

LAS Closing Conference
Potsdam, 16/17 September 2011

LAS

Literacy Acquisition in Schools
in the Context of Migration and Multilingualism

Sociological results from LAS Germany:
classroom interaction in a multilingual, multi-participant setting

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Presentation outline

- 1 Basic features of the two German classes under scrutiny
- 2 Family backgrounds of the mono- and bilingual case pupils
- 3 Linguistic and cultural diversity in classroom interaction
 - 3.1 Lesson discourses
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1 Basic features of the two German classes under scrutiny

The LAS schools

- The LAS schools are located in the same worn-down district of a Ruhr area city with a medium unemployment rate and an over average foreigner quota. Both schools are considered to have an underprivileged clientele.

Primary school

- 315 pupils, 36% without German citizenship
- 15 teachers, 14 of whom female (21 pupils per teacher)

Comprehensive school

- 1011 pupils (secondary I + II), 40% without German citizenship
- 69 teachers, gender distribution 50-50 (15 pupils per teacher)

Classroom demography

First grade

- 30 pupils, 8 with migration background/ German as a second language, two of which are in remediation class and do not participate in German class regularly
- Teacher is in her mid-thirties and has been teaching in primary school for seven years

Seventh grade

- 27 pupils, 13 with migration background/ German as a second language
- Teacher is in his early sixties and has been teaching in this comprehensive school for twenty years

Didactic approaches to literacy acquisition

First grade

- Literacy acquisition as a “natural” ability
- Reading and writing as “natural” elements of social reality
- Method: 1. “write as you hear”; 2. orthography acquisition

Seventh grade

- Literacy acquisition as a “natural” ability
- Reading and writing as “natural” elements of social reality
- Method: 1. genre-based text comprehension; 2. structural approaches to language (grammatical phenomena)

2 Family backgrounds of the mono- and bilingual case pupils

- In more than half of the bilingual case families, there is at least one parent who is “first generation” and did not go to school in Germany. These are usually the mothers, the main caretakers.
- Parents with German as a first language (GL1) tendentially have better school-leaving and professional qualifications than parents with German as a second language (GL2). Higher educational degrees are limited to parents of first-graders.
- There is a relevant connection between literate practices at home and the educational achievements of the parents, with a slight surplus on the part of the monolingual families.
- Parental school support is slightly more distinctive in the monolingual families especially in the first grade.

3 Linguistic and cultural diversity in classroom interaction

Mono- and bilingual children participate in school based on different starting conditions along the lines of their linguistic/ migration background.

With the LAS long-term observation of classroom interaction, we have the opportunity to look at the manifestations of these differences in the immediate interaction systems and not only in terms of absolute outputs like grades and certificates:

Do differences make a difference
in immediate classroom interaction?

3.1 Lesson discourses

- Make ca. 10% of total lesson time in the first and 80% in the seventh grade
- Performed in the form of whole-class-teaching
- Teachers orchestrate discourses by determining topics, asking questions and appointing speakers
- In the first grade, topical lesson discourses always lead to according writing assignments
- In the seventh grade, lesson discourses can also be conducted as an end in itself

Example from 7th grade during the discussion of compounds, September:

- The issue of grammatical gender serves as an occasion to address different linguistic backgrounds of participants.
- The distinction refers to early childhood language acquisition and is then narrowed down to “all Turkish children”.

Example on blackboard: „Universitätsgebäude“ (*university building*)

*TEA: warum ist dieses grundwort so wichtig ?

%eng: why is this root so important?

*TEA: gerade jetzt für viele von euch .

%eng: especially for many of you .

*TEA: **die deutsch nicht von kind an gelernt haben .**

%eng: who didn't learn German from childhood on.

*TEA: hilal .

%com: with raised hand

[...]

*HIL: daraus kann man den &ar artikel gewinnen .

%eng: you can gain the article from it.

*TEA: aha@i .

*TEA: wie lautet also der artikel .

%eng: so which article does it have to be .

[...]

*TEA: **jetzt möchte ich mal grade alle türkischen kinder fragen .**

%eng: I'd like to ask all Turkish children now.

*TEA: was muss jetzt für ein artikel vor dieses gesamtwort ?

%eng: which article belongs to this total word?

Example from 7th grade during the discussion of Heine's "Belsazar", February:

- The setting of the poem (a temple) serves as an occasion to address alleged different religious backgrounds of participants.
- There is a distinction made between "we Christians" and "you Muslims", but at the same time, "we" addresses also the collective of writers in the classroom.

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*TEA: was sagen wir christen zu den häusern in denen wir gott verehren ?
%eng: how do we christians call the houses where we pray to god?
[...]
*TEA: wie heißt das gotteshaus der juden ?
%eng: what's the name of the house of god of the jews?
[...]
*TEA: und wie nennen äh@i # muslime ihr gotteshaus ?
%eng: and how do muslims call their house of god?
*TEA: das müssen wa wissen .
%eng: we have to know that.
*TEA: und das müssen wa auch ma richtig schreiben können .
%eng: and we have to be able to write it correctly.
*TEA: fadime .
%com: with raised hand
*FAD: ähm@i cami .
*TEA: das is sicherlich euer wort .
%eng: that's certainly your word.
*TEA: aber was sagen wir im deutschen dazu ?
%eng: but how do we call it in German?
%com: points at ALI who raises a hand
*ALI: moschee .
%eng: mosque.
*TEA: schreibste das mal an ?
%eng: would ya chalk it up?
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Examples from 1st grade, December and April:

*TEA: und jetzt hat mumi angst .
 %eng: and now mumi is afraid.
 *TEA: dass da [in der weihnachtskiste] .
 %eng: that there [the christmas chest].
 *TEA: gefährliche sachen drin sind .
 %eng: are dangerous things in it.
 *TEA: weil mumi nicht weiß .
 %eng: because mumi doesn't know.
 *TEA: was advent- und weihnachtssachen sind .
 %eng: what advent and christmas things are.

*TEA: fehlt hier auch was?
 %eng: is there something missing here, too?
 %com: paints a tree on the blackboard and writes
 „Bau_“ below it, then points at the word
 *TEA: kerim .
 %com: with raised hand
 *KER: da fehlt **der** m@l .
 %eng: the [wrong article] m@l is missing.
 *TEA: **das** m@l am ende genau .
 %eng: the [correct article] m@l at the end, right.

- Neither the issue of grammatical gender nor the Christmas reference serve as an occasion to address different linguistic or cultural backgrounds of participants.

In the **first grade**, the linguistic and cultural diversity of the participants is never being mentioned in lesson discourses. In this respect, participants are not perceived with regard to a general differentiation “with/ without migration background” as it is not made relevant in immediate communication.

In the **seventh grade**, different linguistic and cultural backgrounds are occasionally addressed in specific contexts. In this respect, participants are perceived with regard to a general differentiation “with/ without migration background” when it is made relevant in immediate communication.

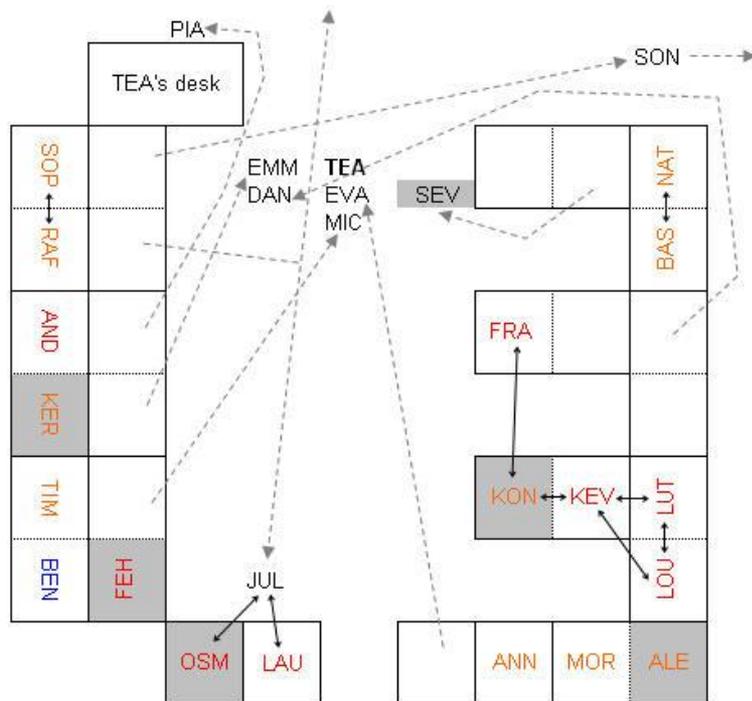
The relevance of linguistic and cultural diversity is therefore negotiated during the immediate interaction among the attendants.

3.2 Individual assignments

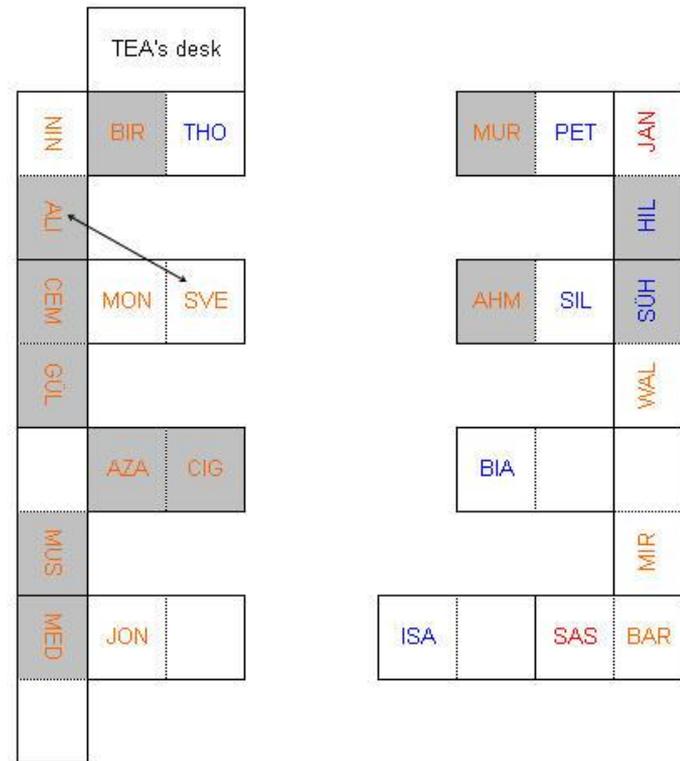
- Make ca. 40% of total lesson time in the first and 15% in the seventh grade
- Are prepared in previous lesson discourses
- Are mostly based on work sheets in the first and on original texts in the seventh grade
- Assignment time exploitation is on average 37% in the first and 66% in the seventh grade
- Results are never discussed in the forum in the first grade; in the seventh grade, pupils' solutions are often discussed exemplarily

Approaching individual writing assignments

1st grade, June



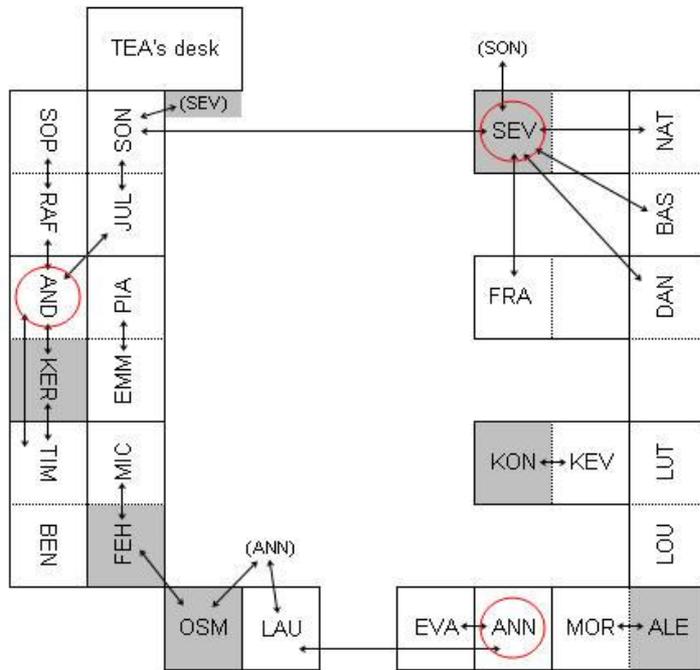
7th grade, May



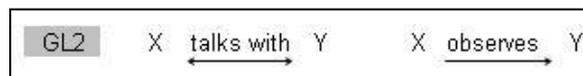
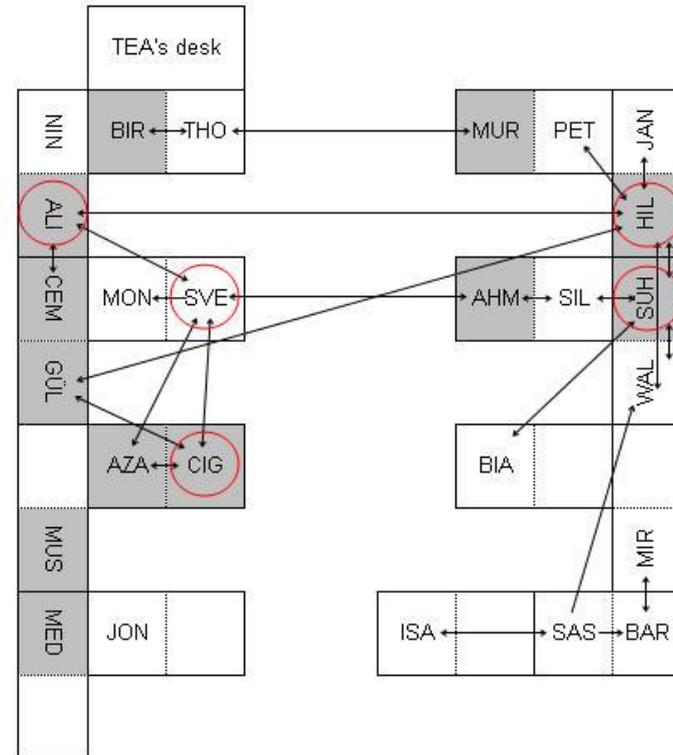
GL2 X talks with Y starts immediately with task prolongs preparations sits idly, observes others leaves seat

Private interactions during writing assignments

1st grade, June

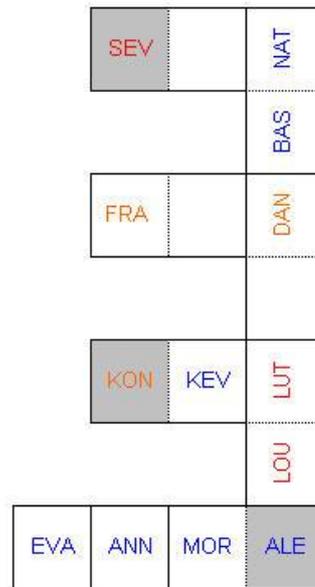
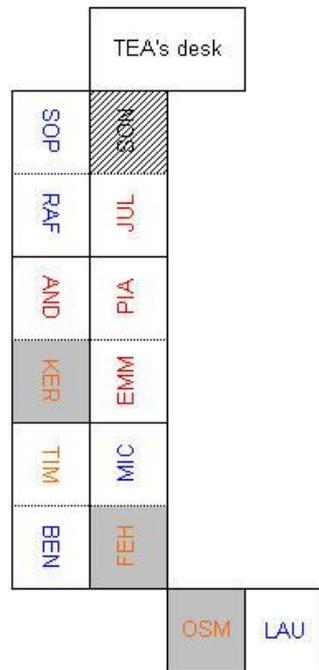


7th grade, May

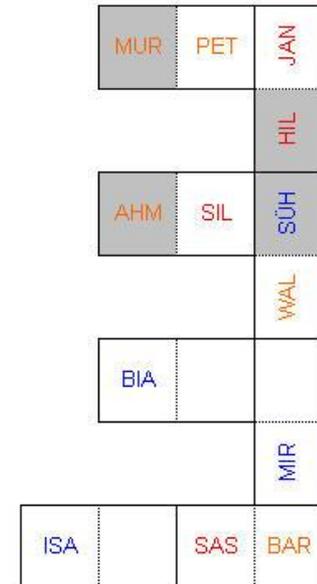
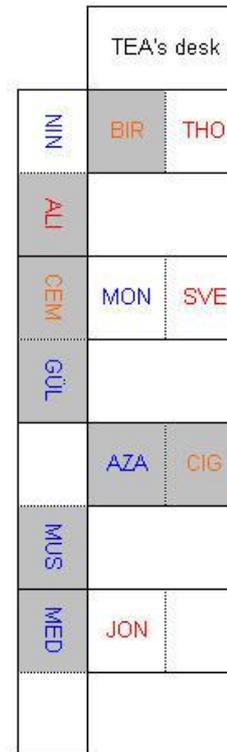


Conduction of writing assignments

1st grade, June



7th grade, May



GL2	works with concentration	struggles with task	is distracted, careless
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In **both grades**, neither individual approaches to assignments nor private interactions can be explained along the lines of linguistic or cultural backgrounds. Individual behaviours seem to be entirely situationally motivated.

The **requirements of adapting to the social situation** regularly seem to surpass perceptions of differences and are thus not made relevant for individual work.

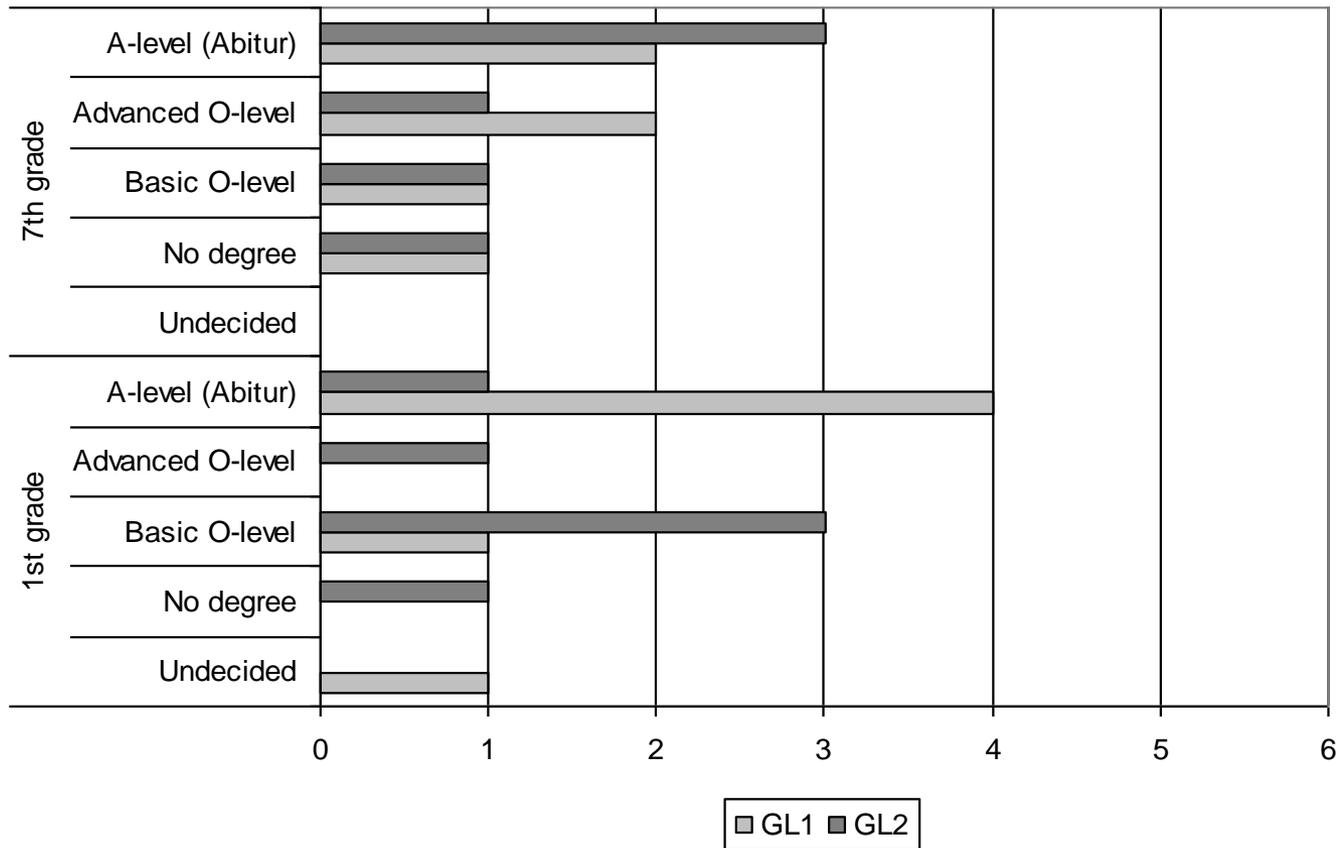
In the **first grade**, bilingual pupils seems to struggle more intensely with writing assignments than monolingual ones. In the **seventh grade**, monolinguals are more likely to handle individual tasks carelessly and distractedly.

3.3 Cumulative findings

In almost all evaluated categories, differences between monolingual and bilingual case pupils exist in the first, but not in the seventh grade. Gender differences occur more often in the seventh grade.

	1 st grade			7 th grade		
	GL1	GL2	♀ / ♂	GL1	GL2	♀ / ♂
Attentiveness	+	-	0	-	+	♀ / ♂
Active participation	+	-	0	0		0
Social corrections	-	+	0	0		♀ / ♂
Factual corrections		x		-	+	0
Assignment time exploitation		0	♀ / ♂	0		♀ / ♂
Work efficiency	+	-	0	0		♀ / ♂
reading						
writing		0		0		♀ / ♂

Teachers' prognoses on the case pupils' further school careers



4 Summary: Do differences make a difference?

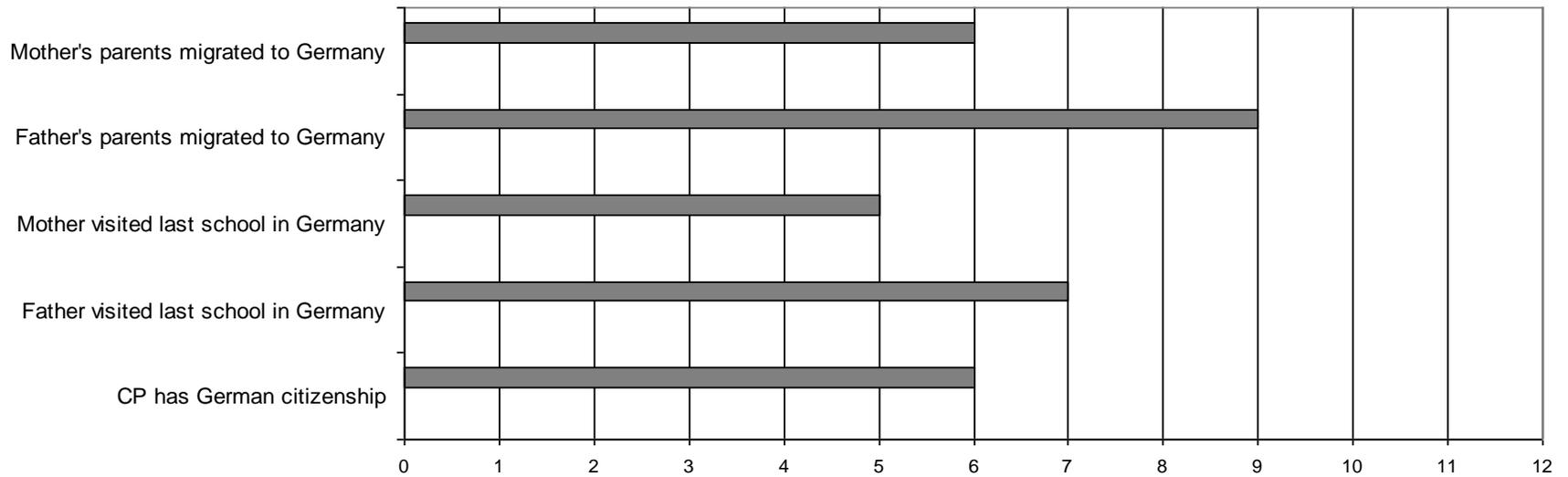
Based on interaction analysis, the differentiation of participants according to linguistic and cultural backgrounds is not a consistently relevant feature of interaction and lesson performance. It is, however, more prominent in the first grade where it tendentially puts bilingual pupils at a disadvantage.

What seems to make a difference in comparison is

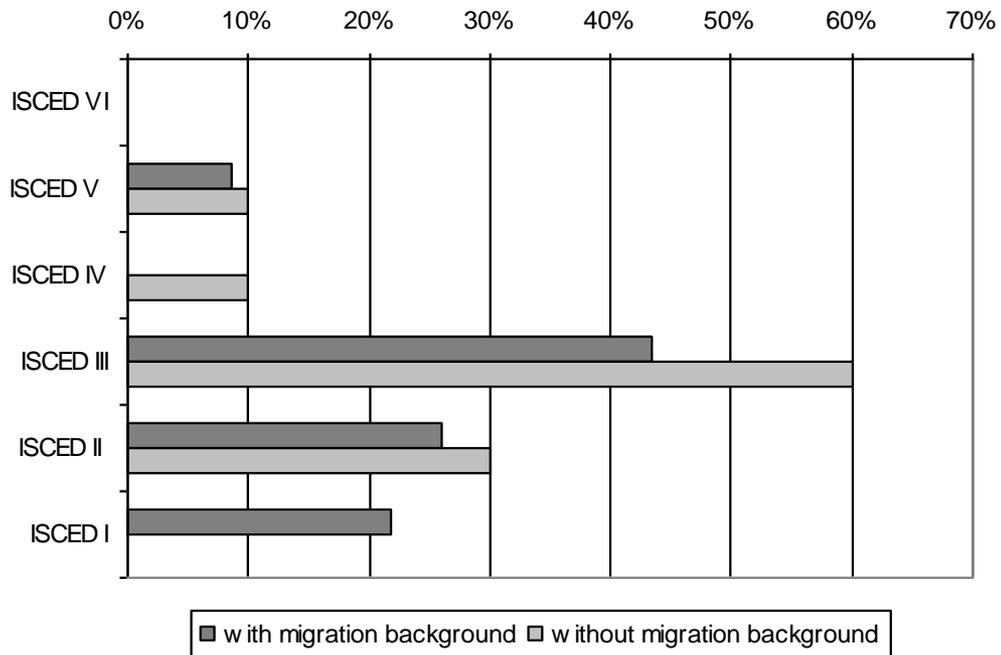
- a) the more heterogeneous clientele in the first grade in contrast to the post-selection situation in the seventh grade and
- b) the different handling of diversity, being ignored in the first and accepted in the seventh grade.

Thank you for your attention.

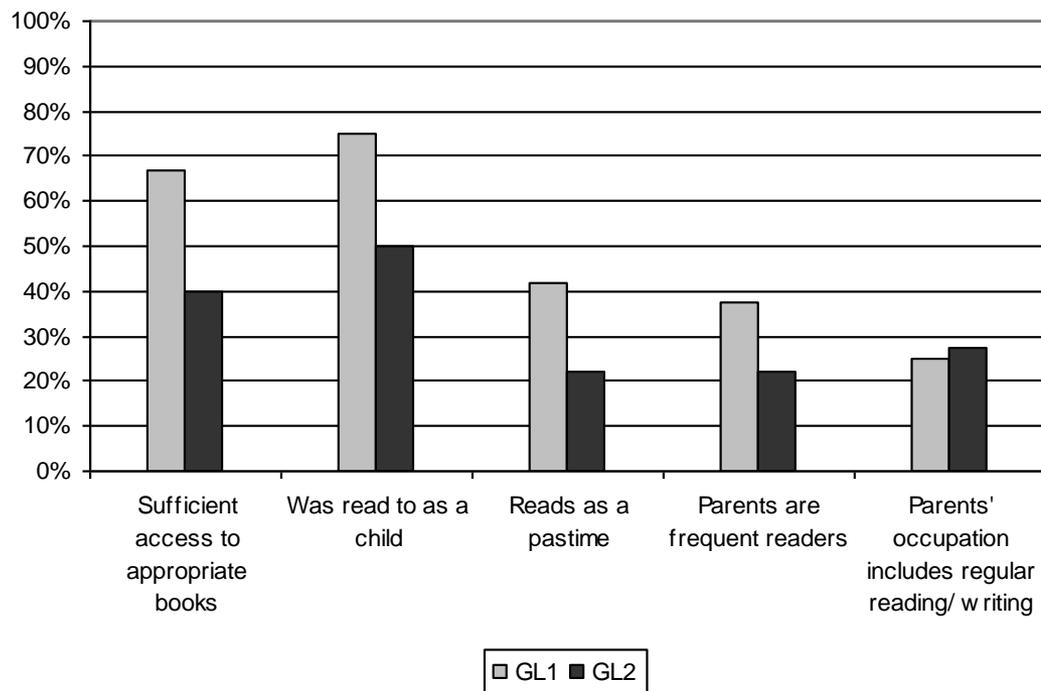
Migration backgrounds of case pupils



Educational achievements of case pupils' parents



Literate practices in case pupils' families



Parental school and studying support in case pupils' families

