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Home-literacy practices and academic language skills of migrant pupils

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Abstract

The main objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between home-literacy activities and other literacy-related practices, including oral activities, such as parent-child interaction and communication in leisure time, and the academic language skills of adolescent pupils with an immigrant background. The study involved 164 adolescent pupils with and 190 adolescent pupils without an immigrant background from schools in Hamburg, Germany. Information concerning students' language practices and home-literacy activities was collected via questionnaire. A validated language test was used to assess pupils' productive academic language skills in German. This article describes the migrant pupils' reported language use during literacy-related and oral activities. The results show that multilingual practices during various activities are usual in migrant pupils' lives, but that different languages assume different functions: the home language seems to be important for interaction with parents on family issues and migration-specific subjects, while German is used more in literacy activities (e.g. reading) and literacy-orientated issues (e.g. discussing social issues). However, the relationship between home-literacy practices and academic language skills requires further analysis.

1. Introduction

In the city of Hamburg more than one third of school pupils have a migration background (Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung, 2011) – a figure that is set to rise over the next few decades. For the linguistic everyday interaction of these children, both German and their family language(s) play an important role, particularly in families where one or both parents were born abroad. Yet these languages do not compete. Rather, they complement each other as they are used in situation-specific contexts. More precisely, in multilingual contexts the role of the German language

is never challenged; the home language(s) spoken by migrant groups co-exists with German rather than replace it (Gogolin, Neumann & Roth, 2003). Gogolin (1994) terms such multilingual experiences 'lebensweltliche Mehrsprachigkeit' (*multilingual realities*), meaning that the daily language use of migrant groups is marked by switching between two or more languages acquired in a migration context. Vertovec (2007) accounts for this phenomenon through the concept of 'super-diversity', encompassing the social, cultural and language diversity of a given society in which multilingualism is a distinctive feature. 'Super-diversity' is further understood as the diversification of diversity, whereby diversity cannot be understood in terms of multiculturalism (the presence of multiple cultures in one society) alone. At the basis of this paradigm shift are two sets of developments that can be observed in Europe and worldwide: i) the changing patterns and itineraries of migration into Europe and continued migration by the same people within Europe and ii) as a result, people continually bringing with them different resources and experiences from a variety of places in their everyday interactions and encounters with others and institutions. There is, however, a lack of studies that deliver insight into the diverse and multiple language use of adolescent migrants. Although most studies ask students which language(s) are spoken at home (e.g. PISA), they do not collect data concerning different language use in diverse activities and spheres. For this reason, the present study focuses on adolescent migrants' language use and language practices during different oral and literacy activities.

The issue of migration-induced multilingualism is of particular interest when analysing the situation of migrants in European educational systems. According to international monitoring studies such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) or PIRLS/IGLU (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study/Internationale Grundschul-Lese-Untersuchung), migrant minority students fail to attain comparable educational outcomes to their monolingual peers, resulting in migrant groups occupying lower status positions in society. This is particularly true in Germany where the gap between the performance of monolinguals and their migrant peers is one of the widest in the PISA sample (cf. Klieme et al., 2010). The German PISA consortium suggests that proficiency in the German language (measured as reading proficiency) at a grade-appropriate level is a decisive factor for the educational achievement of migrant pupils. Furthermore, the PISA results indicate that reading proficiency in German cumulatively influences achievement in mathematics and the natural sciences (Baumert & Schümer, 2002).

However, there are several other explanations for this performance disparity. Some research accounts for the gap as a consequence of structural failure or indirect institutional discrimination within the school system (Gomolla & Radtke, 2002). Others, drawing on Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, claim that migrant

families generally have a lower socioeconomic status and therefore fewer resources with regard to education, cultural participation, formal skills and qualifications, thus influencing pupils' performance (Baumert & Schümer, 2001; Klieme et. al., 2010). A third explanation focuses on language used at school, the so-called 'academic language' (Cummins, 1979). In Germany, the FÖRMIG programme (Förderung von Kindern und Jugendlichen mit Migrationshintergrund)[1] introduced the term 'Bildungssprache' to refer to this special language register (Gogolin, 2009; Gogolin & Lange, 2011). 'Bildungssprache' is broader than reading proficiency and comprises the whole act of speaking in educational contexts to include written texts, oral interactions, the teacher's classroom language and so on. Hence, one of the reasons for the underachievement of migrant students can be traced to a lack of competence in dealing with and acquiring academic language in the second language (Duarte, 2011; Gogolin, 2009).

Further research has revealed a positive relationship between home environmental factors (such as reading activities, parent-child interaction and the quality of family language use) and (academic) language development (Leseman & de Jong, 1998, 2001; Leseman, Scheele, Mayo & Messer, 2007, 2009, 2010; Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman & Hemphill, 1991). For instance, children who participate more frequently in home-literacy activities show higher (academic) language skills. Home-literacy activities, such as shared book reading and related types of parent-child conversations, are characterized by the use of a rich vocabulary, complex and information-dense sentences, and semantically interconnected discourse as the kind of language use that is generally thought to stimulate language development (Huttenlocher, Vasilyeva, Cymerman & Levine, 2002; Leseman et al., 2007; Weizman & Snow, 2001). However, these studies mostly focus on early childhood or primary school pupils. The multilingual language practices and home-literacy activities of migrant adolescents have not yet been extensively researched, although a relationship between language use, reading practices and academic language skills is assumed (cf. Klieme et al., 2010; Bos et al., 2003). Language development or development in general is declared to be a lifelong process that is not completed at a certain age (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Lowie, Verspoor & de Bot, 2009).

Regarding the advantages of bi- and multilingualism, it has been noted that bilinguals' combined first and second language (L1 and L2) vocabulary often exceeds that of monolinguals (Oller, Pearson, & Cobo-Lewis, 2007; Vermeer, 1992). The conceptual knowledge basis built up in L1 facilitates the learning of L2 (Cummins, 1991; Genesee, Paradis & Crago, 2004; Kroll & de Groot, 2005). And being bilingual brings cognitive advantages, such as enhanced metalinguistic awareness and executive control that supports L2 learning (Bialystok & Senmann, 2004; Bialystok, 2007). Marked by the transfer of knowledge and skills from L1 to

L2, such positive bilingualism is not limited to favourable socioeconomic, cultural and political circumstances, or to older students (Verhoeven, 2007).

For this reason, and against the background of the concepts of 'super-diversity' (Vertovec, 2007) and 'lebensweltliche Mehrsprachigkeit' (*multilingual realities*) (Gogolin, 1994), it is necessary to consider language practices and activities in all of the languages that adolescent migrants use. This article aims to reveal migrant pupils' multilingual language use according to different home-literacy activities that are assumed to be positively related to academic language skills. To this end, a questionnaire concerning the language practices and language use during home-literacy activities of pupils with and without a migration background was developed. Features of academic language and how these skills have been tested are described below.

2. Academic language skills

The description of academic language in the German context is derived from the 'Functional Grammar' approach (FG) in linguistics (cf. Halliday, 1994; Cummins, 2000; Schleppegrell, 2004). Gogolin & Lange (2011) deploy the term 'Bildungssprache' to denote a special register that, at the lexical, morpho-syntactic and textual levels, differs fundamentally from other registers (such as those of everyday interpersonal communication). It is especially suited to convey (in spoken and written form) cognitively complex information in context-poor or decontextualized circumstances to a distant or unfamiliar audience that expects truthfulness, expertise and authority. Furthermore, academic language consists of technical terms and specific elements of the 'language of schooling' (Schleppegrell, 2004), such as the vocabulary of the school and school subjects. Although ubiquitous, academic language is of particular importance in the educational context and for educational achievement as it is used in instructional settings, essays, textbooks and exams. It is the "language" used by and expected from the "successful pupil" (Gogolin, 2009, p. 270). Academic language requirements increase in line with the advancing educational biography, especially when school instruction and subjects became more differentiated.

Schleppegrell (2004), using Halliday's 'Functional Grammar' framework, analysed the English linguistic features of academic language in instruction situations, tasks, essays, and textbooks in primary and secondary school, and compared these with the linguistic characteristics of ordinary interactive-interpersonal communication. At the lexical level, academic language is characterized by the use of specific, technical words (e.g. 'the industrial revolution'), by lexical and grammatical strategies of condensing information ('the tiny, old, worried history teacher'), and by the

use of explicit and specific references to time and space ('In the 18th century, in the capital of France, the guillotine …') in order to establish a shared frame of reference with the audience. As a result, academic discourse consists of relatively information-dense texts that contain more content words than function words, when compared to utterances in interactive talk.

Based on Schleppergrell's description, a systematisation of German academic language features at different levels was conducted (Reich, 2008; Gogolin & Lange, 2011). As in English, discursive features of German academic language are related to the framing and mode of academic language, for instance the determination of turn-taking and speaker's role, a high content of monological features (e.g. lectures, presentations and essays), technical kinds of texts (e.g. protocols, reports and argumentations) and stylistic conventions (e.g. objectivity, logical structure and appropriate length of texts). Similar to Schleppegrell's depiction, features at the lexical and semantic levels include characteristics of vocabulary and individual meanings, such as differentiation and abstract expressions, prefix verbs, including inseparable prefixes and reflexive pronouns and nominalisations, as well as technical terms. Characteristics of academic language at the syntactical level refer to the distinctive features of word order, such as the explicit indication of cohesion, the hypotaxis, impersonal expressions, light-verb constructions and extensive attributes. As a consequence, for the present study, a language assessment was used that measures the productive academic language skills of the students. Following the descriptions above, the language assessment considers particular academic language characteristics on the lexical, semantic and syntactical level that will be described below.

As mentioned above, attempts to explain the performance gap between pupils with a migration background and pupils without a migration background are based on low academic language skills of the former group. The discrepancy between the type of language used daily by migrant pupils in their second language and the sort of language that is actually required at school is one of the explanations often mentioned in the literature (cf. Bernstein, 1977; Cummins, 2000; Gogolin, Kaiser & Roth, 2004). In second language acquisition, most authors agree that the attainment of a high level of proficiency in academic language in the second language will be facilitated when the proficiency exists in the first language (Bialystok, 2004, 2009; Cummins, 2000; Duarte, 2011; Scheele, 2010). In addition, it seems to be important to uncover to what extent the home environment influences academic language skills. In the context of migration, this also requires a deeper insight into cross-language transfer and to examine whether literacy practices in the heritage language promote academic language skills in the second language.

3. Environmental factors influencing academic language skills

For the purposes of the present study, the results of previous research on the relationship between home environmental factors and academic language skills are particularly important. They reveal a strong relationship between home-language practices and literacy activities and (academic) language development (Leseman et al., 2007, 2009; Snow et al., 1991). Although they focus mostly on early childhood, the findings are nonetheless important for investigations among adolescents. Other studies have revealed firm relationships between home-literacy activities and children's language development, academic language skills and school achievement in reading and writing (Leseman & de Jong, 2001; Leseman & van Tuijl, 2006; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Here, home literacy refers to diverse activities in families that involve literacy products and technologies, including, among others, shared book reading and name writing with children, but also adults' own reading and writing behaviour that may serve as a model for children. Home literacy, according to several authors, also includes forms of spoken language. This concerns genres of spoken language that follow to some extent the linguistic features of written language (Hoff, 2006; Olson, 1991). Frequently studied examples include personal conversations, oral storytelling, and discussions on general interest topics like visiting the zoo or the theatre that might also occur in books, newspapers, and magazines.

Current research aims to identify aspects of home literacy which might contribute to children's development and learning. Evans, Shaw & Bell (2000) and Sénéchal & Lefevre (2002) have found that home-literacy activities make children aware of the use of arbitrary symbols (letters, written words, printed texts) to code spoken language. Acquiring knowledge of letters of the alphabet starts with observing parents' written activities and is strongly related to frequently occurring practices of pointing to the letters of the child's first name and demonstrating how to write them. Letter knowledge, along with well-developed phonological skills, facilitates initial reading in first and second grade (Schneider, Roth & Ennemoser, 2000). Home literacy, including particular forms of spoken language interactions in the family, is presupposed to provide children with a special kind of language input at the lexical, grammatical, and textual levels (Leseman et al., 2007). Academic language is thus a convenient term in this context as many linguistic features are shared with the language in instruction situations and textbooks in school and with formal language use in newspapers, books, and official media. A longitudinal study involving monolingual Dutch, bilingual Turkish-Dutch and bilingual Moroccan-Dutch children, aged 3-6 years, offers evidence that home-literacy activities play an important role in acquiring academic language skills (Leseman et al. 2007; Scheele,

2010). The results show that the bilingual children who have been primarily socialized and have had literacy activities in their heritage language achieve lower scores in academic language skills in Dutch compared to their monolingual peers. The findings at entry to kindergarten indicate that the Turkish-Dutch children acquired their Dutch academic language skills at a faster rate than their Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch peers. These results indicate a positive cross-language transfer based on a common underlying proficiency of academic language skills (Cummins, 1991). In contrast the Moroccan-Dutch children performed lowest in Dutch as well as in their heritage academic language skills. Their heritage language Tarifit-Berber is non-scripted, so the parents had limited opportunities for home-literacy activities with the child. Bialystok (2009) shows similar evidence where migrant pupils show positive transmission effects when they engage in literacy activities in their home language.

Based on the state of art, Wasik & Hendrickson (2004) propose a model containing home-literacy variables that influence children's (academic) language development. This model is transferable to the adolescent group and forms the basis of the present study. The model includes several factors: (1) parental characteristics, (2) child characteristics, (3) the home environment and (4) parent-child relationship. Parental characteristics include the migration background of the family, socioeconomic status, as well as parental beliefs and educational aspirations for the child. The cognitive and language proficiencies, engagement and motivation of the child are relevant child characteristics that influence (academic) language development. The home environment includes several literacy-related activities, such as reading, parent-child interaction on different topics, and the use of media. The parent-child relationship mediates home-literacy activities and interaction. A supportive and secure atmosphere is essential and influences interpersonal interaction.

These relevant aspects of language socialisation have been theorised in Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986) ecological model of human development. His theory looks at a child's development within the context of the system of relationships that form his or her environment. Bronfenbrenner defines complex environmental 'layers', each having an effect on a child's development. Interacting factors in the child's maturing biology, her/his immediate family and community environment and the societal landscape fuel and steer her/his development. The 'mesosystem layer' relates to interactions in the microsystems – parents interact with teachers in school, neighbours interact with each other. The child is not directly involved in the mesosystems, but is nonetheless affected by them. The 'exosystem layer' relates to the broader community in which the child lives (e.g. the workplace of parents). Though the child may not have direct contact with it, the systems affect the child's development and socialization, such as his socioeconomic background. The

'macrosystem layer' may be considered the outermost layer in the child's environment. While not a specific framework, this layer is comprised of cultural values, customs and laws. The effects of larger principles defined by the macrosystem have a cascading influence throughout the interactions of all other layers. For example, it includes the prestige of the languages spoken by migrants in society. For those migrants who speak a language of low standing in society, there may be fewer opportunities for home-literacy practices in their heritage language. The chronosystem encompasses the dimension of time as it relates to a child's environments. Elements within this system can be either external (such as the timing of a parent's death) or internal (such as migration or the transition from school to work). The 'microsystem layer', the smallest of the contexts in which the child is embedded, is made up of the environment where the child lives and moves. The people and institutions the child interacts with make up the microsystem. Examples include immediate family members, schoolteachers and peers.

The current study focuses on the microsystem of the parent-child relationship to include parent-child interaction, home environmental factors, and activities in leisure time. Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner introduces the term 'molar activities' to describe ongoing behaviour with a momentum of its own and perceived by participants to have meaning or intent in a given setting (e.g. reading, playing and so on). These activities play an important role regarding (language) development. As daily activities, they are perceived to be causes as well as consequences of development. The current study thus looks into adolescent pupils' home-literacy activities, which are conceived as molar activities that offer opportunities for skill acquisition and development. Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner's model is useful to describe language practices at the microsystem level with parents (e.g. during parent-child interaction), multilingual home-literacy practices, and language practices in leisure time (e.g. when meeting peers, doing sport, and so on). As previously mentioned, most studies that focus on the relationship between home literacy, language practices and academic language skills, involve children and pupils at primary school. The aim of the present study is to investigate these factors for the adolescent migrant group. To date, there is a lack of descriptions concerning different language use and language practices at home and in leisure time that may positively relate to academic language skills. Following Bronfenbrenner's theory, the focus of the present study lies on the microsystem of adolescent migrant pupils with the aim of depicting their multilingual practices in various settings.

4. The current study

The main objective of this article is to enquire into language use during home-literacy activities, other literacy-related activities, and oral activities, among adolescent migrant pupils. In accordance with Wasik & Hendrickson's model (2004), the home environment as it concerns literacy-related activities will be described. Due to the research gap on language use and language practices among adolescent migrants, this study provides an initial description of migrant pupils' language practices during literacy and oral activities at the microsystem. Bronfenbrenner's 'molar activities' (1979, 1986) are of particular importance here. Language use during parent-child interaction, reading and leisure time will be described relative to different genres and topics. It is assumed that migrant pupils' language practices are typically multilingual and diverse and marked by situation- or topic-specific language choice. Additionally, and according to previous research results, it can be hypothesised that migrant pupils probably have reduced social and cultural capabilities at the macrosystem level. However, the relationship between language use during home-literacy activities and academic language skills has to be further analyzed.

5. Methodology

In order to investigate the language practices of migrant pupils, the present study deployed a quantitative cross-sectional design; data was collected via questionnaire and through language assessment.

Subjects. The study involved 354 pupils. 164 pupils with a migration background (defined as having at least one parent born in a foreign country; Statistisches Bundesamt, 2011) and 190 pupils without an immigration background were assessed. These pupils were attending the 9th or 10th grade at three schools[2] in Hamburg, Germany. The average age of the students was 16.2 years and 195 males and 159 females took part. The schools were selected according to the social index (KESS-Index)[3] in order to ensure a wide achievement spectrum. The pupils were tested during the school day for 90 minutes in their classroom.

Academic Language Skills. The language assessment test, 'Fast Catch Bumerang' (Reich, Roth & Döll, 2009), was used to assess pupils' productive academic language skills in German. For the purposes of this study, the pupils were asked to write an article on how a boomerang is constructed, based on a picture sequence. Evaluation criteria comprise task accomplishment (cognitive measure), text production competence (design and structure of the text, addressing), (technical) vocabulary (nouns, verbs, adjectives), and conjunctions. Evaluated features of academic language, based on the theoretical descriptions above, are nominalizations

(e.g.: 'Der Bau des Bumerangs' [*The construction of the boomerang*]), compound words (e.g.: 'Die Stichsäge' [*The jigsaw*]), attributive constructions (e.g.: 'Die markierten Bereiche' [*The marked areas*]), passive voice (e.g.: 'Es wird ausgeschnitten' [*Will be cut*]), participles (e.g.: 'Der geschliffene Bumerang' [*The sanded boomerang*]) and non-personal expressions (e.g.: 'Dann muss man ihn drehen' [*Then one must turn it around*]). Cronbach's alpha of the test was .80.

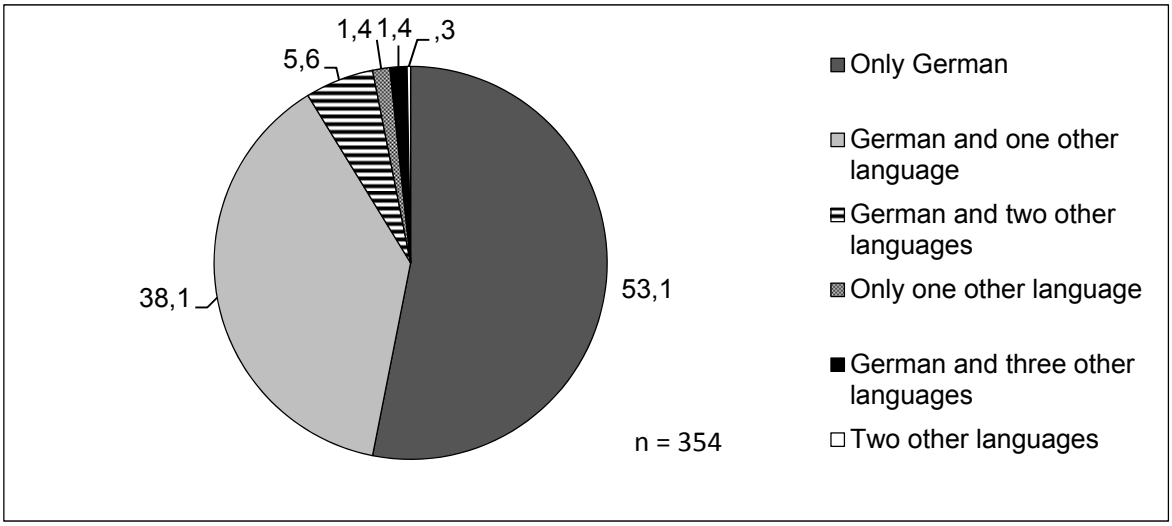
Home language and literacy. Information on language practices and home-literacy activities was collected via questionnaire. A number of standardized questions addressed the home learning environment, including language and literacy activities (cf. Leseman et al., 2009). Students were asked about general language use at home and their language use when talking with their parents about different topics. A sample item thus reads: 'How frequently do you talk with your parents about topics of general interest (war, social issues, protection of the environment). Please declare the language(s) that you use mostly.' Other topics of enquiry included talking about books and movies, worries and problems, heritage and culture, family and school issues. Answers were rated on a five-point Likert scale (scale point one represents 'almost never', whereas five stands for 'at least daily'). The students were further asked about their reading practices. A sample item is: 'How frequently do you read non-fiction books? Please declare the language(s) that you use mostly.' They were also asked about other genres, such as magazines, newspapers, religious books and novels. Again, scale point one denotes 'almost never', whereas five stands for 'at least daily'. Furthermore, students answered questions on their leisure time activities. A sample item is: 'How frequently do you take exercise in your leisure time? Please declare the language(s) that you use mostly.' Other questions related to cultural clubs, social and religious activities, activities with peers. The same ratings according to the Likert scale were also used here, with scale point one representing 'almost never' and five standing for 'more than 10 hours per week'.

6. First descriptive results

Figure 1 presents general home language use of pupils involved in the study. Over half of pupils use only German at home, most of whom have no migration background. Only 9 % of migrant pupils mentioned that they use only German at home and a small number of pupils mentioned using only one or two languages other than German at home. It is therefore evident that German and the home language shape the language use at home. About 38 % mentioned that they use German and one other language, and 6 % mentioned that they use German and two other languages at home. The results described here confirm the findings that German

coexists with the home language in migrants' homes, i.e. migrant pupils speak German as well as their home language(s) at home (cf. Fürstenau & Gogolin, 2001).

Figure 1: Language use at home



The spoken languages of the pupils are described in figure 2 more precisely. Pupils with an immigrant background demonstrate diverse language combinations. It has been noted that migrant pupils claimed to use mostly German and their home language(s), so the relevant language combinations always include German. As expected, and according to the concept of 'lebensweltliche Mehrsprachigkeit' (*multilingual realities*) (Gogolin, 1994), diverse languages and language combinations are mentioned by the pupils. The most common combinations are German with Turkish and German with Russian, which is not surprising as the Turkish and Russian migrant groups are the largest minority migrant groups in Germany (cf. BAMF, 2012). However, there are other heterogeneous combinations, including, for example, Arabic, that is partly spoken in combination with French, or the Farsi-speaking group. Furthermore, 6 % mentioned that they speak English with another migrant minority language at home, such as an African language. About 4 % use a Romance language (French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese) at home and 3 % Kurdish (also partly spoken with Turkish), or only Polish. The category 'other languages' includes, among others, Armenian, Albanian, Czech and Serbian, confirming the language diversity of the pupils. In sum, the current sample reveals a multilingual and super-diverse language background of the pupils.

Figure 2: Language(s) spoken at home – language combinations

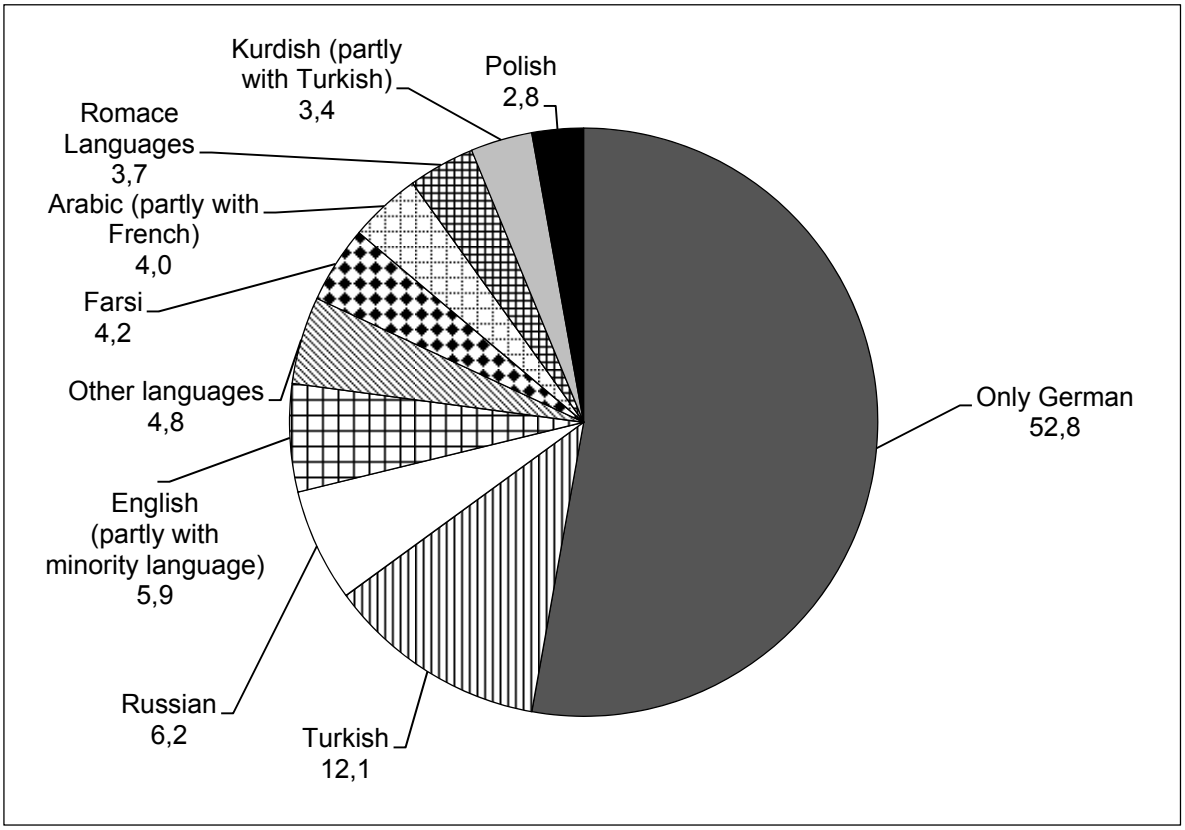
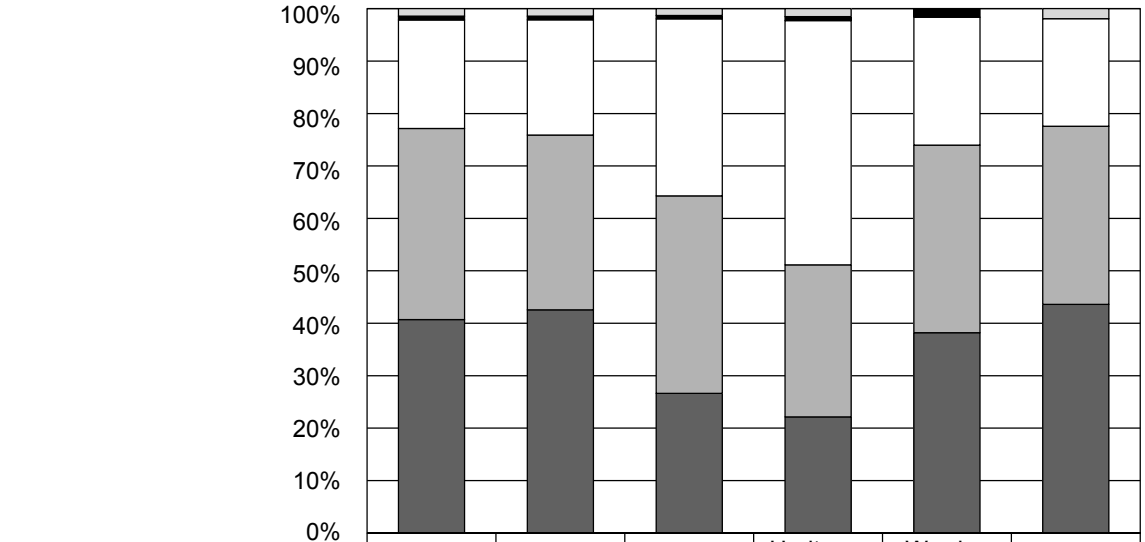


Figure 3 presents language use of migrant pupils in interaction with their parents. The results are differentiated by diverse topics, such as talking about books, movies or TV, social topics and topics of general interest, family and school issues, and problems/worries. It is evident that language use of migrant pupils varies through the different topics. School and social issues or literacy activities (books, movies, TV) are discussed more often in German (42 % and 44 %) than in the home language. About 34 % of the migrant pupils in this sample also mentioned using their home language too. Just 21 % declared that they only speak a language other than German when talking about school and social issues. In contrast, pupils mostly discuss family issues and heritage subjects in their home language (34 % and 47 %), and also partly in German (38 % and 29 %). Problems and worries are discussed in various ways, mostly in German (38 %) and in addition with one other language (36 %). Language choice in oral activities can therefore be differentiated in two ways: on the one hand, pupils predominantly use German for more literacy-orientated interaction, such as talking about books, movies or programmes they watched, as well as discussing social and school issues. On the other hand, there are issues that are discussed primarily in the home language on account of the migration context, such as family issues and subjects concerned with heritage, culture and traditions. The data clearly shows that language choice during oral activities

with parents is influenced by different topics and issues and that both languages play an important role in daily interaction with parents.

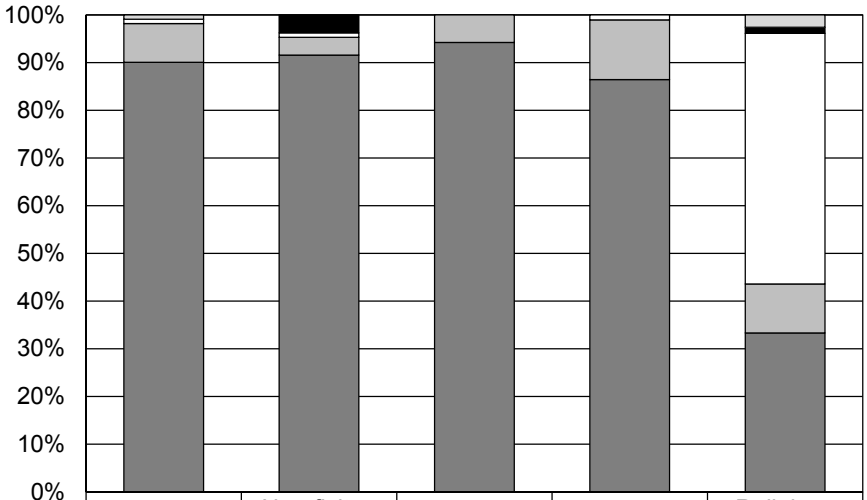
Figure 3: Language use in parent-child interaction by topics



	Books, movies, TV (n=140)	Social topics (n=141)	Family issues (n=154)	Heritage, culture, traditions (n=131)	Worries and problems (n=123)	School issues (n=156)
Two other languages	1,4	1,4	1,3	1,5	,0	1,9
German + two other languages	,7	,7	,6	,8	1,6	,0
Only one other language	20,7	22,0	33,8	46,6	24,4	20,5
German + other language	36,4	33,3	37,7	29,0	35,8	34,0
Only German	40,7	42,6	26,6	22,1	38,2	43,6

As shown in figure 4, language use during literacy activities differs strongly from that during parent-child interaction. It becomes apparent here that migrant pupils mostly use German for reading activities. The majority mentioned reading magazines (94 %), newspapers (90 %) and non-fiction books (92 %) in German only. Nonetheless, 12 % of pupils in the sample use German as well as their home language for reading novels and 8 % for reading newspapers. The reading of religious books is an exception: 53 % only read religious books in a language other than German and 33 % use only German. On the whole there is a considerable tendency to privilege German in literacy activities. One reason might be that the pupils have few opportunities to perform literacy activities in their home language because they have no access to books, magazines and so on in that language. This is an important consideration with regard to academic language skills that are influenced by literacy activities described above.

Figure 4: Language use while reading, sorted by genres

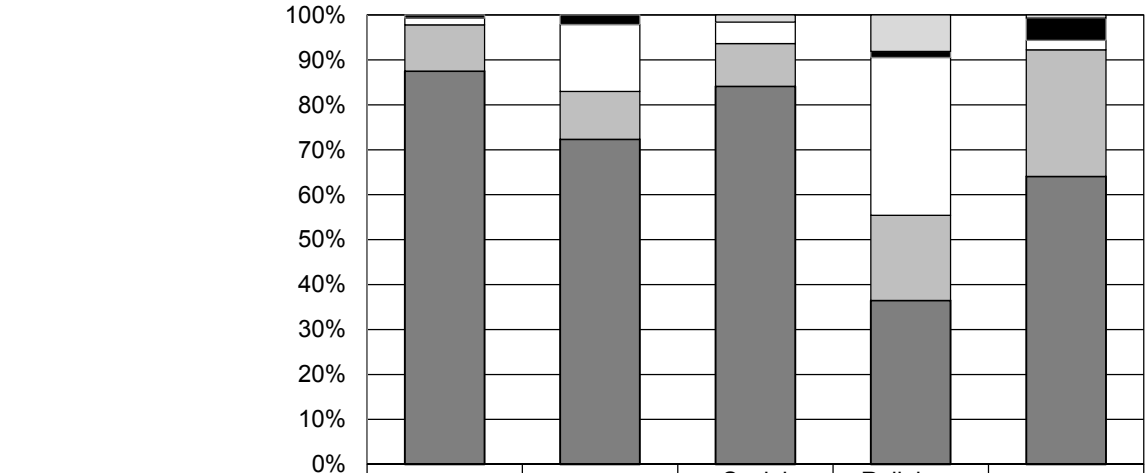


	Newspapers (n=111)	Non-ficiton books (n=107)	Magazines (n=104)	Novels (n=96)	Religious books (n=78)
Two other languages	,9	,0	,0	,0	2,6
German + two other languages	,0	3,7	,0	,0	1,3
Only one other language	,9	,9	,0	1,0	52,6
German + one other language	8,1	3,7	5,8	12,5	10,3
Only German	90,1	91,6	94,2	86,5	33,3

As shown in figure 5 language use in leisure time is more diverse than during literacy activities. 28 % of the migrant students mentioned using German and one other language with peers while 64 % use only German. German predominates during sports (87 %) or social activities (84 %). Language use in religious activities is heterogeneous with 36 % of the migrant pupils using only German and 35 % of them using only a language other than German. It is obvious that German and the home language play important roles for migrants' leisure time activities.

In sum, the results show that multilingual practices during different activities are usual in migrant pupils' lives, but that different languages assume different functions: the home language seems to be important for oral activities and communication, while German is ever-present but possesses a special function for literacy activities. In line with Bronfenbrenner's model (1979), the home language is important in the microsystem layer, especially in parent-child interaction, and the molar activities are mostly carried out in German.

Figure 5: Language use during leisure time activities



	Sports (n=136)	Cultural club (n=47)	Social activities (n=63)	Religious activities (n=74)	Peers (n=142)
Two other languages	,0	,0	1,6	8,1	,7
German + two other languages	,7	2,1	,0	1,4	4,9
Only one other language	1,5	14,9	4,8	35,1	2,1
German + one other language	10,3	10,6	9,5	18,9	28,2
Only German	87,5	72,3	84,1	36,5	64,1

7. Summary and discussion

The present study aimed to give an overview of migrant pupils' language practices at home and in leisure time, especially during home literacy and oral activities, as well as in interaction with their parents. For this purpose, a questionnaire was applied to collect data on migrant pupils' language practices and language use during different home-literacy activities. The first empirical results of this study reveal multilingual languages practices and diversity in language use during home literacy and oral activities of migrant pupils at home. Regarding oral activities with parents, some specific characteristics could be found: on the one hand, the pupils predominantly use German for more literacy-orientated interaction situations, such as talking about books, movies or programmes they watched, as well as discussing social and school-related issues. On the other hand, there are specific migration-induced themes, such as family issues and subjects concerning heritage, culture and traditions, which are discussed primarily in the family language(s). Thus, it becomes apparent that language choice during oral activities with parents depends on different topics and issues and that all spoken languages play an important role in daily interaction. Compared to home-literacy activities, such as reading, the results are quite different. In general, there is a considerable preference for German books, newspapers, magazines and so on. One reason for this might be that pupils have

fewer opportunities to perform literacy activities in their home language, as Scheele (2010) studies regarding Moroccan bilinguals have shown.

The findings reveal that, with regard to the concepts of 'lebensweltliche Mehrsprachigkeit' (*multilingual realities*) (Gogolin, 1994) and 'super-diversity' (Vertovec, 2007), multilingual practices during different activities are usual in migrant pupils' lives, but different languages assume different functions: the home language(s) seems to be important for oral activities and communication, while German predominates and takes on a special function for literacy-related activities. This is an important consideration with regard to academic language skills that are influenced by literacy activities. As far as Bronfenbrenner's model (1979, 1986) is concerned, the home language(s) is important in the microsystem layer, especially in parent-child interaction, whereas the molar activities (such as reading or more literacy-orientated oral activities) are carried out mostly in German. These molar activities are crucial for (language) development. In fact, previous research confirmed a strong relationship between them and (academic) language proficiency (Bos et al., 2003; Leseman & de Jong, 2001; Leseman et al., 2007). With regard to findings on positive cross-language transfer (cf. Bialystok, 2009; Scheele, 2010), it is important to note on the macrosystem layer that migrants may have fewer opportunities for home-literacy activities in their home language(s). This aspect should be taken into consideration for the evaluation of academic language skills.

Further analyses will be conducted with the aim of exploring the influence of home-literacy activities and the home environment, including the socioeconomic background and the academic language skills of pupils with an immigrant background. They intend to reveal important pedagogical implications for intervention programmes and for educational work in schools.

Notes

1. Support for Immigrant Children and Youth.
2. The students attend the 'Hamburger Stadtteilschulen', where they are able to obtain three different certificates: (1) graduation after 9th grade, (2) graduation after 10th grade and (3) graduation after 12th grade (high-school diploma).
3. The social index (KESS-Index 'Kompetenzen und Einstellungen von Schülerinnen und Schülern') describes the social impacts of pupils families from schools in Hamburg. The social indices are defined from index 1 (highly impacted social situation of pupils) till index 6 (preferred social situation of pupils).

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