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LAS

Literacy Acquisition in Schools  
in the Context of Migration and Multilingualism

**Mono- and bilingual pupils in the LAS-Study**

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## Structure of the presentation

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## 1 Preliminaries: Multilingualism and school success as a fact of the societies at large

- sociolinguistic and language policy parameters of Turkey and Germany with respect to Turkish (in Germany) and Kurdish (in Turkey)  
→ **next slide (4)**
- In Germany and in Turkey, on a general level, and on average, the school success of the respective bilinguals lies below the school success of the monolinguals (cf. PISA-Studies for Germany, ERG-Publications for Turkey).

Parameters of language policy (in the sense of Schiffmann 1996): Turkish in Germany, Kurdish in Turkey

Country and Language Level of description	Kurmanci-Kurdish in Turkey (ca. 10 million speakers <sup>1</sup> )	Turkish in Germany (about 1.5 million speakers? <sup>2</sup> )
<b>Macro level of official status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>indigenous language; no official status,</li> <li>mother tongue education in other languages apart from Turkish is forbidden (§ 42 of Constitution), as is use of language other than Turkish in official public (cf. Party Law § 43, 81, Law of Associations § 31);</li> <li>since 2002 (Media) / 2003 (Education), Kurdish belongs implicitly to the „Languages and dialects used traditionally by Turkish citizens“</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>allochthonous language; no official status; use of language in the frame of anti-discrimination law (§ 3 of Constitution)</li> </ul>
<b>Meso level of societal institutions and media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong differences in vitality between areas with Kurdish (ethnic) majority in South-East of Turkey, and areas with Kurdish (internal) migrant population in the West.</li> <li>Low presence and use in national media; however, existence of national television station (Şeş-TV); also (illegal) satellite television station (Roj-TV);</li> <li>degree of presence and use in the internet: unclear</li> <li>academic institutions investigating Kurdish in Turkey: established very recently;</li> <li>Kurdish lesson: legally possible under the label of foreign language instruction for grown-ups; illegal in the form of mother tongue instruction, but practised in Kurdish cultural associations (also in the town quarter under investigation: at least one of the LAS case pupils received Kurdish mother-tongue education)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High presence of Turkish media, produced (also) in Germany;</li> <li>degree of presence and use in the internet: high</li> <li>established philological tradition of the investigation of Turkish – but less so of migrant Turkish</li> <li>mother-tongue education according to the provisions of the German Federal Republics (at least four of the 7<sup>th</sup>-grade LAS case pupils received mother tongue education when in primary school; the LAS-comprehensive school used to offer Turkish lessons (for Turkish speakers), however, no Turkish mother tongue education in the LAS-schools at time of LAS research)</li> </ul>
<b>Micro level of informal public and family</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use of varieties of Kurdish in informal public in areas with high concentration of speakers (such as town quarter under investigation);</li> <li>open discouragement of use of Kurdish in the LAS school (but see Kurdish teacher!);</li> <li>use as family language (also among bilingual LAS case pupils)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use of varieties of Turkish in informal public in areas with high concentration of speakers (such as town quarter under investigation);</li> <li>open discouragement of use of Turkish in the LAS comprehensive school;</li> <li>use as family language (also among bilingual LAS case pupils)</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> KONDA (2006: 18).

<sup>2</sup> 2009: 1,6 Mio Turkish citizens in Germany; more than 100.000 naturalized (former) Turkish citizens; since 2005 newborns with German passport: Who of them speaks Turkish? Who doesn't?

## 1 Preliminaries: Mono- and bilingualism as a biographical fact of individual pupils

### The bilingual speaker

- acts linguistically with alternating representational structures (“languages”),
- where the switch from one language to the other
  - is (nearly) not limited structurally,
  - but is, basically, functional (in the sense of register differentiations) and systematic,
  - and inscribed biographically, shaped by the macro-, meso- and micro-level of language policy (see the reluctance to speak the family language in the LAS-test situation),
  - and is, through this biographic inscription, not neutral, but constitutive in the speech act, in that it is able to evoke different viewpoints of the same event.

## 1 Preliminaries: Mono- and bilingualism as a biographical fact of individual pupils

### Resources

- Identity-related switch between the two languages at disposal (~ material from two languages),
  - “Cross-linguistic phenomena”: Convergences between the languages, language contact phenomena, and reciprocal transfer (~material from one language, but strategies from two).
- **the central question: how much is the pupil’s use of his/her bilingual resources for school purposes shaped by language policy parameters?**

## 1 Preliminaries: Mono- and bilingualism as a biographical fact of individual pupils

### ... however: the impossibility of clear-cut differentiations between mono- and bilingual, and the problem of identification

- 'Monolingual' case pupil AND (Germany, 1st grade): both parents not born in Germany, but in Poland (mother) and Macedonia (father) respectively. AND is raised in the German language, which is not the first language of his parents; Polish and (particularly) Macedonian are present in the extended family; the older sister seems to have picked up some Macedonian;
- 'Bilingual' case pupil AZA (Germany, 7th grade): The first language of both parents is Kurdish, but parents depict Turkish as family language; AZA himself claims the family language to be German; Kurdish is present in the extended family; LAS-tests show no Kurdish and mediocre Turkish competences
- 'Monolingual' case pupil SÜM (Turkey, 1st grade): Comes from a Roma family; parents claim to be monolingual in Turkish and are outspoken with regard to their ethnic affiliation. – No data could be obtained in the LAS project with regard to the vitality of Romani in the Roma families of the neighborhood. Also the literature is controversial in this point.

## 2 Mono- versus bilingual pupils in terms of linguistic competences (in the school language, and as revealed through LAS-tests)

### **First graders in the German class, literate structures**

- The monolinguals appear slightly more successful in terms of literate structures than the bilinguals, in the beginning of the first year;
- however, the bilinguals seem to catch up at the end of the school year;
- with the exception of one structural domain, i.e. connectors, where the bilinguals continue showing (slightly) less literate structures than the monolinguals.

### **First graders in the Turkish class, literate structures**

- no clear distribution according to mono- versus bilinguality of the case pupils, with the exception of one structural domain, i.e. TMA-markers, where the bilinguals show less literate structures than the monolinguals and are less able to use them according to narrative genre.

## 2 Mono- versus bilingual pupils in terms of linguistic competences (in the school language and as revealed through LAS tests)

### **First graders German class, orthographic structures**

- The monolinguals seem slightly more successful than the bilinguals, without particular domains of orthography standing out

### **First graders Turkish class, orthographic structures**

- The bilinguals score significantly better in terms of capturing more complex syllable structures and vowel quantity.

## 2 Mono- versus bilingual pupils in terms of linguistic competences (in the school language and as revealed through LAS tests)

### **Seventh graders Germany, literate structures**

- no clear-cut differences between mono- and bilinguals in the narrative texts (spoken and written), but in certain structural domains of the (written) instruction text, where the monolinguals show more literate structures in the domain of complements.

### **Seventh graders Turkey, literate structures**

- No clear-cut differences between mono- and bilinguals.

## 2 Mono- versus bilingual pupils in terms of linguistic competences (in the school language and as revealed through LAS tests)

### **Seventh graders Germany, orthographic structures**

- In an overall tendency, the bilinguals are more successful in orthography than the monolinguals, less so (but still perceivable) in punctuation, more so in the other domains of orthography.

### **Seventh graders Turkey, orthographic structures**

- slightly better performance on average of the bilinguals, who contribute more to the (however not quite clear) overall improvement than the monolinguals.

### 3 Cross-linguistic phenomena / (possible) resources through bilingualism (as revealed in LAS-Tests)

#### First-graders:

- Cross-linguistic phenomena are apparent in the employment of connectives (Turkish-German in the German class), in the employment of TMA-markers (Kurdish-Turkish in the Turkish class), as well as in phonological awareness (syllable structure, vowel quantity – Kurdish-Turkish in the Turkish class);
- there seems a positive relationship between literate competences in L1 and literate competences in L2: reciprocal use of the competences in the one language in order to solve problems in the other (e.g., <ğ>!).

### 3 Cross-linguistic phenomena / (possible) resources through bilingualism (as revealed in LAS-Tests)

#### Seventh-graders

- The family language may exert an influence on personal stance/viewpoint in the text. However, this is confined to an oral mode (see Hilal, German class) resp. the LAS-test product (see Ege, Turkish class, who uses a different viewpoint when telling the same story in the class test).
- lesser attempts to use competences in the one language in order to solve problems in the other,
  - but see AZA in the German class and AYS in the Turkish class: Their cases might be taken to show that bilingual pupils which are confident regarding their orthographic competences in the school language are able to transfer these to their family language;
- differences between mono- and bilingual pupils (if generalization possible at all) concern literate structures in written school genre (instruction text), in the German class.

## 4 Mono- and bilingual pupils and their family background

### Educational background

- As a tendency, bilingual pupils come from less educated families than monolinguals in the German and in the Turkish class. The mothers are the main caretakers, and are particularly in the Turkish class often illiterate, and have highly reduced competences in the majority language, which means that parental studying support is in fact non-existing.
- Better educational achievements of bilingual parents in the German class can be attributed to schooling in Germany.
- It goes for all parents in general that the lower their educational degrees, the less informed they are on their children's school lives and the educational system as a whole.
- School support, also in terms of aspirations and career planning, is in the German case less pronounced in the bilingual families, while in the Turkish case, most of the parents are not able to provide this kind of ideational assistance regardless of their linguistic background.

## 4 Mono- and bilingual pupils and their family background

### Socio-economic background

- Measured by absolute criteria, the families of the case pupils in Turkey in general certainly do not reach the living standards of the families in Germany. Conditions as found in the respective city quarter in Istanbul hardly exist in Germany at all, if only because of the functioning welfare state that provides poor families with comparably adequate homes and incomes.
- Relatively speaking, however, many of the case families in the German LAS research come from the lower socio-economic stratum, as well.
- Since economically based residential segregation is not as pronounced in Germany as it is in Turkey, the economic situations of the case families in Germany are more heterogeneous especially in primary school – before the separation of pupils within the three-tiered school system.
- But in both countries, low educational degrees regularly translate into low economic status. In Turkey, this leads conspicuously more often to extremely high and unrealistic aspirations for the children's future careers.

## 5 Mono- and bilingual pupils in classroom interaction

### **The first languages of the bilingual pupils in school and classroom interaction – first grades (German and Turkish class)**

- complete exclusion of L1 (implicit in Germany, also explicit in Turkey);
- no interaction between bilingual pupils in their L1 witnessed during recess in Germany,
- ... witnessed rarely (in a situation of 'emergency' in Turkey (report p. 315)).

## 5 Mono- and bilingual pupils in classroom interaction

### The first languages of the bilingual pupils in school and classroom interaction – seventh grades (German and Turkish class)

- (implicit and explicit) exclusion of L1;
- inclusive incidents equal language with ethnicity (the Kurdish teacher in the Turkish school, the 'name'-incident in the 7th-grade, German class),
- ... or – in the German seventh grade – the bilingual composition of the class is addressed explicitly during the lesson, when mistakes occur which the teacher assigns to second-language phenomena, particularly in the case of grammatical gender.
  - However, in the German seventh grade, the bilingual pupils nonetheless do not seem to experience the implicitly suggested inferiority of their first language negatively; they rather seem to enjoy opportunities to own up to their being "special",
- interaction between bilingual pupils in their L1 witnessed during recess in both contexts.

## 5 Mono- and bilingual pupils in classroom interaction

### Lesson activities (only German first-grade context)

- while there are hardly any differences between the mono- and bilingual pupils in terms of lesson activities, the bilingual pupils in the first grade
  - are less attentive
  - participate less intensive and
  - are more frequently targets of the teacher's social correction activities than the monolinguals.

## 6 Mono- and bilingual pupils in teachers' and school approaches

### German class

- First grade: Linguistic and cultural differences between the pupils are deliberately ignored in classroom interaction; the teacher herself says that she does not think along these lines, but then again, in private talks with the researchers, she displays palpable reservations towards Osman who comes from a very religious Muslim family, and her school career prognoses indeed point at a tendential exclusion of bilingual pupils from advanced education.
- In the seventh grade, and in the comprehensive school in general: Linguistic diversity is accepted as a shaping feature of the school's clientele. Differences are occasionally identified in the classroom in terms of "typical" linguistic mistakes of GL2-speakers (negative connotation), but also by arts projects where bilingual pupils translate German poems into their first language, and by exhibiting newspaper clippings on successful bilingual pupils in the corridor of the teachers' wing. But also here, in backstage conversations with the researchers, the teachers mark especially the religious Islam as a problematic aspect of the multicultural school.

## 6 Mono- and bilingual pupils in teachers' and school approaches

### Turkish class

- Linguistic and cultural diversity does not play a role in immediate classroom interaction or in institutional context of the school at large – on the part of the teachers and the school representatives it is treated as non-existent.
- The “ethnic issue”, however, is quite prominent in the city quarter, in the case pupils' families, in the teachers' informal utterances towards the researchers, and in racist comments of the pupils.

## 7 Conclusions

- In both the German and the Turkish context, cross-linguistic phenomena are particularly apparent in the first grade. The pupils clearly use their bilingual resources for school-related purposes.
- In both contexts, cross-linguistic phenomena are (nearly?) not apparent any more in the seventh grade.
  - However, in both national contexts, the bilingual seventh-graders appear (slightly) more successful than the monolinguals in the domain of orthography: Does this point at a stronger meta-linguistic awareness of the bilinguals, and/or is it because orthography is less dependent on (monolingual) familiarity with the language?

## 7 Conclusions

- In both contexts, cross-linguistic phenomena are ignored, or if anything, reduced to ‘problems’ (which they then are, but not because of the factual situation [i.e., bilingualism], but because of the helplessness in terms of dealing with it).
- In the Turkish context, the mere fact of bilingualism is completely absent from the public school discourse, and reduced to the level of ethnic/racist approaches,
- while in German case, we find a recognition of the multicultural school clientele.
  - ... This does, however, not translate over to an awareness of linguistic issues, and is paired with “functional” arguments for negative ethnic or linguistic connotations, leading to, for example, by tendency negative school career prognoses for the bilingual pupils.

## 7 Conclusions

### A tentative generalization:

- The primary school creates a homogenising start. It is not able to cope with differences between pupils which are based on the linguistic resources of the bilingual pupils. Cultural and linguistic differences become part of a selection mechanism,
  - ... which in Germany is strengthened through the three-partition of the school types after the primary school.
- The seventh grade displays the outcome of the homogenisation: The pupils behave (more or less successfully) in conformity with it. Differences between pupils relate to differences with regard to educational and socio-economic background, but not anymore, or much less so, with regard to (multi-)linguistic background.
  - In Germany, this is stabilized also through the three-partite school system, in Turkey, it is stabilized through the stronger social segregation in town quarters.
- In Turkey, the homogenisation process is supported by the Kemalist ideology (which does not regard linguistic differences), in Germany, it is supported by the principle of equality of treatment (which does not know how to regard linguistic differences).

## 7 Conclusions

### **WHY should the school care more/differently?**

- .. because equal treatment of unequal clients leads to pronounced inequality (Radtke & Gomolla 2002, Maas 2008).

### **WHAT could school do differently?**

- ... concentrate more on the linguistic aspects of what it does, i.e. literacy instruction, and on the processes of the acquisition and development of literacy, and on what this means for pupils from different social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Maas 2008, Haueis 2011).

**Thank you for your attention!**

**Dinlediğiniz için teşekkürler!**

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