Trauma-Informed Practices for Migrants: Applications in Applied Linguistics

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Summary

Trauma-informed language and communication is a hot topic in education and health care, especially in wake of the COVID-19 pandemic (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2021). We've seen a surge of interest in trauma-informed research because of the stress of a global pandemic and the growing numbers of displaced people worldwide. Aspects of language and trauma play a central role in migration and resettlement processes. In fact, migration is one of today's biggest global challenges. Estimates show that in 2020 there were 281 million international migrants, a growing number representing 3.6% of the global population (International Organization of Migration, 2021). These numbers include all forms of migration, such as voluntary migration, migrant workers, and involuntary or forced migration. Some forms of migration may cause traumatic experiences, which in many cases may even lead to complex trauma. Reasons for leaving the home country, journeys which may include trafficking or refugee/detention camps, abuse, opaque visa and asylum processes, as well as isolation and vulnerability in a new place often with a different language and culture, are all aspects that can add to trauma and stress experienced by migrants. This book aims to highlight the ways in which applied linguists can integrate trauma-informed approaches across the scope of their work. There is already good evidence that trauma-informed approaches matter in education, clinical settings, social work, and policy. This volume will bring together perspectives from across the field of applied linguistics to unpack the role of language when developing and enacting trauma-informed education, research, and care.

The above migration stories are relevant for how language interacts with healthcare and mental health, and applied linguists are in a unique position to facilitate research and guidance on best practices when it comes to languaging health. Recently, Cherry (2023) issued trauma-informed language guidance to lessen unwanted power dynamics in healthcare contexts. The document highlights how individuals affected by trauma internalize language and how this can affect their well-being and healing process. Interestingly, Bailey et al. (2019) and Ortigosa-Beltrán et al. (2023) demonstrate that a disconnect in speech production and emotion leads to a reduction in trauma response, for example when

traumatic events are narrated in a foreign language. These studies hold implications for therapeutic treatment.

Similarly, research on trauma-informed pedagogy has exploded in recent years following the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the toll it took on mental health and education (Custodio and O'Loughlin, 2021).This recent research is grounded in trauma-informed language teaching practices that highlight the importance of creating a positive learning experience (McDonald, 2000), artful instruction (Medley, 2012), and the importance of motivation following trauma (Iversen et al., 2014).

Additionally, research on trauma has been informing policy making. Bowen & Murshid (2016) explain how policy can better reflect the six core principles of trauma-informed care to minimize trauma-driven health disparities. Magruder et al. (2017) frame trauma as a global public health concern and showcase how public health policies are crucial in addressing the issue whilst outlining a potential framework for a trauma-informed public health policy agenda.

This volume explores the connection between language and trauma to understand how applied linguists can better work with migrants who have undergone trauma. The exploration and answers to the questions below are not limited to linguists, but may equally be of interest to legal scholars, NGOs, sociologists, social workers, health care workers, and others. The intended readership for this volume ranges from the academic audience to practitioners working directly with migrants, and extends to anyone interested in these issues. Language use for this volume should follow the "Federal Plain Language Guidelines" (2011). By using a more comprehensible style of writing for this volume, "the intended readers can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information" (International Plain Language Federation).

We are interested in submissions that explore the questions below from a trauma-informed perspective centering around the areas of policy, foreign language learning and teaching, interpreting, discourse and narratives, and health. We encourage submissions that explore these issues in different parts of the world and welcome multidisciplinary contributions from researchers and practitioners alike.

- How do policies position different migrants and what are the implications for immigration procedures and support? Does the language used in policies allow learners of the majority language to access it and engage or does it disempower/disown them by making them rely on support services? How far do policies recognize trauma-related needs within asylum and humanitarian protection processes? Do timeframes and procedures recognize needs under a trauma-informed approach? How can the inclusion of migrants in research processes and participatory action lead to effective and evidence-based policy-making and ultimately lead to more self-empowerment?

- Do foreign language class settings accommodate for the needs of people affected by trauma or does it hinder their learning? How can these environments be rethought and teaching approaches facilitate learning to enable victims of trauma to develop lifelong language learning skills? How can curricula be shaped to increase engagements and

sustainable learning to help individuals affected by trauma integrate and participate in society more actively?

- How can entitlement and access to interpreters be made more just? How can fluency in a language and quality interpretation be ensured to accurately represent migrants' accounts to lead to better and more justified outcomes for migrants in support and immigration claims as well as court procedures? What can be done to prevent the abuse of power in the relationship between interpreter and the individual in need of interpretation? And finally, how can aspects of nationality, culture, beliefs, and gender be mitigated to ensure a trustful relationship between a migrant and interpreter?

- Does the language used in migrant narratives accurately capture their experiences? How is language in migrant narratives used to support goals of different agencies, the government, or advocacy work? How are migrants positioned through the use of or sensationalization of narratives and what are their implications?

- What can be done within the health care sector to better support migrant patients affected by trauma? What can language contribute to help communicate about trauma and mental health? What is the role of language in trauma healing processes?

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Timeline

1. Call for contributions: start of January 2024
2. Submit abstract outlining idea for your chapter: 17th March 2024 – **extended deadline for contributions in interpreting: 10th June 2024**
3. Submitting proposal for the volume to Multilingual Matters: April 2024
4. If abstract was accepted submit manuscript for your chapter: 15th September 2024
5. Preliminary feedback by editors: mid November 2024
6. Submit revised chapters for peer review: January 2025
7. Feedback from peer review: March 2025
8. Submit revision of peer-reviewed version of chapter: April/May 2025
9. Anticipated submission to the press: May 2025

Abstract Proposal

Please submit a 200 word proposal to the editors Maybritt (maybritt.woodcock@uni-greifswald.de) and Emily (feuerher@umich.edu) by March 17th 2024.

Manuscripts for chapters should be approximately 5,000 words not including references. Please cite using APA and follow Oxford spelling.