

*Language and literacy in migration context
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Acquisition of literacy in the context of multilingualism



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1. The LAS-Project: Meet Osman
2. Definition and dimensions of Literacy
3. Constellations (L&WL) in the acquisition of literacy

1) The LAS- Project

Sürig et al. 2016,
Schroeder & Sürig (eds.) 2020



LAS-Projekt: empirical object of investigation

- One year observation of pupils in first grade and seventh grade, in a neighborhood with high linguistic diversity in Turkey (Istanbul) and Germany (Ruhrgebiet),
- observation (video-recording of lessons) of 12 pupils per classroom,
 - six monolinguals (Turkish bzw. German)
 - six multilinguals (Kurdish-Turkish bzw. Turkish-German)
- written products of these pupils as produced during observed lessons,
- competence in literacy of these pupils (literate structures, orthographic structures) in their family languages *and* school languages, based on tests,
- social and educational family backgrounds of these pupils.

Meet a LAS-case pupil from Germany: Osman, 1st grader

Socio-cultural background

- Osman is the child of a middle-class family of Turkish descend
- Father moved to Germany with his family when he was a child, mother came to Germany through marriage
- Osman has three older siblings
- Family lives in a neighborhood, where Turkish is also used in informal public

Language use

- The siblings use Turkish and German among themselves
- The parents use Turkish among themselves and also when talking to the children

Meet a LAS-case pupil from Germany: Osman, 1st grader

Literacy

- In Osman's home, reading and writing mostly takes place in Turkish.
- The mother reports that she occasionally read books to Osman when he was little

Kindergarten/school

- Osman entered Kindergarten pretty late – he was five years old,
- Osman is now in his first year of school in a German primary state school, situated in the neighborhood where he lives

The first elicitation

- Takes place in the second month of school; as almost all of his classmates, Osman cannot read or write at this stage
- Osman is shown a short silent film “The Lost Envelope” (3 min.), narrating a critical incident
- and is first asked to retell the film
- following that, the elicitor asks Osman to dictate what he has just narrated (so his story can be read by others)

... See an excerpt for the narrated vs. the dictated version:

Osman: Excerpt from narrated vs. dictated version of „The Lost Envelope“

Sürig et al. 2016: 79

Narration	Dictation
<p>21 dann habm sie zu krankenhaus gefahrn</p> <hr/> <p>then have-3PL they to hospital drive(PPTCP)</p> <hr/> <p>‘then they drove to the hospital’</p>	<p>83 und dann sind sie nach krankenhaus gefahrn</p> <hr/> <p>and then be(3PL) they to hospital drive(PPTCP)</p> <hr/> <p>‘and then they drove to the hospital’</p>
<p>23 und sagt so [?] in den in krankenhaus so krankenhausfrau sagten sie was</p> <hr/> <p>and say so in the(ACC.M) in hospital so hospital.woman say-PST.3PL they something</p> <hr/> <p>‘and say so in the hospital so hospital woman they said something’</p>	<p>87 dann hat sie mit dem krankenhausfrau gesprochen</p> <hr/> <p>then have(3SG) she with the(DAT.M) hospital.woman speak(PPTCP)</p> <hr/> <p>‘and then she talked to the hospital woman’</p>

What's the difference?

In the dictation we find

- concern for grammatical correctness (line 21 vs. 83),
- elimination of repetition and discourse particles
- stronger orientation towards the linguistic form of a sentence (lines 23 vs. 87)

- Osman might still in the progress of building up his early second language German,
- but he (already) has an implicit knowledge concerning the requirements of literacy, in his second month of school.

2) Literacy (Sting 2003)

- Literacy means the ability to use written, printed and digital information in order to participate in social processes, to realise self-chosen goals and to further develop one's own knowledge and opportunities (cf. Sting 2003: 321).

Literacy: dimensions (KOCH & ÖSTERREICHER 1994, MAAS 2008, 2010)

- ***Situational/communicatively:*** characterised by the formal-public register; characterised through **decontextualized communication**, which is not defined by the immediate context but symbolically, through textual standards;
- ***cognitively:*** characterised by the fact that the speakers / writers use language not only to verbalize thoughts but adapt and further develop them: Script is an external storage, which can be edited;
- ***structurally:*** characterised by retarded language production and a focus on linguistic form; the result is a higher complexity, elaboration and differentiation of linguistic forms (→ **literate structures**, cf. also Sürig et al. 2016);
- ... and ***medial:*** characterised by the possibility to be represented through a writing system and its analytical-abstract relation to language.

Acquisition of literacy

- Acquisition of the communicative and cognitive functions of writing in social context:
 - decontextualised (and through this: monological) use of language;
 - the written text as external memory,
- acquisition of literate structures,
- acquisition of textual knowledge: rules and standards of text types concerning coherence and cohesion,
- acquisition of spelling: a specific script and its analytic-abstract relation to language:

Components of a writing system: what needs to be learned (here: German)

- **graphic**: motoric aspects of the production of letters of a specific (here: alphabetic) script
- **phonographic**: representation of sounds
 - syllabic
 - segmental (the individual phoneme)
- **logographic**: representation of words/morphemes
 - use of the *spatium* ("empty space between words")
 - distribution of minuscule and majuscule ("upper and lower case letters")
 - use of elements of logographic cohesion: apostrophe, hyphen, ...
 - rate of invariant representation of morphemes, i.e. marking of morphological consistency
- **textual**: punctuation

Components of a writing system: what needs to be learned (here: German)

- **graphic**: motoric aspects of the production of letters of a specific (here: alphabetic) script
- **phonographic**: presentation of sounds
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analytical approach to language!

Constellations (L&WL) in the acquisition of literacy

Four acquisition constellations (see Weth & Schroeder 2022: 427ff.), three of which, namely "L1=WL2", "L2=WL1" and "L2=WL2" are language contact constellations:

	First written language (WL1)	Second written language (WL2)
First language (L1)	L1=WL1	L1=WL2
Second language (L2)	L2=WL1	L2=WL2

Figure 4: Schematic representation of language-acquisition settings as combinations of first/second language and first/second written language

Constellations (L&WL) in the acquisition of literacy

- The constellation **L1=WL1** is not a language contact constellation, but describes learners who are alphabetised in their first language (L1). These learners must learn to detach themselves from their oral language resources in order to analyse how the familiar oral features such as phonological and prosodic patterns correlate with their representation in the corresponding writing system (WL1). Structurally, a "language expansion" occurs (Maas 2010, Dahmen & Weth 2018).
- This constellation applies to learners (pupils) who speak German as their first language and are introduced to written language/writing at school.

Weth & Schroeder 2022: 427ff.

Constellations (L&WL) in the acquisition of literacy

- The constellation **L2=WL1** describes learners whose first literacy acquisition takes place in their second language. These learners sometimes acquire the language of literacy instruction in parallel with the writing system of that language.
- Bilingual or multilingual literacy learners differ from monolingual literacy learners in that they (can) additionally rely on phonological and/or morphological information from their first language when learning to write in the second language (L2).
- Examples of this are children who have a dominant command of a language other than German when they start school, or non-literate adult immigrants in

Weth & Schroeder 2022: 427ff.

Constellations (L&WL) in the acquisition of literacy

- The constellation **L2=WL2** characterises typical foreign language learners. They have acquired literacy in the dominant language at school and are now learning the new foreign language writing system (WL2) in parallel with the language (L2) itself.
- This often involves a transfer of (e.g. orthographic) regularities from the first acquired written language to the foreign language to be acquired - examples of this can be found in English, French, ... foreign language lessons (for French Weth 2010). The concept of → **matrix spellings** (Weth et al. 2020) can be partially applied to these examples.

Weth & Schroeder 2022: 427ff.

Constellations (L&WL) in the acquisition of literacy

- The constellation **L1=WL2** often applies to writing in minority languages/heritage languages. Speakers of these languages acquire their language(s) orally in the family and do not acquire their first language in this (minority) language, but in the dominant language of the school/society, which is their second language. Some of these learners also take part in literacy lessons in their first language and acquire this language as WL2.
- Studies show how learners in this constellation use features of their first written language (WL1) to write their first language (L1) as WL2 (Maas & Mehlem 2003, Maas 2008, Weth 2015, Sürig et al. 2016, Schroeder & Sürig 2020).
- Learners use their linguistic and literary resources from WL1 to construct a second writing system (→ matrix spellings).

Weth & Schroeder 2022: 427ff.

Constellations (L&WL) in the acquisition of literacy

- **Matrix spelling:** Writing in one language with the graphematic matrix of another (Weth et al. 2020).

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