Abstracts

Why are certain immigrant groups less successful in their L2 acquisition than others? This is the question posed by *Katharina Brizić* in an exploratory survey based on interviews with the teachers and parents of 60 fourth-graders whose families immigrated to Austria from Turkey or the former Yugoslavia. The selection of the survey participants follows up on a psycholinguistic longitudinal study that showed the Turkish children to be less proficient in both their L1 and their L2 German than the Yugoslavian children. However, her reconstruction of the families' language biographies brings to light a more complicated pattern comprising several minority and majority languages instead of just Turkish or Serbian/Croatian that does not allow the multilingualism of the children involved to be reduced to one L1 alone. Her analysis shows that more children in the Turkish sample have undergone a language shift than in the Yugoslavian sample. She finds that children whose families continue to use the parental language display greater language proficiency than those whose parents have had to partially or fully renounce their own language in their country of origin. This draws attention to parents' former experience of language shift as a possible explanatory factor for the relatively poor achievements of children in their L2. On this basis, the author explores the methodological challenges of innovatively researching the second language acquisition not of individuals, but of whole groups of less successful immigrant children.

Katja Francesca Cantone and *Stefanie Haberzettl* present an instrument for the reliable and differentiated assessment and diagnosis of secondary school children's language performance and support requirements in German as a second language. Based on a corpus of 29 tests, they illustrate methods for evaluating pupils' written texts with regard to the three criteria of content, grammar and style. The authors suggest rating content in terms of task fulfilment while their evaluation of grammar distinguishes between errors occurring in the noun, verb and sentence domains. However, owing to the high number of mistakes in the noun domain, they consider the possibility of reducing the grammatical analysis to this single domain. The stylistic recommendations they make are based on four criteria: a clear structure, the use of appropriate connecting devices, an adequate vocabulary without shifts in register and lexical variety illustrated in terms of the children's individual type-token ratios. Taking the written texts of eight learners by way of example, the authors provide a detailed discussion of these criteria and the analytical decisions involved in the proposed evaluation procedure.

Sabina De Carlo develops a twofold perspective on fostering literacy at primary school: she highlights the importance of both language use within the fam-

ily and teacher expectations for analysing children's written assignments. Her corpus comprises 58 oral and 234 written narratives produced by children from grades 2-4 with German, Moroccan Arabic or Berber as their first language. Taking the example of two learner texts, she shows how to relate linguistic analyses concerning reference, narrativity, and contextuality to the social contexts of family, school, the classroom and, more specifically, the preparation of written texts in the classroom. Based on the major role that exposure to the written forms of various languages in the home is assumed to play in the development of literacy among children, she also highlights the effects of literacy as a social practice in the school domain, particularly the expectations of teachers, and calls for the compilation and deployment of individual language profiles at primary school.

Andrea G. Eckhardt presents the results of a quasi-experiment designed to test the effect of the (de-)contextualisation of linguistic input on the listening comprehension of children with German as a second language as opposed to those with German as a first language. In her study, 498 primary schoolchildren watched video sequences that presented language either in context (a scene from a children's movie) or out of context (a simulated retelling of the movie scene on the phone). Afterwards, the children took a multiple-choice listening comprehension test. The variance analysis shows that decontextualised language is more difficult to understand for both native speakers and immigrant children but that the data do not confirm the hypothesis that decontextualised language is more difficult for speakers of German as a second language than for native speakers.

Focusing on the factor of age in second language acquisition, *Wilhelm Grießhaber* suggests an interdisciplinary approach that combines linguistic and neurological perspectives. Based on an overview of research on the linguistic development of child and adult learners as well as his own data concerning children's acquisition of German as a second language in grades 1-4, he first of all establishes the differences between both groups of learners. To explain individual differences in second language acquisition, he draws on findings from neurological studies carried out with blind persons and stroke sufferers that demonstrate the human brain's ability to redeploy neuronal resources for new functions. Based on these neurological findings, he suggests a model of compensatory usage of neuronal resources to explain the differing degrees of success in the second language acquisition of adults who no longer have access to primary networks for first language acquisition. He argues that adults may vary in their ability to make use of non-primary networks and that this variance could be related to the communicative needs and constraints of individual learners.

Nazan Gültekin, Sevilen Demirkaya and *Claudia Riemer* present a longitudinally designed study of the effects of a language support program (*Sprachförderprogramm*). This aims not only to provide data on the linguistic development of four to six-year-old immigrant children, but also to enable an insight to be gained into the importance of family and kindergarden for second language acquisition. An initial quantitative component of the study is based on linguistic data derived from a language proficiency survey carried out with the children, questionnaires completed by their parents and ratings entered by the kindergarten staff in the *Sismik* observation form. A second qualitative component of the study focuses on ten Turkish and Kurdish-speaking children selected contrastively according to the criteria of linguistic and social behaviour, family constellations and characteristics, and implementation of the language support program in the respective kindergardens. This is supplemented by interviews with the language support experts, kindergarten staff and parents. By means of a case study, the authors illustrate the scope of their socio-ecological, context-sensitive research design and demonstrate the strengths of a mixed-methods research strategy.

What are the quality indicators of a language support program for pre-school children? This is the question posed by *Werner Knapp, Julia Ricart Brede, Barbara Gasteiger-Klicpera* and *Diemut Kucharz* in their paper. Based on a sample of 20 videotaped language support units each with a duration of around 20 to 30 minutes from the "Sag' mal was – Sprachförderung für Vorschulkinder" program, they develop a system of indicators for evaluating the quality of language support units from both a pedagogical and linguistic perspective. They take a transcript of children playing a guessing game and use it to demonstrate the challenges posed by the application of such quality indicators in terms of learning atmosphere as indicated by oral corrections and interest as indicated by eye contact. They also illustrate the degree to which from an analytical perspective indicators of linguistic quality rely on factors such as input correctness, the percentage of learner contributions as opposed to teacher contributions and the use of new words in sentences.

Drawing on a typologically based comparison of Turkish and German, *Christoph Schroeder* investigates texts written by Turkish-speaking children in German as a second language. His focus is on the lexical semantics of movement verbs: Whereas Turkish uses the stem of the finite verb to express "movement" und "means" while "manner" is realised in the converb, in German "movement" und "manner" co-occur in the stem of the finite verb while "means" is realised as a verbal prefix in a position that Talmy (1991, 2000) calls the "satellite". Based on these linguistic considerations, the author analyses a corpus of 67 narrative German texts from school children with a Turkish migration background

in grades 5 to 7. His finding is that the subjects tend to rely on Turkish in terms of style when it comes to the verbalisation of movements in German. He calls for this interesting finding to be followed up in more large-scale studies taking three aspects in particular into consideration: the use of comparable data from children with German as a first language, an extension of the study to focus on other comparable linguistic features displaying typological variation and the inclusion of further first and second languages in addition to Turkish and German.

Katharina Straßl and *Andrea Ender's* study focuses on the writing skills of immigrant children living in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. With their particular interest in the influence of diglossia on second language acquisition, they pursue a topic that is not often researched but nevertheless of major significance in other German-speaking areas as well. Following an introduction to the diglossic situation in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, they provide a pilot study of twelve texts written by children aged nine to eleven with Albanian, German or Turkish as their first language. They analyse the use of masculine noun phrases in the accusative case (which have the same form as masculine noun phrases in the nominative case in the dialect), past tense forms (which are non-existent in the dialect) and relative pronouns in relative clauses (which are realised as *wo* in the dialect). Their error analysis shows that learners from all three language groups make mistakes in the case of masculine noun phrases in the accusative and that children with German as a second language make more such mistakes than those speaking German as a first language. Overgeneralisations of past tense forms are a common mistake among the Turkish subjects. However, the number of relative clauses is too low to enable any general conclusions to be drawn with regard to the influence of the dialect.

Constanze Weth examines the family literacy background of children raised by Moroccan immigrants in France. Her analysis of the children's literacy resources is highly relevant for the field of German as a second language because she succeeds in showing that the children are able to transfer the knowledge of written French that they have acquired to the writing of Arabic words in Latin letters. Her analysis combines an ethnographic approach with orthographic analyses. While on the one hand her ethnographic approach enables her to examine the use of writing within families and to establish that the children predominantly experience the Arabic script in Islamic recitation practices as opposed to the French script in functional contexts, the orthographic analysis reveals that almost all the children use French orthography to write Arabic in Latin letters. Particularly surprising are the regular occurrence of linguistic forms segmented from the oral input and the uniform spelling of morphemes.