

The importance of language learning in a multilingual society

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European Commission

Action Plan 2004 – 2006

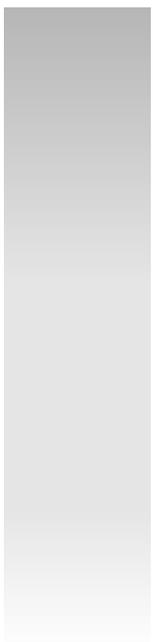
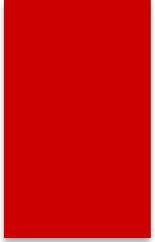
Aim: Mother tongue/L1 plus two other languages

Language Learning

- is a shared responsibility
- promotes intercultural awareness
- promotes coexistence and cooperation
- promotes equal educational opportunities

How many languages do you speak?

- When and how did you learn these languages?
- Why did you learn them?
- Do you use them?



Do you want to learn another language?

- Which language?
- What is your motivation?

Vienna



-
- Languages spoken in Vienna
 - Children with a background of migration
 - Educational success

Multilingual Cities

- "Multilingual Cities" aims at revealing linguistic diversity and the potential at schools to the general public
- Number of languages spoken by school children and their families in Vienna
- Analyse the connection between language, multilingualism and academic performance

Multilingual Cities

- **Hamburg** / Germany (carried out by: Fürstenau, Gogolin & Yağmur 2003)
- **Brussels** / Belgium (carried out by: Verlot, Delrue, Extra & Yağmur 2003)
- **Madrid** / Spain (carried out by: Broeder & Mijares 2003)
- **Lyon** / France (carried out by: Akıncı, De Ruiter & Sanagustin 2004)
- **Essen** / Germany (carried out by: Chlosta, Ostermann, Schroeder)
- **Gothenborg** / Sweden (carried out by: Nygren-Junkin & Extra 2003)
- **The Hague** / Netherlands (carried out by: Extra, Aarts, Van der Avoird, Broeder & Yağmur 2001)

2008-11 Vienna

- 85% of all primary school classes
- 20,000 children in 3rd and 4th year of school (8-10 years old)

Results (2011)

- 60% of these children with a background of migration – father, mother or child was born in another country
- 145 countries, nearly 150 languages
- 37.5 % speak German only
- 48% speak other language at home

Surprising facts....

- 80% of the children say they speak German best (but 25% of these have problems with German)
- Only 10% never speak German at home (at least part of the time)
- 69% like German best
- 12% say they want to learn German at school
- L1 is substituted by German

Problems

- Bilingual children are not as successful at school as monolingual children
- If the parents do not speak their first languages with their children but German instead, the children do not develop a higher degree of language competence
- „Deutsch only“ – obviously one of the reasons for bad Pisa-results/failure at school/early school leaving

Multilingual Cities

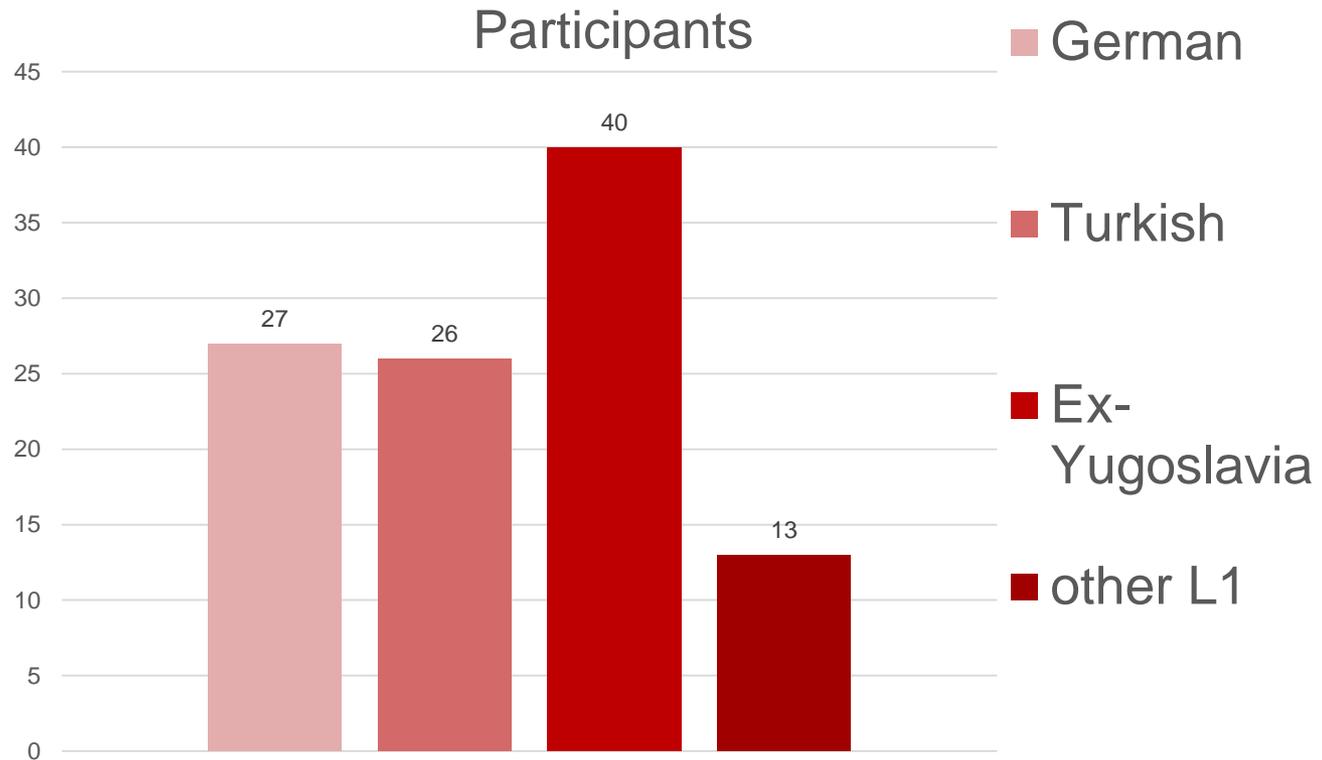
- https://www.academia.edu/1826419/Brizi%C4%87_K._and_Hufnagl_Claudia_Lo_2011_Multilingual_Cities_Vienna._Preliminary_school_report_on_a_home-language_survey_in_Viennese_primary_schools._Austrian_Academy_of_Sciences._Online._in_German_with_graphs_and_labels_
- Brizic (2006) Das geheime Leben der Sprachen
- http://www.beigewum.at/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/032_katharina_brizic.pdf

A closer look....

Annemarie Peltzer-Karpf

- Professor for linguistics at Graz University
- *“A kući sprecham Deutsch”*, 2006
- 106 children were followed for 4 years
- Use and proficiency of German and of L1 if not German

Peltzer-Karpf (2006)



German at the beginning of the first school year

- Number of words; groups of words
- 3 children

(Peltzer-Karpf 2006)

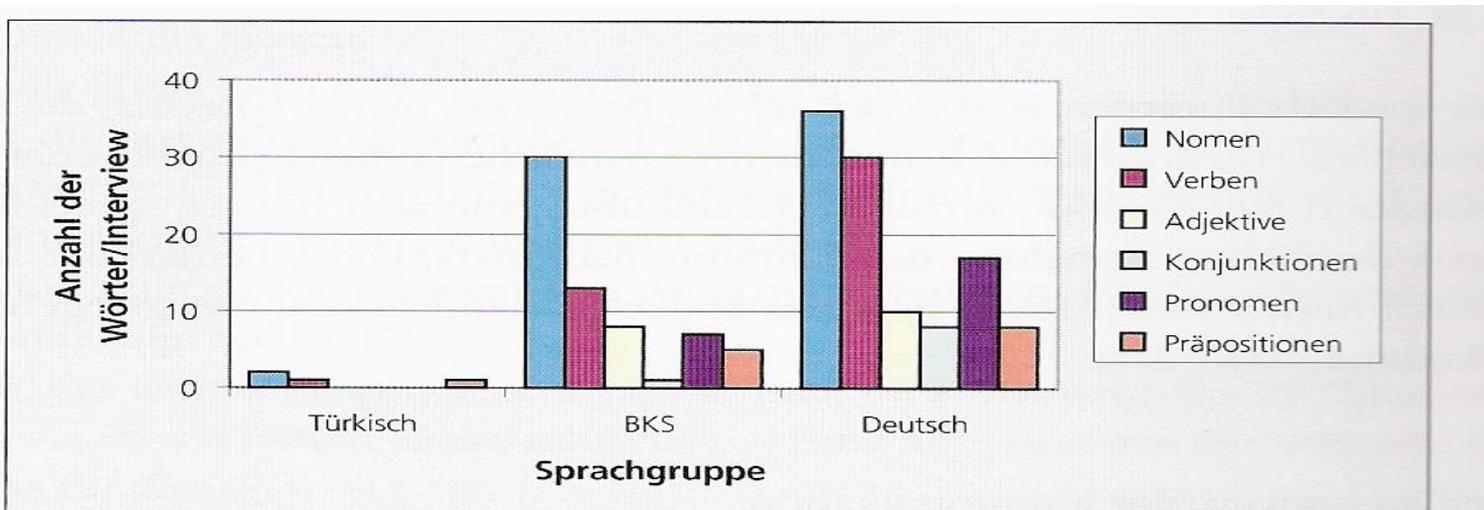


Fig. 5.2: Spontansprache Deutsch: Wortklassenverteilung zu Beginn des 1. Schuljahres

Children at the beginning of the first school year - German

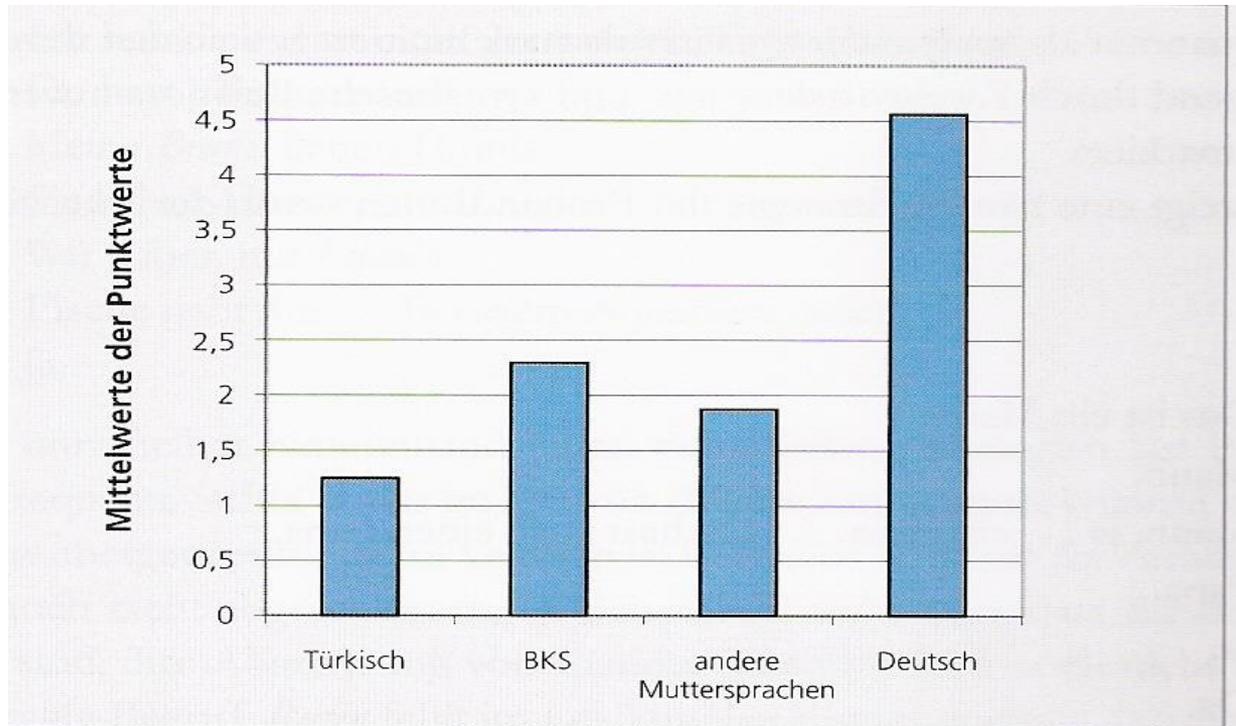


Fig. 5.1: Spontansprache Deutsch: Beginn des 1. Schuljahres

Children at the beginning of the first school year - German

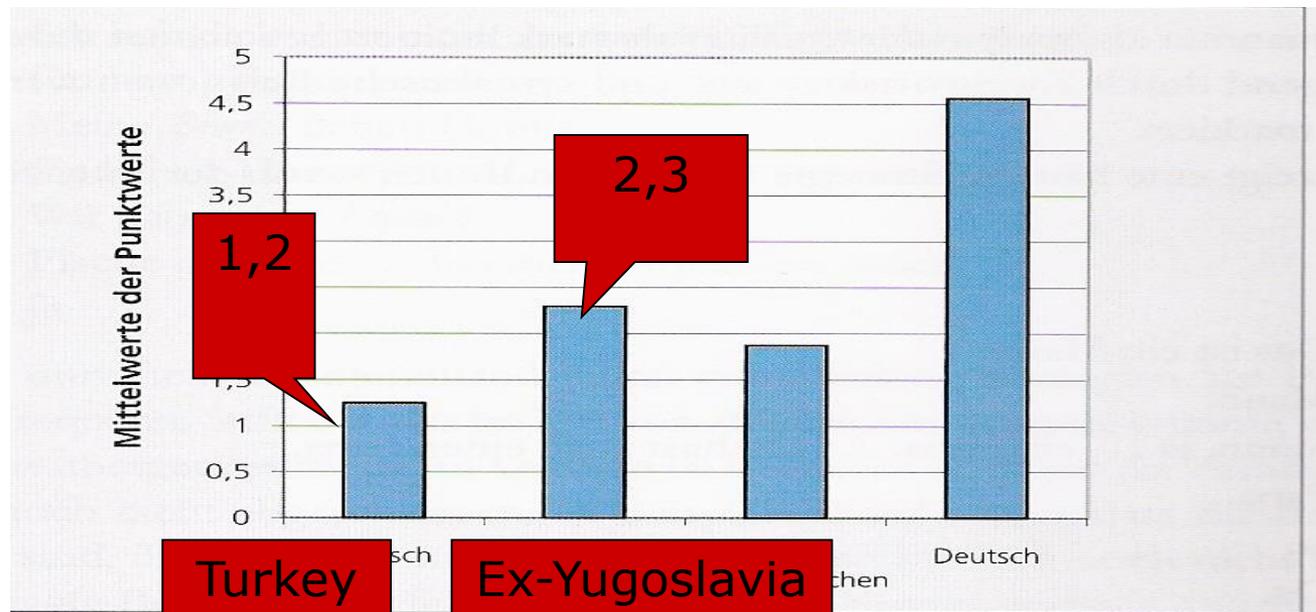
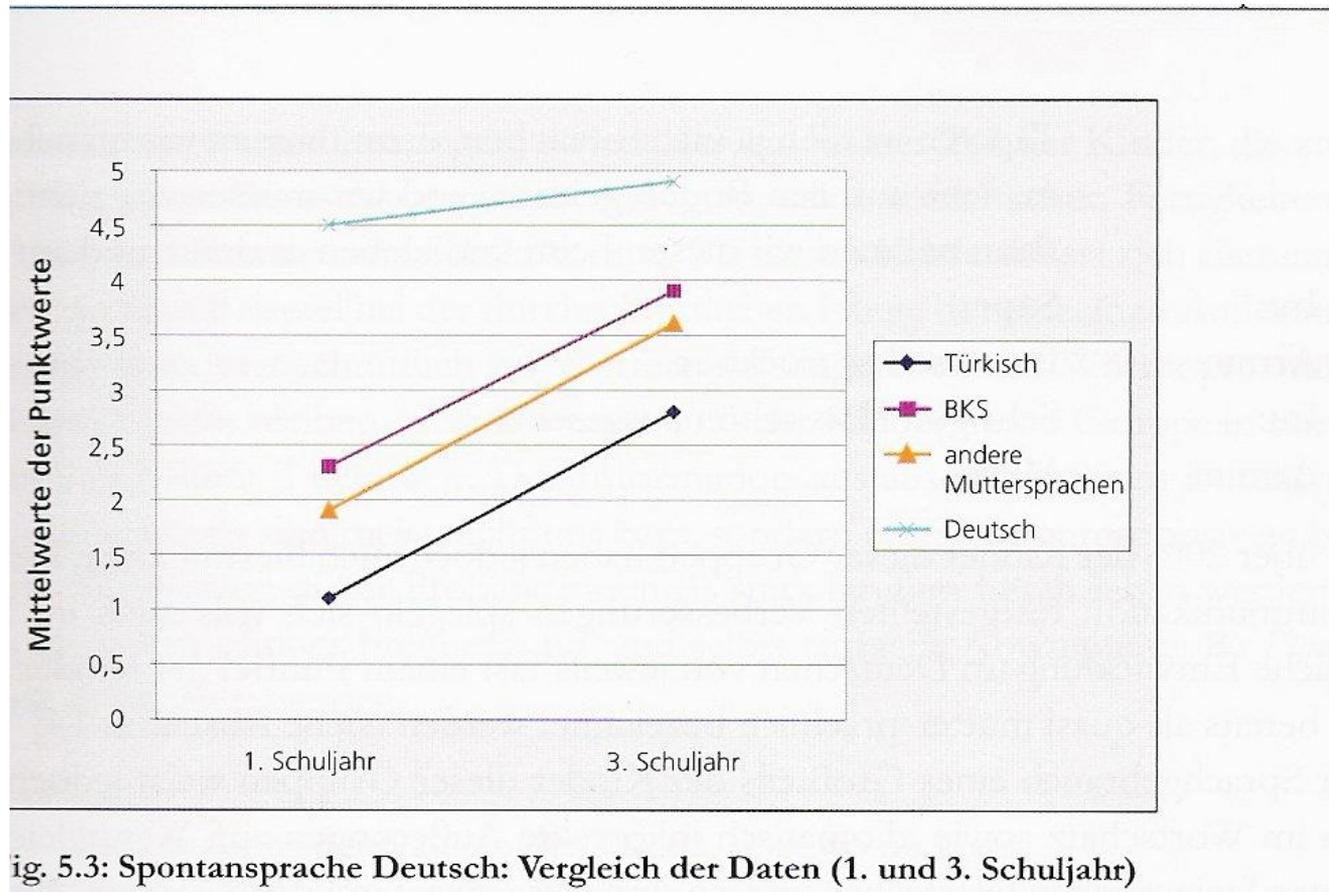
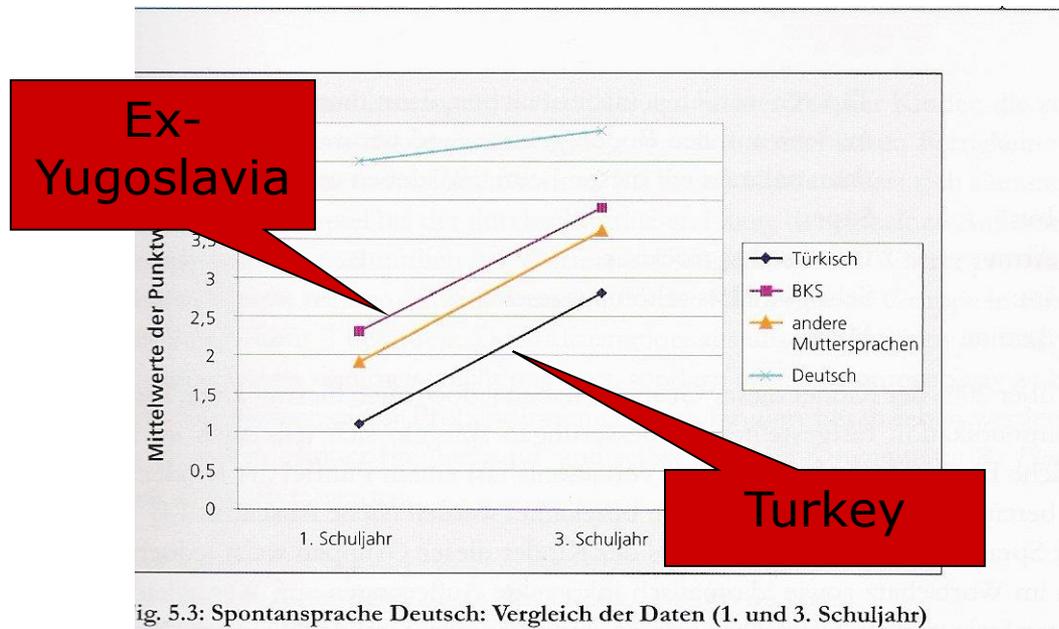


Fig. 5.1: Spontansprache Deutsch: Beginn des 1. Schuljahres

Children speaking German in their 1st and 3rd year of school



Children speaking German in their 1st and 3rd year of school



What does the study show?

- All the children have improved their German in these 4 years considerably.
- Bilingual children still need special help at age 10 (after 4 years of school).
- If the child speaks L1 well, they will learn L2 more easily.

What does the study show?

- Quantity and quality of language input/language lessons decide how well the children learn L2.
- Biliteracy should be an explicit goal.
- School education of the parents influences the command of German of the child.

What does the study show?

- The most surprising result of the study, however, was that children from Ex-Yugoslavia speak German significantly better than children from Turkey.

Katharina Brizic (2007): Das geheime Leben der Sprachen

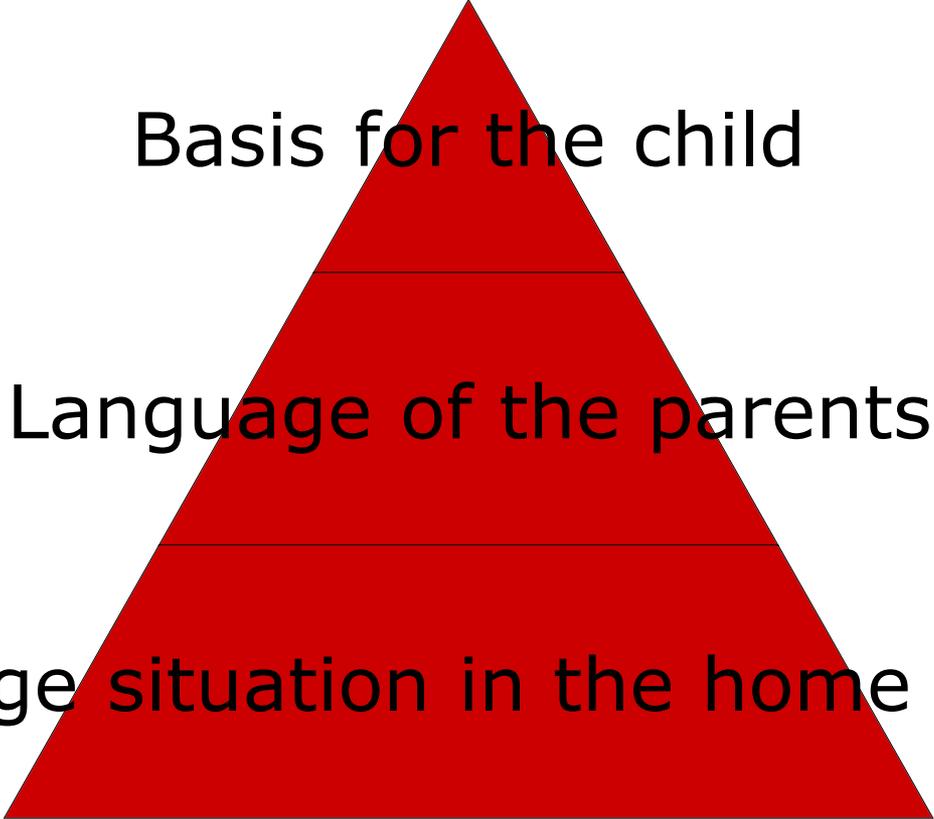
- **Research Question: Why do children from former Yugoslavia score so much higher in both their first language and German compared to those from Turkey?**
- **Socio-linguistic study**

LINGUISTIC CAPITAL MODEL (LCM)

What influences the language of the children?

- Language (of the parents) in the home country (macro level)
- Situation of the parents/language group in the new country (meso level)
- Situation of the child (micro level)

LINGUISTIC CAPITAL MODEL (LCM)



Basis for the child

Language of the parents

Language situation in the home country

1. Language of the parents/home country

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- Official language/dialect
- Taught/spoken at school
- Spoken by majority/minority
- Prestige
- Language change
- Education of the parents

1. Language of the parents/home country. Think of the languages you speak/understand?

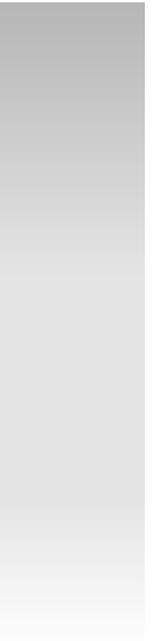
- Official language/dialect
- Taught/spoken at school
- Spoken by majority/minority
- Prestige
- Language change (in your family?)
- Education of the parents/ Do your parents/grandparents speak a dialect/officially recognized form of the language? Can they write it?

2. Situation of the family in Austria

2. Situation of the family in Austria

- How well do parents speak the language? School education?
- Written language? Writing skills?
- Language accepted?
- Which languages are spoken at home?
- Language change/language death – minority/languages which are not socially accepted

3. The child



3. The child

- Language competence L1, L2,...
- Mixture of languages?
- Everyday language only
- Close connection between identity and language
- Close connection between language competence and success at school

3. The child

If children speak L1 well, they will easily learn to speak L2/ German.

Language Death

- Speech community or single person abandons a language
- Slow process
- Reasons: Low prestige/political pressure/migration/...
- To improve position/position of the children

What is important?

- Children must learn languages – at home and at school
- Basis for success at school – social success
- The mother tongue is the basis for all language learning

List of recommendations:

- Pre-school education helps children with their German
- Good competence in L1
- Cooperation with the parents
- How to read and write L1
- German should be taught like a foreign language

Enjoying languages promotes learning

Children begin to learn a language on the first day of their lives – and they learn it all their lives long. You are never “done” with learning a language. On the contrary: You always continue learning a language and with each new language you start anew. Enjoying languages promotes learning.

Thank you for your attention!



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