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Hidden rules of language use

Ethnographic observation on the transition from kindergarten to primary school in Switzerland

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Growing linguistic and cultural diversity among children with and without an immigrant background is common in the Swiss education system. The new super-diversity of societies (Creese & Blackledge, 2010) requires professional development of teaching staff concerning linguistic and cultural responsibility and social justice. The paper presents initial findings from the research project "Multilingualism and Mobility in the Transition from Kindergarten to Primary School in Switzerland" (MEMOS) of the University of Applied Sciences and Arts North-western Switzerland, a follow-up project to the international study "Heterogeneity and Literacy in the Transition from Elementary to Primary School" (HeLiE) of the University of Cologne (Panagiotopoulou & Graf, 2008). The research questions of these two projects concentrate on the day-to-day practices of teachers and the language practices of multilingual children with an immigrant background. The MEMOS project encompassed intensive participant observation and analyses of semi-structured interviews and documents in kindergarten and first grade school class over a period of two years. My research shows that multilingual children balance separate language worlds according to the social context. Further pertinent findings illustrate the dynamic change of language use and preferences. Moreover, these children perceive themselves as multilingual individuals and actively construct their linguistic and cultural identities.

**Huldar reglur í tungumálanotkun: Etnógrafísk athugun
á umskiptum úr leikskóla í grunnskóla í Sviss**

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Vaxandi fjölbreytileiki er í tungumálum og menningu á meðal barna í mennta-kerfi Sviss, bæði innflytjenda og innfæddra. Þessi mikli margbreytileiki sam-

félaga (Creese & Blackledge, 2010) útheimtir faglega þróun kennara varðandi tungumálakennslu og menningarlega ábyrgð. Í þessari grein verður farið yfir niðurstöður rannsóknarverkefnisins *Multilingualism and Mobility in the Transition from Kindergarten to Primary School in Switzerland (MEMOS)* sem unnið var af University of Applied Sciences and Arts í norðvesturhluta Sviss. Í verkefninu var fylgt eftir niðurstöðum alþjóðlega verkefnisins *Heterogeneity and Literacy in the Transition to Primary School (HeLiE)* sem unnið var við Kölnarháskóla (Panagiotopoulou & Graf, 2008). Rannsóknarspurningar verkefnanna tveggja beinast að málvenjum tvítyngdra barna sem eru afkomendur fyrstu kynslóðar innflytjenda. MEMOS-verkefnið fól í sér ítarlega þátttökuathugun og greiningu á hálfopnum viðtölum og skjölum úr leikskóla og fyrsta bekk grunnskóla. Gögnum sem hér er byggt á var safnað á tveggja ára tímabili. Niðurstöður sýna að í samræmi við félagslegt samhengi finna tvítyngd börn jafnvægi milli ólíkra tungumála. Frekari niðurstöður sýna hreyfanleika í breytingu tungumálanotkunar og valbundinnar notkunar. Enn fremur skynja börnin sig sem tvítyngda einstaklinga og byggja máltilfinningu og menningarlega sjálfsmýnd á því.

Introduction

In recent ethnographic research in kindergarten and primary school settings, I was struck by the fact that I could not observe the use of family languages in the day-to-day language practices of children with immigrant backgrounds:

Erkan, Dilek and Aylin¹ are playing outside with a diablo. Aylin is telling a story about her little sister. Dilek listens attentively and says, "Frechdachs"/ "cheeky monkey", and then, "your sister is a real cheeky monkey". Aylin repeats, "cheeky monkey", and adds that her sister is a clown. It strikes me that the children are speaking German with each other although all three speak Turkish at home. (Dilek's use of the expression "Frechdachs" / "cheeky monkey" surprises me and I find her choice of phrase very fitting to the situation). I ask Aylin how old her sister is and she answers with her sister's name.² I repeat the question and Dilek answers, "five". "Do you know Aylin's sister?" I ask Dilek. She says she does. Then she tells me that she is already seven years old and will be turning eight soon. I ask her when her birthday is. She thinks for a moment before going to Erkan and asking him, "Erkan, when is my birthday?" Erkan, her twin brother, answers, "Our birthday is in exactly six months." (Fieldnote of 22nd May 2013, primary school, Edina Krompåk)

The terms "mother tongue" and "native language" or "heritage language" concentrate, on the one hand, on the emotional aspect (see Oksaar, 2003) and, on the other hand, on the origin of the language. In this paper, the term "family language/s" will be used because of its neutral description and the focus on the social context. In the situation outlined above, I had the opportunity to observe three children with Turkish as their family language while playing with the diablo. This activity was initiated by the teacher after a period of "quiet work". The children who had completed the task were allowed to play with the diablo, a skipping rope or a beanbag in the corridor, while the teacher and the other children finished their work in the classroom. On two occasions during the course of the conversation, Dilek uses the expression, "Frechdachs" / "cheeky monkey" for Aylin's sister. We can assume that Dilek learned this expression at school and can now use it successfully and

¹ All participants have been given pseudonyms.

² The conversation and the interviews between the children and me were conducted in Standard German. The terms "High" or "Standard" German refer to the language used in Switzerland in written and some, usually formal, oral communication. Here the linguistic term "Standard German" will be used. In literal translation, for example of the interviews, the more common term in everyday speech, namely "High German", is used.

effectively in appropriate situations, as she demonstrates here. Aylin repeats the word, "Frechdachs / cheeky monkey", and she also supplies a synonym, "clown", which simultaneously confirms an understanding of Dilek's choice of phrase and reinforces the meaning of "cheeky monkey". In this way, each girl contributes to a co-construction of the meaning of the word and acknowledges the language choices of the other girl. A remarkable fact in this incident is that Dilek, Aylin and Erkan speak Standard German outside the classroom, even in the absence of the teacher. Given that language is a medium of social interaction (Vygotskij, 1934/2002, p. 50), it can be assumed that multilingual children choose the language they use according to the social context in which they find themselves. In this case, the context is a school, where the official language is Standard German. Dilek, Erkan and Aylin appear to prefer Standard German in their day-to-day interactions while at school even though the family languages are not explicitly prohibited there.

In this paper, I will provide a survey of language use by multilingual children in a variety of school settings and discuss how young children experience their multifaceted language competences. The main research questions are:

- How do multilingual children perceive their languages in transition from kindergarten to first grade?
- How do children use linguistic practices to negotiate linguistic and cultural identities?

In part two, I describe the language plurality in Switzerland, focusing on curricular requirements at kindergarten and school. In part three, I outline the methodology of the ethnographic study. In part four, I present three short case studies which were chosen according to the theoretical sampling method and analysed by means of grounded coding (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1996). In part five, the following findings are discussed: a) the individual language use of multilingual children; b) their perception of linguistic and cultural identities; and c) dynamic changes in language use and language perception in the transition from kindergarten to primary school.

Language plurality in Switzerland and language policy in kindergarten and school curricula

Switzerland is widely known to be a multilingual country characterised by transnational migration. With its "meshing and interweaving of diversities" it is aptly described as super-diverse (Creese & Blackledge, 2010, p. 551). Multilingualism in Switzerland is multifaceted, encompassing official languages on the national and cantonal levels, the family languages of persons with a migration background, and diglossia. Diglossia in the context of Switzerland is "an umbrella term for several Alemannic dialects" (Stepkowska, 2012, p. 203) and represents the duality of Standard German ("Hochdeutsch") and Swiss German ("Schweizerdeutsch") in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Moreover, Swiss German is divided into varieties of dialect which differ in terms of phonetics, semantics and lexis (Caprez-Krompàk, 2010). While this plurality is to some extent acknowledged in kindergarten and primary school curricula, the response of the education system is wanting in many respects.

According to the federal constitution (art. 4), four languages (German, French, Italian and Rumantsch) have official status (Bundesverfassung der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft, 1999). Of the 26 Swiss cantons, 22 can be considered monolingual. This means that these cantons have one officially recognised community language. In 17 cantons the official language is German (Aargau, Appenzell, Ausserrhoden, Appenzell Innerrhoden, Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft, Glarus, Luzern, Nidwalden, Obwalden, Schaffhausen,

Schwyz, Solothurn, Sankt Gallen, Thurgau, Uri, Zug, Zürich). In a further four cantons (République et Canton de Genève, République et Canton du Jura, République et Canton de Neuchâtel, Canton de Vaud) French is the official language, while in the canton of Ticino / Repubblica e Cantone Ticino it is Italian. There are three bilingual cantons in which German and French co-exist as official languages (Bern / canton de Berne, Staat Freiburg / État de Fribourg and Staat Wallis / État du Valais). Kanton Graubünden / Cantone dei Grigioni / Chantun Grischun, a uniquely multilingual canton, has with three official Swiss languages (German, Italian and Rumantsch) (Caprez-Krompæk, 2010, p. 71).

Against this general backdrop, it is important to note that while societal multilingualism thus appears a desirable norm on some institutional levels, in the Swiss educational system what Gogolin (1994) calls the *monolingual habitus* predominates (Werlen, 2007). The local educational language is determined according to the official language of each specific canton. A few bilingual schools notwithstanding, monolingual schools operating in the official cantonal language predominate.

There are important convergences in language policy between Switzerland and other countries, especially in Europe. Switzerland is a member of the Council of Europe and hence subscribes to its language policy, which coincides to a large extent with the language policy of the European Union. Hence, although Switzerland is not a European Union member, it too shares the European Union aim that all inhabitants should be able to communicate in three languages:

"Promoting language learning is central to the EU's language policy. The EU encourages everyone to learn and speak more languages, in the interests of mutual understanding and communication. Our goal is an EU in which every citizen knows at least two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue" (European Commission, 2014).

According to a 2009/10 report by the Swiss Federal Office of Statistics, 42% of all children in the Swiss educational system have an immigrant background (Bundesamt für Statistik, 2010). In contrast to the linguistic and ethnic heterogeneity of the pupils, the number of teachers in Swiss schools with diverse linguistic and ethnic backgrounds is small (Mantel, 2014). Within schools, the promotion of family languages of children with an immigrant background takes place in the context of so-called HSK classes (*Heimatliche Sprache und Kultur* / Heritage Language and Culture). These classes take place twice a week: on Wednesday afternoons (when there is no other formal schooling) or on Saturday mornings (Caprez-Krompæk, 2010, p. 212). Several empirical studies have highlighted the difficulties of the courses in Heritage Language and Culture (Allemann-Ghionda, 2002; Caprez-Krompæk, 2010; Schader, 2006). The main problem is the separation of the HSK classes and the resulting isolation of the HSK teachers (Caprez-Krompæk, 2010, p. 233). Although Swiss educational policy aims to integrate into the school curriculum the family languages of children with immigrant backgrounds, the actual stipulations focus on the teaching of foreign languages and not on day-to-day language practices within school life. The Swiss Education Report of 2010 emphasises the acceptance of the family languages of children with an immigrant background in integrative foreign language teaching:

The goal of foreign language teaching is functional multilingualism. From a language teaching perspective, this requires an *integrative approach to language teaching* which also takes into account the first language learned. Special attention should be paid in this regard to the *first languages of children with an immigrant background*. (SKBF-CSRE, 2010, p. 72, Translation EK, emphasis in original)

In which form do the family languages of children with immigrant backgrounds appear in the curriculum? The curriculum of the kindergarten of the canton of Basel-Landschaft, for example, requires that children should "[...] experience Standard German and foreign languages in songs and play" (*Stufenlehrplan Kindergarten*, Kanton Basel-Landschaft, 2003, p. 10, Translation EK).

In the primary school curriculum, on the other hand, family languages are not integrated into day-to-day language practices. The promotion of family languages is split off instead into separate Heritage Language and Culture courses:

The promotion of the native language is important for children's personal development and lays the groundwork for them to learn German as a second language. It is therefore important to support children in their attendance of the Heritage Language and Culture courses. (*Stufenlehrplan Primarschule*, Kanton Basel-Landschaft, 2007, p. 22, Translation EK)

Summarising this policy towards the promotion of multilingualism in the Swiss educational system and in particular of family languages as part of these multilingual competencies, we can identify some controversies regarding the application of societal and individual multilingualism. The value and benefits offered by societal multilingualism are widely recognised, but the promotion of individual multilingualism – especially in everyday practice – is fragmentary. Furthermore, the curricula do not provide concrete recommendations – beyond singing "songs in foreign languages" (*Stufenlehrplan Kindergarten*, Kanton Basel-Landschaft, 2003, p. 10, Translation EK). We can conclude that it is largely unclear how teachers should deal with linguistic and cultural heterogeneity in the classroom and especially how they can or should promote individual multilingualism.

Whereas cantons of the German-speaking part of Switzerland variously determine whether Swiss German or Standard German should be the official language in kindergarten, the official spoken language in primary school, high school and in higher education is Standard German. The kindergarten curriculum specific to the canton of Basel-Landschaft, for example, requires that both languages be accorded equal value:

In kindergarten, children are supported in developing competence in Swiss German and also in developing a willingness to learn Standard German. A teaching sequence of some length is taught in Standard German on a daily basis. (*Stufenlehrplan Kindergarten*, Kanton Basel-Landschaft, 2009 Translation EK)

To sum up, we can assert that in Switzerland children both with and without an immigrant background are confronted with several languages, not only at home but also at school. In daily life, they use Standard German (the medium of the school) and Swiss German (the medium of communication outside the classroom). For this reason the duality of Standard German and Swiss German can be defined as a "special type of bilingualism – a symbiosis of two admittedly similar yet syntactically different languages" (Stepkowska, 2012, p. 203). On the basis of her findings, Suter Tufekovic (2008) classifies the acquisition of Standard German by Swiss children as somewhere between first- and second language acquisition. Moreover, in consideration of the wide regional variety of Swiss German we can describe the "dialect-standard-situation" as a multilingual situation (Berthele, 2010, p. 37).

Methodology

The ethnographic study reported in this paper is part of the research project MEMOS – "Multilingualism and Mobility in the Transition from Kindergarten to Primary School in

Switzerland" at the School for Teacher Education of the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland. MEMOS is a follow-up to the international study "Heterogeneity and Literacy in the Transition from Elementary to Primary School" (HeLiE) of the University of Cologne (Panagiotopoulou & Graf, 2008). The MEMOS design and also the main research questions were derived from the HeLiE project (Panagiotopoulou & Krompæk, 2014). HeLiE and MEMOS examine opportunities for learning and for the promotion of learning in day-to-day educational settings at elementary and primary levels, as well as considering the quality of everyday language teaching in early childhood educational institutions (Panagiotopoulou & Graf, 2008; Panagiotopoulou & Krompæk, 2014).

The data for this paper were collected during ethnographic fieldwork over a period of two years in one selected kindergarten and in the first year of school at primary schools. Central to the selection of research settings was the identification of educational institutions with a high proportion (80% \geq) of multilingual children with immigrant backgrounds. Data were collected in six phases (kindergarten: October–November 2011, January–February 2012, May–June 2012; primary school: September–October 2012, January–February 2013, May–June 2013). Data collection consisted mainly of intensive participant observation on two or three days a week for at least four hours a day. Over a period, five key participant children were identified. They were interviewed at the end of kindergarten and primary school. This research was conducted in Standard German, which is an official language of the kindergarten and the school. This paper concentrates on three short case studies which were chosen by means of theoretical sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 1996), which Charmaz describes as a process of "seeking pertinent data to develop your emerging theory" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 96). The sampling was developed according to a process of open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1996).

Sample and data collection

The kindergarten and primary school in this purposive sample were in a suburb of Basel-Stadt in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. The relevant kindergarten class consisted of twelve children (six boys and six girls) aged five to six. Nine children have an immigrant background and most of them started learning German at kindergarten at age five. Their family languages are Albanian, Bengali (Bangla), German and Swiss German, Italian, Macedonian, Tamil and Turkish. The parents' socio-economic status ranges from lower to middle class. In the first grade of primary school, I was able to observe the key participant children in the new environment in a larger class with eighteen children (ten girls and eight boys). This class was also ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous. The number of German-speaking children increased to five, while the family languages remained the same.

In addition to the intensive participant observation over two years, the children were interviewed at the end of kindergarten and primary school. Collected audio recordings of spoken interactions and photographs of selected pieces of children's work were included in the analysis. Teaching staff and the parents of selected key participant children were also interviewed (see *Table 1*).

Role of the researcher

In the kindergarten and the primary school, I was presented to the teachers and the gatekeepers as a "researcher" with pedagogical experience at university. Teachers saw me not just as a "researcher" but also a "teacher", an "expert" in pedagogical themes, and they sometimes sought my opinion on their lessons. To the children I introduced myself as a person who wanted to learn about their daily life in kindergarten and primary school. The full and exact detail of how they perceived me is hard to determine. It is possible

Table 1 – Data collection		
	Kindergarten	Primary school
Observations: fieldnotes	√	√
Interview: teacher	1 (head teacher)	2 (head teacher and a teacher for special linguistic needs)
Interview: children	7	7
Interview: parents	1	–
Audio recordings of spoken interactions	√	√
Analysis of documents	√	√

that my use of Standard German, rather than for example Albanian, impacted on the children's responses. In addition, the children may have attributed to me the same linguistic and social capital as they did to the teacher. During the research, the children often asked about my writing. In this way, I had interesting conversations with them. I always asked them for permission to photograph their drawings or work. According to Corsaro (1985), I practised peripheral participation, in which I did not actively initiate interactions but let myself be guided by the children.

Qualitative data analyses

Individual language use of multilingual children

In the following section, I will present my observations on the individual language use of multilingual children in three case studies. Dilek, Erkan and Luana are multilingual children each with an immigrant background. With the exception of Luana, they are also key participant children. During my fieldwork, I was struck by the fact that children with an immigrant background do not speak their family language in kindergarten and at primary school even though the teacher at the kindergarten frequently asked the children words in their family languages and they regularly sang a song in the family languages of those children (Panagiotopoulou & Krompåk, 2014). Therefore, I set out to discern how the children perceive their family languages in school settings. I observed them in various communicative situations with peers and, in a series of semi-structured interviews, I asked them focused questions about language preferences and language use. The semi-structured interviews were conducted after the last year of kindergarten and after the first year of school.

Dilek, the reader of Turkish books

Dilek is a seven-year-old girl with a Turkish immigrant background who learned German at kindergarten at the age of five. She has a twin brother, Erkan. I was able to observe Dilek in different situations at kindergarten and primary school. She consistently used Standard German in peer contexts and during the break, even with her brother:

I: What is your mother tongue?³

³ In the interviews I used the term "mother tongue" for the specific term "family language" because it is what the interviewees understand.

- D: Turkish language and German language.
I: Hm. What do you speak at home with your parents?
D: Turkish.
I: Only Turkish?
D: Yes.
I: And with your- What do you speak with your father at home?
D: Hide-and-peek and tag.
I: Hm. And what *do you speak*? What language do you speak with him?
D: Turkish and *German*.
I: *High German* or Swiss German?
D: High German.
I: Hm. And what do you speak with your brother?
D: High German too.

(Interview with Dilek, 11th June 2012, kindergarten)

Dilek's answers in the interview are short and directly related to the questions posed. In the interview, Dilek identified both Turkish and German as her "mother tongue", although she also said that she used Turkish in conversation with her parents. For this reason, I asked her again what language she speaks with her father at home. Her – surprising – response was to name two common children's games, "hide-and-peek and tag". One possible interpretation is that the German words "sprichst" / "talk" and "spielt" / "play" sound similar, so Dilek misunderstood the verb. Alternatively, she might have thought that the question about language use had already been asked, so the verb would now be "spielt" / "play" instead of "sprichst" / "talk". The second time she added German as a language spoken in the family and in reply to my question "High German or Swiss German?" she differentiated between the languages and answered "High German", adding that at home she speaks Standard German with her father and brother. The fact that Dilek identifies with both languages shows her *bilingual attitude*. The assertion by Skutnabb-Kangas (1981, p. 18) that it is frequently difficult to identify a single family language corroborates Dilek's multilingual situation.

A year later, at the end of the first class of primary school, I interviewed Dilek again and was very impressed by her story-telling ability and her literacy experience of reading Turkish books. I was also surprised by her statement about the language preference of her twin brother, for whom speaking Turkish is embarrassing:

- I: [...] Do you speak Turkish with your brother?
D: No, he doesn't talk. Because it's embarrassing.
I: Why is it embarrassing?
D: Oh, I don't know. He doesn't - he only speaks German now. Not Turkish.
I: Oh. And what about you?
D: I speak a bit of Turkish at home.
I: Who do you speak Turkish with at home?

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- D: A bit - like when I want to play at kindergarten //I: Hm// where I am now and there's a big - a big boy then I can - speak Turkish a bit with him. //I: Hm// the little one *too*.
- I: Ah, that's very good. So someone else speaks *Turkish* in your class. Who's that?
- D: Aylin. And my brother doesn't because it's embarrassing for him - he only speaks German.
- I: Yes, and do you speak Turkish with Aylin?
- D: Hm- now- Hmmm- no, I don't speak Turkish.
- I: How do you know that she can speak it then?
- D: Erm, don't know.
- I: ((laughs)) Have you ever heard her speak Turkish?
- D: I know she can speak Turkish now.
- I: You know she can speak it but you've never heard her do it? Or maybe you have?
- D: I've never - don't know.
- [...]
- I: And you've got lots of books to read at home, right?
- D: Yes.
- I: Have you got some like Driton? He showed his Albanian book today. Have you got Turkish books at home too?
- D: Yes, few.
- I: A few. And can you *read* them?
- D: Hm, I read a few.
- I: *Really?* ((voice gets higher)). //D: Hm// *Woow*. Because that's something really tricky, isn't it?
- D: Hm, a bit hard.//I: Hm// There is so many books, that have lots and lots of pages. //I: Yes.// more than 100, lots and lots //I: Um// and that's hard for me to read. I can't do that.
- I: Hm, but have you ever tried to read Turkish words?
- D: Yes, I tried Turkish words once, I read these books and then I could do the easy, the easy ones, and the hard ones are really hard.
- I: Yes, I can imagine. Hm. Good.

(Interview with Dilek, 29th May 2013, primary school)

Dilek's language use in the family had changed over the course of a year: "I speak a bit of Turkish at home." Thus, the *dominance of what had originally been her family language had faded*. This change is an important aspect of the dynamic model of multilingualism (Herdina & Jessner, 2000; Cummins & Swain, 1992). Dilek uses Turkish outside school, with the children at the playground near her old kindergarten. In school settings, she does not use her family language, not even with her brother and Aylin who both share Turkish as a family language. It seems that Dilek's language world is separated into "*school*

language" and *"home language"*. Her ability to identify Aylin's family language is a result of received information, not of experiencing real language use. Dilek knows that Aylin speaks Turkish, but she has never heard her actually speak it. Pupils are aware of the linguistic and cultural heterogeneity of the group but no communicative use of the pupils' family languages could be observed in the day-to-day language practices of the kindergarten and the school. These findings correspond with the phenomenon of "language fractioning" / "Sprachenfraktionierung", which describes the separation of the functions of languages as a consequence of the monolingual orientation of the education system (Rehbein & Meng, 2007, p. 17). Heller (2006) reports similar results in her sociolinguistic study of students in secondary school in francophone Canada: "Mostly, as we have seen, they keep these languages relatively separate (this is, of course, completely consonant with staff strategies for containing the sociolinguistic contradictions of the school, and with the school's underlying ideology of bilingualism as parallel monolingualism)" (Heller, 2006, pp. 124–125).

Erkan, the "silent"

During the process of grounded coding, Dilek's twin brother, Erkan, received the code "silent", based on his reaction in situations where the teacher asked him about Turkish words or Turkish culture. In stark contrast to his silence in situations requiring Turkish, he was, however, a very active participant during circle time in Standard German and in the peer group, where he also used Standard German.

After the teacher has discussed the "Forest day" with the children and the children have put their treasures from the wood in the basket, the teacher asks the children to make a "dirt track" out of earth and dust. Then she takes a large dice made of foam rubber and asks, "What is this? Is it a ball?" "It's a dice", answers one boy. "Yes, that's right." "You have to roll it and he has to jump over the dirt track." Rolling the dice, she asks the children, "How many?" "Two!" the children answer in chorus and count out loud while the child whose turn it is jumps over the dirt track. The child who has just jumped is allowed to roll the dice. Now it's Erkan's turn. He rolls a four. "Four" says the teacher. "Can you count to four in Turkish, too?" Erkan remains silent. The teacher counts to four in Turkish. (Fieldnote from 18th October 2011, kindergarten)

In this fieldnote, I describe a situation in kindergarten in which the children practise numbers in a jumping game called the "dirt-track". Although the central idea behind this game is for children to count together, it is only Erkan who was asked to count alone, in his family language. Erkan does not oblige, responding only with silence, and instead it is the teacher who in fact begins to count in Turkish, demonstrating her expertise in the Turkish language. As a result of the teacher addressing him directly and requiring him to "perform", Erkan is afforded special "different" status. Erkan's reaction is to retreat into silence. Complementary to the findings of Seele (2012), which show how children actively participate in practices of doing ethnicity (Diehm & Kuhn, 2006), in my analysis it is the teacher in particular who is actively engaged in the reproduction of the children's ethnicity. In an interview with Erkan, I asked him about his family language use at kindergarten:

- I: Do you speak your *mother tongue* at kindergarten? Do you speak Turkish?
E: Yes.
I: Who do you speak Turkish to at *kindergarten*?
E: With Aara and Samira. ((interruption))
I: *Can Aara speak Turkish?*

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- E: No. She can speak Bangla and High German as well.
- I: Aha, but you speak Turkish with her?
- E: Yes.
- I: What do you say to her in Turkish?
- E: Er, don't know now.
- I: ((laughs)) And does she understand when you say something in Turkish?
- E: Yes.
- I: Yes? Hm. And do you speak Turkish to your sister at kindergarten?
- E: Yes.
- I: Yes? When?
- E: Er, this morning.
- I: This morning. On the way to the kindergarten?
- E.: Yes.
- I: Ah, yes? What languages do the children speak at kindergarten?
- E: German.
- I: Hm. And what else?
- E: And Macedonian as well. Luana does.

(Interview with Erkan, 12th June 2012, kindergarten)

Although I was unable to observe Erkan speaking Turkish, he reported on his active language use with his sister and his friends. In concrete interactions with his best friends, Aara and Samira, Erkan also uses Turkish. This situation could be interpreted as a *creative experiment with languages*, where Erkan is presumably teaching his best friends Turkish or promoting a *feeling of unproblematic understanding among friends*. Through interaction with peers, children negotiate relevant aspects of their ethnic and linguistic identities (Diehm & Kuhn, 2006). Another interesting aspect of Erkan's language use to become apparent in the interview is his use of Turkish with his sister on their way to school. The walk to school and back home can be seen as a *bridge between the two language worlds* of "home language" and "school language". We can assume that, like Dilek, Erkan also replicates this *separation of languages*. Erkan, too, is aware of the other children's family languages and, interestingly, he specifically mentions Luana and her family language, Macedonian. However, his knowledge of Luana's family language seems to come from the teacher, not from Luana herself. Luana defines herself as an Albanian-speaking child (see below, "Luana, the speaker of Albanian"). Erkan thus reproduces the teacher's *doing ethnicity* (see Diehm & Kuhn, 2006).

At the end of the first year in school, Erkan defines German as the language he knows best:

- I: Which language do you know *best*?
- E: German. [rapid answer]
- I: Hm. High German.
- E: High German [very low volume]
- [...]

- I: Do you speak other languages?
E: Yes, like *my language* at home.
I: What's the name of your language at home?
E: Turkish.// I: Hm.
I: Who do you speak that language with?
E: With my sister, my dad and Dilek. Other people don't understand it, except Aylin. // I: *Hm.* //E: She's Turkish.
I: *Aha.* And do you speak Turkish *with Aylin* too?
E: Yes.
I: When? I've never heard you do that.
E: Whenever we have a playdate.// I: Oh, at home then.// E: Sometimes.
I: And where do you have a playdate? At home?
E: At her house or at mine.

(Interview with Erkan, 30th May 2013, primary school)

In this interview, Erkan labels the family language as "my language at home". Erkan differentiates between German as the language he knows best and "my language at home". The possessive pronoun "my" and the adverb of place "at home" are thereby closely connected and point to the *localised nature of language use*: "Turkish is spoken at home". There are *some changes in Erkan's language perception* over the course of the year. According to his sister, speaking Turkish is (now) "embarrassing" for him. Now his use of Turkish is accordingly limited to the family context. Moreover, it is only at home that Erkan communicates in Turkish with his Turkish-speaking schoolmate Aylin. In the school context Erkan and Aylin use Standard German for their day-to-day interaction.

The fact that Erkan refused to speak Turkish and was embarrassed by it contrasts with his sister Dilek's attitude. Such individual differences in language preference may also be influenced by gender differences. Further analysis might explain individual language preferences in terms of how the families, schools and peers treat boys and girls.

Luana, the speaker of Albanian

Luana attracted my attention in kindergarten because of her very forceful reaction to the inaccurate description of her family language.

It is 9 am and the children are sitting in a circle. The teacher is talking about what they are going to do in the kindergarten group in the coming days and weeks. She announces that the group will be going to the library where they will be able to listen to a story and where the children will be able to look at books in other languages such as Albanian or maybe even Macedonian. She says the word "Macedonian" with emphasis and looks at Luana as she does so. Luana smiles and says "I don't speak Macedonian, I speak Albanian!" The teacher corrects her forcefully, saying "No, you speak Macedonian, because your cousin was in my kindergarten group and she spoke Macedonian." She adds that Macedonian is nearly the same as Albanian. (Fieldnote from 5th June 2012, kindergarten)

In my fieldnote of 5th June 2012, the teacher talks about books in several "foreign" languages and looks directly at Luana when she mentions books in Macedonian. Luana

appropriates her Albanian identity very confidently, correcting the teacher's statement as follows: "I don't speak Macedonian, I speak Albanian!"⁴ Not even this strong reaction from Luana, however, convinces the teacher. She argues that Luana's cousin spoke Macedonian, the implication being that the same will be true of Luana. In the context of the kindergarten, Luana's ethnic belonging is then constructed by the teaching staff, with no respect for the child's own linguistic self-ascription. As a result, the inter-relationship between teachers and children becomes imbalanced, with the adults assigning the children certain identities and thus reinforcing their own positions of power as knower and ascriber of language identities. Although Luana defends her family language, my data (interview with Erkan on 12th June 2012, kindergarten) show that the children ultimately tend to assume the ascription of the teacher rather than that of a kindergarten friend. Erkan reported in the interview that Luana's family language was Macedonian. The teacher is thus actively *doing ethnicity* (Diehm & Kuhn, 2006) and the children adopt the ethnified ascriptions of the teacher. In the interview with Luana at kindergarten, I asked her about language use in her family:

- I: What is your mother tongue?
- L: Albanian.
- I: Hm. And what do you speak at home with your parents?
- L: Albanian.
- I: Hm. And what about with your little sister?
- L: Albanian.
- I: Albanian as well.
- I: And have you got relatives here, aunts, uncles? Have you got any?
- L: With them I speak Albanian.//I: Hm//
- L: But with my uncle too I don't - but *with* him I just - with my uncle I don't, because I can't. With my uncle, I talk like at kindergarten.
- I: And what does everyone speak at kindergarten?
- L: (6)
- I: What does everyone speak at kindergarten?
- L: Hmmm.
- I: High German? Yes? Hm. Do you know any other language besides Albanian?
- L: Noo. Only my mum, my grandma and my grandpa do.
- I: What languages do they speak as well then?
- L: Um, they speak *Macedonian* as well.

(Interview with Luana, 11th June 2012, kindergarten,)

Luana demonstrates some refined knowledge about her family language, which includes her ability to differentiate between Albanian and Macedonian. Luana's mother is, in fact, known to speak both Albanian and Macedonian, but the family language (according to

⁴ Albanian is an Indo-European language that constitutes a distinct branch within this language family. Albanian is originally spoken in Albania, in the Republic of Kosovo and in the Republic of Macedonia, Southern Serbia, Montenegro and Greece (Schader, 2006, p. 43). Macedonian is a Southern-Slavic language and is originally spoken in the Republic of Macedonia and amongst a minority in Albania.

Luana) is Albanian. This would explain why Luana's maternal cousin speaks Macedonian (see fieldnote from 5th June 2012). This short incident illustrates the *wide variety of spoken languages in families with an immigrant background*. Even within a circle of relatives, different languages might be used. Although the teacher does not distinguish between the linguistically diverse languages of Albanian and Macedonian, for Luana these are clearly different and used in different situations. Interestingly, in contrast to her sophisticated perception of her family languages, Luana's knowledge of the language spoken at kindergarten is less developed. Nevertheless, I observed Luana actively using both languages, High German in circle time and Swiss German in particular peer situations. In the interview with me Luana supplied her answers in Standard German too. I would argue, however, that Luana does not just use several languages in school situations, but that in addition she is completely aware of the corresponding and varying usage of language(s).

Over the course of one year, Luana developed metalinguistic skills so that she could describe precisely in which situations at school she uses Standard German and Swiss German.

- I: What language do you speak in your class?
- L: German, High German.
- I: Mm, and what about at break-time?
- L: At break, High German and German as well.
- [...]
- I: Hm. Do you speak *Swiss German* too?
- L: Yes, but when I go home I only talk Albanian.
- I: Hm, fine. Do you understand what Driton says?
- L: Hm.
- I: Is that yes? Did you understand what he read out last time?
- L: Yes.
- I: Really?
- L: But I didn't like it, it annoys me when he says something in Albanian.
- I: Why?
- L: Because I don't always speak Albanian. 'Cos I speak Albanian, but I understand *everything* he says, but he says it over and over again.
- I: He says - he always says things in Albanian?
- L: Yes.
- I: And you don't like that? Why don't you like it?
- L: Because I only want to speak it at home. He can say when I'm at home. ((her voice gets higher))
- I: Ah, OK, when he's at your house
- L: [low volume] Yes, then he can speak it.

(Interview with Luana, 29th May 2013, primary school)

Like Dilek and Erkan, Luana separates her "*home language*" from her "*school language*". For her it is unacceptable to speak the family language at school and it annoys her if

Driton, her schoolmate, speaks Albanian to her at school. During my fieldwork at the primary school I observed one situation where the family language became an issue in circle time, namely during an event that Driton initiated. In order to demonstrate that he has a book in Albanian at home he had brought to school an Albanian copy of "The Town Musicians of Bremen". The teacher asked him to read aloud in Albanian and Driton read a few sentences (Krompàk, in press). In my interview with Luana, I referred to this incident. From Luana's point of view, Driton had broken the *implicit and hidden rule of "one language at home" and "one language at school"*. She defines the rule again: "He can say when I'm at home" (interview, 29th May 2013). The use of the family language at school is a deviation from this norm.

Conclusions

The results of the analyses show that the multilingual children with immigrant backgrounds clearly distinguish between *school language* and *home language* and that they seek to balance separate language worlds according to the social context. By extension, the walk to school can be interpreted as a symbol of a *bridge between two language worlds*. Moreover, the *separation of language worlds* can be understood as an *implicit and hidden rule* in the classroom. If somebody breaks the rules – i.e. speaks the family language at school – the children interviewed feel confused, embarrassed (Erkan) or uncomfortable (Luana). These findings contrast with García's concept of *translanguaging*, which describes "multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds" (García, 2009, p. 45). Translanguaging means that "there are no clear-cut boundaries between the languages of bilinguals" (García, 2009, p. 47). The findings in my research, in contrast, can be better captured with the concept "Sprachenfraktionierung / language fractioning of language" (Rehbein & Meng, 2007, p. 17) which also explains the separation of language use in an educational system governed by monolingual policy. Another study, which investigated the bilingual competences of Nahuatl-Spanish-speaking children, concurs with the findings presented in the present paper in that it too highlights the ability and tendency of bilingual children "to keep the language separate in specific contexts of use" (Francis, 2012, p. 118). Likewise, further findings by Heller (2006) also show a separation of languages by bilinguals in franco-phone Canada. On the basis of my observations and an analysis of the interviews outlined, it can be concluded that the multilingual children I observed do indeed separate languages in their everyday language use. Day-to-day language practices of multilingual children are influenced by the *social contexts* of the kindergarten and the school (Vygotskij, 1934/2002), and in particular by the teacher, who implements the specified language curriculum.

Although the language curriculum outlines approaches to multilingual education, the implications in praxis remain lacking (see Panagiotoupoulou & Krompàk, 2014). Multilingualism in educational praxis remains a surface phenomenon. This is compounded by the fact that teachers may not always have the requisite knowledge about linguistic diversity. This may include, for example, insufficient awareness of *multifaceted family language practices*. Further important findings showed how teachers *do ethnicity* by marking children as speakers of specific mother languages (see Panagiotopoulou & Krompàk, 2014, p. 50–61). The fact that families with immigrant backgrounds might use a variety of languages for their everyday lives is often not registered. In the case of Erkan and Dilek, the family languages spoken are Standard German and Turkish. Depending on the speakers, Luana's family use Albanian, Macedonian, Standard German and Swiss German for communication. If we consider that these multilingual children with an immigrant background were born in and are growing up in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, we can assume that they are also familiar with (or are becoming familiar

with) Standard German in addition to the local variety of Swiss German. Their *language identities are multi-faceted* as indeed are their everyday language practices.

Other important results of the study show the *dynamic change in language use and language perception in transition* from kindergarten to primary school. Multilingual children may *change their language preferences* during the course of a year. In the case of Erkan and Dilek, (Standard) German has become the dominant language. At the same time, over the course of one year they have developed a more nuanced perception of these languages, that is, for example, the distinction between Swiss German and Standard German in different situations (in the case of Luana).

Furthermore, the empirical material presented shows that the *children perceive themselves as multilingual individuals* and view themselves as having more than one "mother tongue" (Dilek). These findings show that multilingual children are actively doing (*linguistic*) *identity according to the social contexts* in which they find themselves. Using family languages at home and the dominant language at school and also learning spoken Swiss German, the children develop *multiple language abilities* and *multiple identities* which are still not yet widely identified or supported in day-to-day language practices in the Swiss education system. How the training of future teachers, in particular, can improve the ways in which the education system may better respond to these multiple language abilities and multiple identities, is a matter that requires further consideration.

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Appendix: Legend to Transcriptions

(.) (..) (...)	pauses (1, 2, 3 seconds)
(6)	pause of 6 seconds
((laugh))	para- or nonverbal act
<i>Really?</i>	stressed, emphasised
hmmm	holding of consonant, according to intensity
I just-	abortion of utterance
[]	commentary
// //	overlap
[...]	suppressed text

(based on Langer 2010, p. 523 and Breidenstein 2013, p. 98)

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Key words

multilingualism – language use of multilingual children – transition from kindergarten to primary school – separation of language worlds

Um höfund

Edina Krompæk (edina.krompak@fhnw.ch) er dósent í kennaramenntun við svissneska háskólann Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz. Hún lauk Ph.D.-prófi í menntavísindum frá háskólanum í Zürich. Rannsóknir hennar beinast meðal annars að málnotkun og sjálfsmynd í fjöltyngdu samhengi.

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