

LAS

Literacy Acquisition in Schools  
in the Context of Migration and Multilingualism

# Challenges of literacy acquisition in school in a comparative perspective 7th grade in Germany / Turkey

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# Outline

1. Components of literacy education in the seventh grade
2. Oral and written language in the classroom: Media and Content
3. Discourse Strategies as problematic link between interaction and literacy
4. Treatment of L1 and PUP adaptation

# 1. Components of literacy (German Class)

- Advanced literacy is treated as a superior educational goal presumably enabling the students
  - to understand and interpret literary texts with tools of text analysis
  - write their own texts in different text genres such as description, argument, summary
  - Applying rules of grammar and orthography on given sentences / words

# Literacy in German School

- the teacher's expectations are very demanding;
- he does not consider sufficiently the restricted literate competences of most of the students

## Work on grammar

- is on a very abstract level and does not include features of text structure explicitly (concepts: Attributes, locative Adverbials; examples; rules)
- takes the lion's share of many lessons
- at least sometimes directly connected to problems of text writing

# Conception of literacy (Turkish Class)

## The Teacher

- ... does not conceive of literacy as a far reaching goal, but sticks only to what is demanded in national exams (multiple choice questions) (p. 468, 520, 550)
- ... offers only predefined templates (‘what is a noun?’ ‘find the metaphors’) as mechanical access to problems of text analysis and grammar (p. 462-465)
- ... deals with grammar always completely detached from text comprehension / production
- ... does not teach techniques of how to write texts in different genres, although this is also part of the curriculum

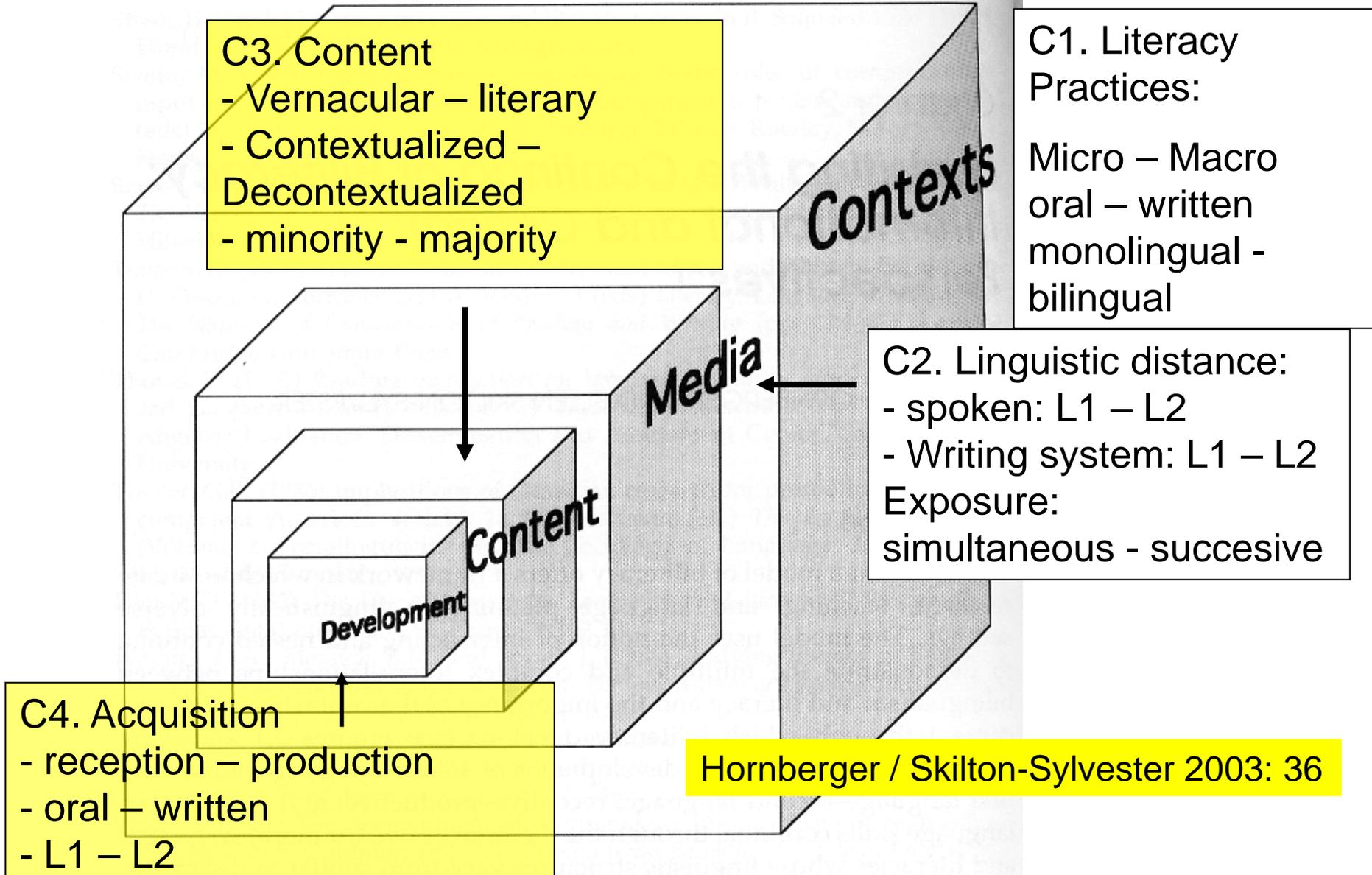


Figure 2.1 Nested relationships among the continua of biliteracy

## 2. Oral & written language in class (medial features)

1. Reading of texts of the text book by pupils aloud, sometimes by teachers
2. Questions & Answers: oral activity, sometimes based on notes written before; Differences in the use of more formal and colloquial language (students / teacher)
3. Blackboard: used as a log book of classroom discourse in Germany very often, in Turkey only for Grammar exercises (mostly teacher, sometimes pups)
4. taking notes: often demanded by teacher, but not actually practiced in both countries;
5. dictation (Turkey), copying text on blackboard (Germany)
6. Writing assignments in class

# Topics of ,language lessons‘ in both classes: structural features

7th grade in Germany	7th grade in Turkey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- description (persons, countries)</li><li>- arguing</li><li>- reporting events</li><li>- Play: A Christman Carol</li><li>- social roles; play script (Difference of Registers)</li><li>- Poetry: Ballads (Heine, Goethe, Degenhardt)</li><li>- Novel: Anna rennt</li><li>- Grammar: sentence constituents, verbal inflection, word classes, active / passive voice</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-rights and freedoms (focus on children's rights)</li><li>- Atatürkism</li><li>- nature and universe</li><li>- emotions and dreams</li><li>- habits (fables of Montaigne / La Fontaine)</li><li>- National Culture</li><li>- Grammar: sentence constituents, verbal inflection, word classes</li></ul>

# The problematic link: from interaction to literacy

1. The function of authorial writing is central to modern concepts of literacy in both national contexts
  2. Developing thoughts by interaction is a necessary stage in acquiring the function of an author
  3. Formal Features of text types help to structure thought; they have to be learnt explicitly
- Central role of classroom **discourse strategies** in terms of medium and structure

# 3. Dominating Discourse Strategy in German Class

'questioning - developing - instruction' = 'fragend-entwickelnder Unterricht': (p. 250-261)

- the teacher asks questions and collects contributions; elaborations and instructions are rare; (250f.)
- the topic is developed in the classroom discourse step by step, incrementally (,kleinschrittig')
- the blackboard is used in the form of a lesson logbook, with immediate discourse results being regularly recorded (p. 522)

# Dominating Discourse Strategies in Turkish Class

Reading texts from the text book and answering preformulated questions:

- the teacher follows the text book very close and uses even his teacher manual in the classroom
- the students read parts of the texts, the questions below them and their answers (sometimes written before in the notebooks as part of homework)
- sometimes, Q & A units occur
- the blackboard is seldom used (p. 523)

# Writing practices in class

## Germany

- Writing Assignments are made very explicit in form and content
- Primacy of content, but pupils often do not dispose of the techniques necessary
- Pupils act quite self confident, in contradiction to their real abilities

## Turkey

- During dictation, comprehension is postponed (p. 451f.)
- Primacy of form over content (p. 453): color of pencil, space in workbook to write on
- Formal features: Extra-points for proverb and epigraphs in essays (p. 454f.)

# Monolingual/Bilingual Education System

## Turkey

- Centralised school system
- All schools are designed for Turkish L1 speakers
- Minority schools
  - Lausanne Treaty, 1923:  
Minorities: Greek, Armenian and Jewish population
- International schools
- Private foreign schools: English, German, French, Italian.

## Germany

- North-Rhine Westfalia
- ENG-GER & FR-GER bilingual programs
- 1 private Turkish secondary school in Köln
- Mother tongue education in primary schools
  - TUR integrated in the curriculum
  - 3-5 hrs/week
  - TEA initiative, number of parents demanding mother tongue education
- Mother tongue instruction in secondary schools

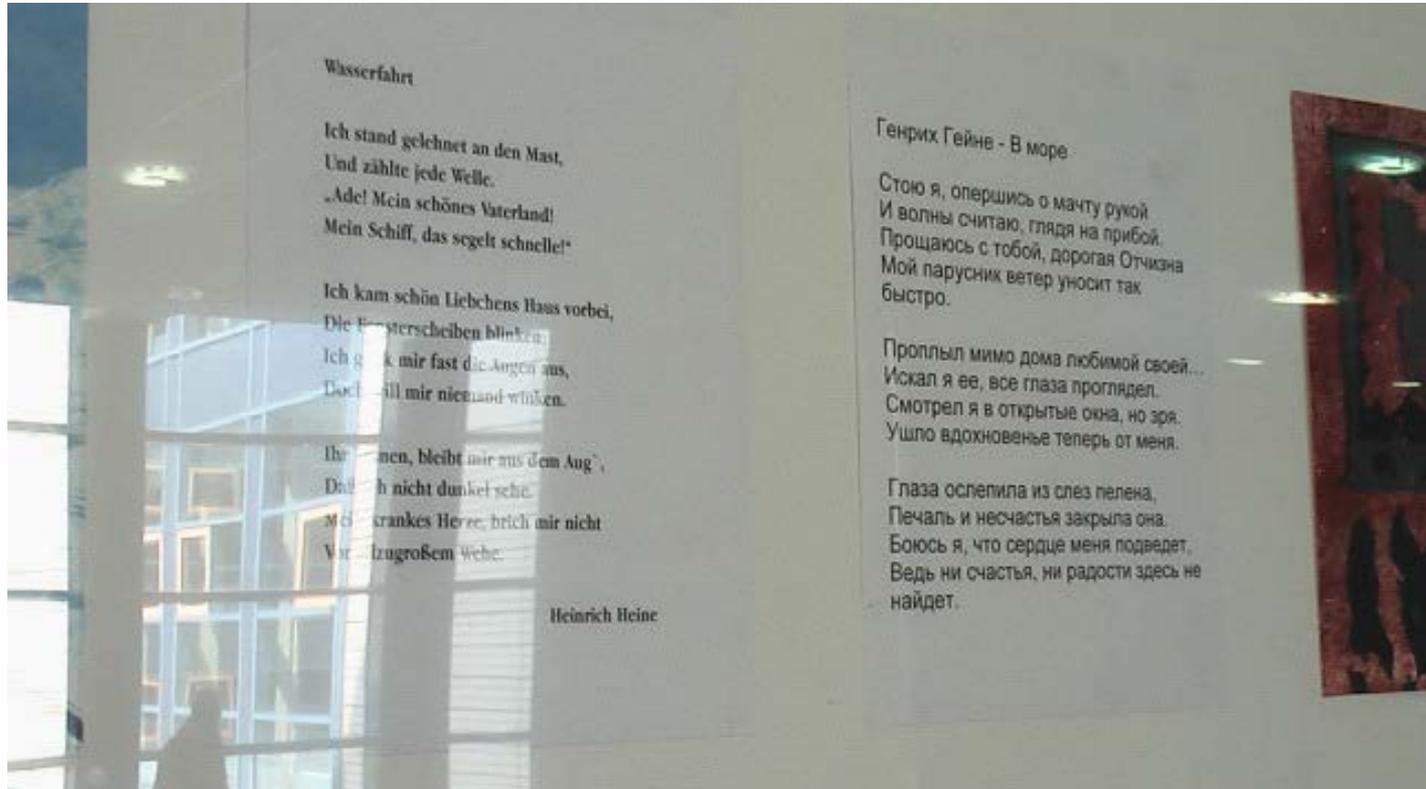
# L1 exclusion in the German school

- actual speaking of particularly Turkish among PUPs is actually forbidden on the school premises
- penal sanction for talking Turkish in the classroom: *“I shall not speak Turkish in the classroom.”*
- underlying assumption: actively promoting the use of German

# PUP adaptation to L1 exclusion

- PUPs seem to have accepted the rule as they do not contest its application
- Turkish L1 PUPs use Turkish only in sidestep talk with their fellow students, which is sometimes audible in the recording
- during the break, groups of pupils sometimes gather; if there are only speakers of Turkish in such a group, Turkish is used

# L1 inclusion in the German school



A Poem of Heinrich Heine, and a pupil's Russian Translation of it, displayed in the entrance lobby of the comprehensive school

# The gender of Turkish first names

## Introduction

202 \*TEA: ich möchte jetzt äh@i dass **türkische schüler** oder schülerinnen # äh@i ganz seltene türkische vornamen einmal laut und deutlich nennen .

I'd like that Turkish pupils should – loudly and clear - tell very rare Turkish first names

205 \*TEA: irgendeinen vornamen den es in der klasse mit sicherheit nicht gibt, den es ganz selten gibt

just a first name that doesn't exist in the class, that is very rare.

207 \*TEA: nur den vornamen sagen .

just tell the name

208 \*TEA: hamit . (after handrising)

210 \*HAM: äh@i Zeki

# Turkish first names (ctd.)

211 \*TEA: äh@i jetzt möchte ich  
**die deutschen** fragen .

Now I want to ask the Germans

212 \*TEA: ist das ein junge  
oder ist das ein mädchen ?

Is this a boy or a girl?

213 \*NIL: was, wie heißt das noch  
mal ?

What, what is it, once more!

214 \*HAM: Zeki .

215 \*NIL: mädchen . [girl]

216 \*TEA: ist das n mädchen ?

Is that a girl?

217 \*HAM: das 's n junge .

It's a boy

218 \*TEA: ist n junge . [It's a boy]

## Comment:

- The pupils in the class are not very often addressed as ‚Germans‘ or ‚Turks‘
- The teacher creates a context, in which ‚Germans‘ could feel difficulties in knowing the gender of Turkish names. NIL does not know (215) and has to be corrected by HAM (218)

# Turkish first names (ctd.)

231 \*TEA: so äh@i die elif hat  
ne sehr vernünftige frage  
gestellt .

Elif asked me a very sound  
question

232 \*TEA: die hat mich gefragt.  
She asked me:

Comment:

→ The teacher creates understanding  
for an alleged difficulty of the Turks to  
identify the gender of rare German  
first name (Gertrud): 234

→ In doing that, he restates the issue  
of uncommon names in national or  
even cultural terms.

233 \*TEA wer ist gertrud . (\*1)

Who is Gertrud?

234 \*TEA: die deutschen wissen  
das natürlich besser .

The Germans know that better, as a  
matter of fact

235 \*TEA: ist gertrud eine sie  
oder ein er ? [is Gertrud male or  
female]

236 \*TEA:valerie . (after handrising)

237 \*VAL: eine /sie . [female]

238 \*TEA: sie . [female]

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\*1 Gertrud is a character of  
the novel that appears in the  
chapter that had to be  
summarized

# Treatment of L1 in the Turkish school

- No mentioning of Kurdish *at all* during the LAS research
- Kurdish excluded both in lesson content and also in recess
- 1st grader TEA: *'KAD speak Turkish!'*
- For the 1st grader TEA the restricting potentials are related to lack of intelligence and has nothing to do with monolingual education system.
- English TEA: *'Kurds cannot learn English.'*

# PUP adaptation to the exclusion of L1

- PUP whispering in IV1's ear about the Kurdish course she attends: at a very early age PUPs are aware of the fact that their L1 is discriminated against
- At a lesson about 'the importance of our language' EGE asks '*Which language?*' → TEA has the opportunity to use this space an enabling potential, but does not.

# Recap

## Turkey

- official denial of L1
  - PUPs pledge
  - Article 42 of the Constitution prohibits the teaching of any language other than Turkish as a first language in schools

## Germany

- Official Appreciation of Multilingualism (7th grade)
- neglect of / indifference to L1 in everyday life
- aspects of multilingualism and multiculturalism are sometimes addressed and processed in a pedagogically and didactically purposeful manner

# To conclude...

- When we limit the discourse in official school contexts to monolingual, written, literary texts from the majority culture, the richness of multilingual, oral discourse, vernacular writing and literary texts from minority cultures is left outside of the school walls.
- Although actors and practices at the traditionally powerful ends of the continua are currently privileged, *they need not be*.
- By way of encouraging rather than inhibiting the PUPs' bringing in their personal experiences and using their L1 we can open up a space for PUPs where they are granted voice and agency, which seems to be the only ethically acceptable solution in today's world.

(Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2003)

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