one of them, even though she most often responds in German.*

*The teacher reads the students the opening paragraph of a fairy tale, then gives them a worksheet that contains that paragraph followed by a few tasks. The first asks content questions, whereby the students pull information from the text and enter it as their responses. The second is a list of new vocabulary items from the text, with the directions stating that the students should translate the words into their home language. The third task asks the learners to speculate on how they think the story continues and report back to the class in German.*

*As the learners work in pairs, those who share a home language use it to discuss the answers to the first task, though they make frequent use of German. One girl who shares a language with a boy in the class but is not working with him occasionally asks him across the room about the meaning of particular words. A few of the boys who do not share a home language but know some English use English to discuss both the meanings of words and how they think the story will continue (they speculate that the princess will be beheaded rather than be spared by the king's servant).*

*Two students are siblings. Though they are not working together, the boy whose German is stronger often helps his brother with word meanings in their home language, but he also switches to English so that the boy his brother is working with will understand what they have been saying. Additionally, because several of the class members are markedly stronger learners than others, both academically*

*as well as in terms of German proficiency, stronger students sometimes assist weaker ones in completing the tasks.*

What we can draw from this vignette is that even though German functions as the dominant language in the class, Frau Simon openly permits and even encourages the learners to use their various languages to help them complete tasks. This implementation of translanguaging aligns with what García and Sylvan (2011) describe as "singularities in pluralities." By this they mean that the heterogeneity even among speakers of the same language is recognized, that "every individual learner's language characteristics and use differ from those of others in the class" (p. 395) and can be attended to. Second, the manner in which Frau Simon grants agency and choice to her students situates "the locus of control for language practices […] with the students", and thus also establishes a practice of "plurilingualism from the students up" (García and Sylvan, 2011, p. 397). This means that Frau Simon creates affordances for her students to use their home languages to work through the activities, mindful to encourage language use in non-exclusionary ways. Compassion comes into play because each learner is made to feel validated, and that her or his home language is there as a resource, both verbally and in writing. Particularly notable within this translanguaging practice is that the learners emulate Frau Simon's approach and take it upon themselves to communicate in languages that serve not only themselves, but also others in the class, such as the boy switching from his home language to English in order to help a peer. While the translanguaging practices evident in this activity (and many other activities she creates) serve the learning goals of the day, they also set the learners at ease, contribute to giving everyone a stake in what is going on in the room, and create affordances that contribute to building a community of practice through compassionate action (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Indeed, we see how Frau Simon's approach also fosters "collaboration among students", which García and Sylvan understand as building on the strengths of every individual member of the classroom or school community to optimize learning. As part of this, collaborative groupings (those the teacher assigned but also self-selecting groupings in situated context) challenge more advanced students, or students with a greater variety of language options, to articulate their understanding of the story or the task so that it is comprehensible to others (García & Sylvan, 2011, p. 395).

**Vignette 2: Leveling the playing field: Learners positioned as teachers through translanguaging**

*The instructional setting is a* Willkommensklasse *in the Kreuzberg section of Berlin. We will call the teacher Frau Birke. The class has 14 students, with seven different languages represented. The students have been learning German for about half a year at the time of this lesson, so most are at the CEFR A2 level of German in terms of speaking and listening comprehension abilities. The focus of the lesson on this day is vocabulary for clothing and ways of talking about what one and others are wearing. The students have various worksheets containing activities related to the target vocabulary and forms, arranged in stations around the room, each somewhat more difficult than the previous. This means that those who need more time or who are not able to manage the more advanced activities would not do all of the stations.*

*After one class hour with these worksheets, the teacher has the students arrange chairs in a circle. After warming up the class by saying what she is wearing and asking a few individuals to say what others are wearing, the teacher has each student stand and say what she or he is wearing, but now with a twist: they say what they are wearing in German, but then say the same thing in their home language, and further, they are asked to teach the class how to say those words and phrases. Each person does this, using a lot of the verbal presentation and choral response techniques Frau Birke often*

*uses, especially the way she has the whole class repeat words or phrases. There is much laughter, particularly when the teacher herself has difficulty pronouncing words in her students' home languages.*

The aim of this instructional unit could not be more conventional, focusing as it does on the acquisition of everyday vocabulary and practicing it in a contrived pedagogical context (i.e. how often would one actually describe what one is wearing in interactions outside the classroom?). Yet by injecting into the activity time in which the learners' own home languages come to the fore, we suggest that rational compassion—as a synthesis of emotion with potential mindful action—is enabled in several ways. In repurposing the lesson as what we might call a simulated translanguaging lesson, it validates learners' home languages, not by merely raising the status of those languages relative to German, but by even putting them on an equal level with the host country language. For those moments, these relatively novice German learners, who in their day-to-day life may feel inferior to others in their ability to express themselves, can position themselves as the 'experts,' in this case on these words and phrases in their home languages. Osborn (2006, p. 33) asserts that teaching for social justice involves "sharing the load" of inquiry by making teacher and learners equal participants in classroom discourse. It requires that "teachers give up a certainly level of control and become co-learners and risk-takers," like the students themselves (Kleyn & García, 2019, p. 75). Further, as students adopt the teaching techniques and ventriloquate the teacher's typical 'teacher talk,' the learners demonstrate an appreciation of the teacher's role as language mentor while also visualizing themselves as able to adopt this important role. And finally, as the learners experience the teacher's difficulties pronouncing the learners' home languages, awareness is raised that language learning is difficult for everyone, even the teacher. We see how this activity reflects Osborn's (2006) proposal that teaching languages for social justice does not elevate action above listening, that learning to hear those around us is not a passive skill, it is activism (p. 33). In asking the learners to not merely parrot words and phrases for clothing in German, the teacher is prompting the learners, and herself, to listen to one another in profound ways. In these ways, compassion is not merely an emotion enabled, rather it manifests as social action in the classroom context, as the contrived pedagogical activity of saying what one is wearing is no longer just about learning and practicing new German vocabulary.

## Vignette 3: Collaboration and team-building through translingual mentoring

*Frau Birke periodically has new students join the class. Two new class members, a boy and a girl, arrive in the class, about half way through the school year. The newcomers are Arabic speakers and do not yet know German. Frau Birke pairs each new arrival with an existing class member, a boy and a girl respectively, who will serve as a 'mentor' for the foreseeable future. During class activities, the mentors receive their own, more advanced worksheets with activities for learning and practicing the day's target vocabulary and forms. The new students receive simple worksheets containing images and individual words selected from the target vocabulary. In addition to each mentor quickly completing her or his own worksheet, the mentor explains the worksheet to her or his mentee in Arabic, and uses that language to help her or him complete it. It is apparent that the newly arrived students are also unfamiliar with the Roman alphabet, and so each mentor helps with pronunciation and writing the letters.*

*During the break between class hours, the researcher has the chance to speak with the female mentor. He praises her for how she assisted the new student and asks whether she likes helping her. He also asks her whether it makes it difficult for her to get her own work done when she helps a classmate in this way. She replies that she loves being a mentor, that she sees how important it was*

*that her own mentor, now transitioned out of the* Willkommensklasse *and into the regular curriculum, helped her in her first months in Germany. It makes her feel useful and helpful and does not distract from her own work because she learns the new material better that way.*

Even though the reason for having fellow Arabic speakers mentor newcomers may appear purely practical, this approach has a twofold purpose that can be understood as rooted in and fostering rational compassion, based both on translanguaging and on learner agency and autonomy. Frau Birke acknowledges and integrates multiple languages within the classroom environment from the start as positive and useful tools in the learning process, and for promoting the learners' wellbeing. Furthermore, insofar as she grants genuine individual responsibility to each student mentor, she ensures that learners can feel a sense of ownership of their learning trajectory and also have individual agency to enact positive change in the classroom environment. Interestingly, via the longer timescale of activity in which the mentee participates, the mentee is also granted agency as legitimate peripheral participant (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in order not only to experience success herself while she works with her mentor, but also potentially to be able to mentor a new mentee in the future. In this way, Frau Birke enables meaningful collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships, implicitly approaching activity across multiple timescales. Because of the cyclical nature of these mentor-mentee relationships, the mentors are given the opportunity to reflect on their own past experiences of difficulty and anxiety in the early days of their own German learning, and can then pair their emotions of empathy and/or sympathy for the mentee with the knowledge they have gained about the practical steps to alleviate distress in the language learning process. What is particularly important to note from Frau Birke's activity is the way in which it extends outward and creates what Oxford (2017) has describes as a ripple effect in which not only the learner transforms and develops. A final and in our view profound observation is relevant here: in arranging the mentor/mentee roles in her class, Frau Birke granted learners opportunities for compassionate behavior along different pathways than might have been intended, such as when the mentor concentrated on helping her mentee learn the letters of the Roman alphabet; in our view this surpassed the expectation that this learner was simply helping her mentee arrive at the correct answers to the worksheet items.

## 4. Guidelines for formalizing compassion in the classroom and curriculum

These snapshots from two *Willkommensklassen* that involve translanguaging practices oriented towards compassion point toward a few basic guidelines for teaching language for migrants that could be used in creating curricular materials, designing curricula, and for teaching practice. Admittedly, compassion itself cannot be demanded from learners as an explicit outcome, a scenario that itself would be lacking in compassion and potentially undermine the very compassion we hope would emerge. However, as we maintain and have shown, it is possible to successfully create conditions in which compassion can and hopefully will come into play by a number of class members, and that over time, these moments of compassionate behavior through translanguaging would characterize the atmosphere in the classroom interactions and, potentially, even have a positive impact in the world beyond the classroom. Three basic guidelines emerge for us to guide the fostering of compassion through translanguaging:

1. Identify relevant features of the context
   First and foremost, as indicated by the approaches of Frau Birke and Frau Simon, it is essential to assess the situated context by taking note of the various singularities within the greater heterogeneity in the class. This entails becoming aware of the range of home languages, levels of proficiency, and overall needs and abilities of the individual learners within the group. This

foundational step allows the instructor to apprehend the type of differentiated teaching that might be needed for the integration of the learners' home language and abilities, and to thoughtfully create lessons; to form productive working groups, or simply be aware of certain group affinities and tendencies that may emerge in the classroom.

2. Co-construct and establish translanguaging as a regular practice

Based on the instructor's assessment of the needs and dynamics of the group, she or he can begin to implement and even co-construct translanguaging strategies tailored to the specific context that will help all members of the classroom community achieve given learning goals. Here, we wish to raise awareness that it takes time to establish a classroom environment open to and familiar with translanguaging as a desired and beneficial practice. When one first integrates a translanguaging activity in a class that is otherwise unaccustomed to making use of multiple languages, the activity could result in confusion, discomfort, or even frustration. However, practice and repetition—as with any other skill acquisition—will help set up translanguaging as a fruitful and expected way of interacting and learning within the classroom dynamic (Tracy, 2014). And of course, the examples evident in these vignettes represent just a fraction of possible translanguaging practices in pedagogical settings. The reader is referred to the contributions in García and Kleyn (2016; see also Seltzer & Collins, 2016) and Kleyn and García (2019) for numerous additional examples of effective techniques for engaging and validating learners' linguistic repertoires.

3. Create affordances for compassionate behavior

In terms of activity creation, learning scenarios and in-class work should be designed to accomplish one or more of the following outcomes, as outlined above: 1) validate and motivate learners through the inclusion of activities that prompt them to utilize their home language and other languages as mobile resources in collaborative settings; 2) upend power dynamics by giving learners the opportunity to take on the role of expert in various ways; 3) grant learners ownership of their learning process through collaborative mentor-mentee relationships. Appropriate teaching and learning techniques that support these aims often fall under the applications of active learning scenarios or collaborative learning techniques (Barkley, Major, & Cross, 2014; Blaz, 1999; Freeman, 1992), and the formats and manifestations of these activities can vary greatly. Common across all of them is that they make space for and acknowledge student singularities, group affinities, leadership capacities, and individual agency.

As noted in the introduction, the main goals of the *Willkommensklasse* are to help newcomers learn German and transition into the regular school curriculum, and ultimately, contribute to their successful integration both within the school and in society at large. The expected default language of communication is German, of course, but the description of these two classes suffices to indicate that extensive translanguaging characterizes both outside-of-class and off-task communication of most or perhaps all of the learners, while the implementation of translanguaging pedagogies appears at the very least to be left to the individual teacher. In this regard, we suggest that the larger curricular context and arc of learner development is just as important as the bottom-up implementation of the guidelines we offer here, because otherwise translanguaging for fostering compassion risks remaining an exceptional occurrence, or worse, merely marginal to the pursuit of the instructional aims (Tracy, 2014). The ideas presented here would therefore need to be brought to bear in the larger discourse about the *Willkommensklasse* at the local, regional or even national level, whereby published course materials, learning outcomes, and even assessments would be reconsidered and reoriented, first toward making room for learners' full linguistic repertoires in all spheres of activity, and then in terms of systemic mindfulness of ways that such practices could also foster compassion. Interestingly, this is the trend in education beyond German-as-a-second-language courses, in the curriculum at large,

where a good deal of attention has been given to "language-sensitive" instructional practices (*sprachsensibler Unterricht*; Fürstenau & Niedrig, 2018; Leisen, 2015; Vogel, 2017), in which teachers adjust their instructional practices to facilitate learning and better include learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Additionally, what we propose holds implications for teacher education, for ultimately, the long-term implementation of translanguaging pedagogies for fostering compassion depends on a large-scale change in the overall mindset of teachers toward the dynamics of the target language as a named national language relative to the complex multilingualism of their students (Piccardo, 2016; Terhart & Dewitz, 2018; Roth, 2018).

Although the proposal to orient the *Willkommensklasse* curriculum and the classroom interactions embedded within it towards translanguaging for fostering compassion represents a large-scale shift which would require the collaboration of numerous and varied stakeholders in order to prove successful, it is our hope is that such a reorientation would result in great gains not only for the individual learners but, by extension, society as a whole. Creating scaffolded and integrated affordances for the development of compassionate behavior through translanguaging would reveal to all those involved in the process (learners, teachers, administrators) the myriad possibilities that exist for interacting with others in compassionate ways on a daily basis. Ultimately, like many other aspects of language and communication taught in the *Willkommensklasse,* the ultimate goal would be for such deeply multilingual expressions of compassion to manifest in contexts beyond that educational setting and for translanguaging to be acknowledged as a valuable and even desirable social practice (Lotherington, 2013).

## 5. Conclusion

The stakes for promoting translanguaging pedagogy for fostering compassion appear to us to be particularly high in our time. In Germany today—as is the case in many other countries experiencing a rise of nationalist and xenophobic sentiment—successful integration is often yolked to the rigid expectation that migrants embrace monolingualism by discontinuing use of their home languages and refraining from translanguaging, adhering to the confines of the bounded, national language, even in their most private interactions. This monolingual understanding of integration is exemplified in a recent op-ed piece, "Auch zu Hause muss Deutsch gesprochen werden!", in which the author makes the alarming claim that the use of languages other than German in migrant households directly results in the social and economic disadvantages often experienced among this demographic (Straubhaar, 2018). He then urges that the current situation, in which sixty percent of migrant families ostensibly speaks languages other than German at home, be remedied through top-down strategies, foremost political interventionist policies. While we can hope that Straubhaar's rather extreme stance does not represent the sentiments of the population at large, we believe it does resonate with public discourses around migrants and language in recent years. Compassionate behavior through legitimate—and legitimated—translanguaging pedagogies could hopefully contribute to changing that public discourse from the ground up, toward embracing a 'new normal' in which compassionate language and behavior, and dynamic multilingualism as a manifestation thereof, gain wider appreciation, a small-scale but potentially profound corrective to the mixed and sometimes hostile messages young migrants receive about language and integration.

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