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The secret life of languages
Origin-specific differences in L1/L2 acquisition
by immigrant children

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Abstract

Focussing on Turkish immigrant children, in whom poor language performance has repeatedly been reported, the present article aims at providing explanations for *origin-specific differences* in the acquisition of L1 and L2 between immigrant children from Turkey and former Yugoslavia. For this purpose I have given special consideration to the *country of origin*, taking into account particularly its past and present policies on (minority) language(s) and education. The resulting interdisciplinary explanatory model integrates approaches in sociology, language attrition studies, socio- and psycholinguistics as well as pedagogy; in the sociolinguistic study presented at the end of the article, this new model is applied to the results of a 4-year psycholinguistic survey conducted with 65 primary-school immigrant children in Vienna, the outcome bearing considerable consequences for further research and educational as well as political practice.

Key words

immigrant children, L1 and L2 acquisition, language policies, language shift, Turkey, Yugoslavia

Abstract

Der vorliegende Artikel hat zum Ziel, mögliche Erklärungen für bislang ungeklärte *herkunftsspezifische* Unterschiede im L1- und L2-Erwerb von Migrantenkindern aus der Türkei und dem ehemaligen Jugoslawien zu bieten. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit wurde dabei dem *Herkunftskontext*, und hier v.a. der Sprach(en)- und Minderheitenpolitik der Herkunftsländer, geschenkt. Das daraus resultierende Modell beruht auf Ansätzen sowohl aus der Soziologie und der Sprachwechsel- bzw. Sprachtodforschung als auch aus der Sozio-/Psycholinguistik und der Erziehungswissenschaft. In einer empirischen Studie wurde das neue Modell erstmals auf ein Sample aus der Türkei und dem ehemaligen Jugoslawien angewendet; dieses hatte in einer vorangegangenen psycholinguistischen Studie ebenfalls die erwähnten herkunftsspezifischen Unterschiede erkennen lassen. Mögliche Folgen, die sich aus den Ergebnissen ableiten lassen, betreffen nicht nur die verschiedenen Gebiete der Migrationsforschung, sondern vor allem auch die Ebene der schulischen und bildungspolitischen Praxis.

Key words

Migrantenkinder, L1- und L2-Erwerb, Sprach(en)politik, Sprachwechsel, Türkei, Jugoslawien

Introduction

Already the period that directly anteceded my study and even more the time when the study was being conducted were both characterized by harsh political debates about the so perceived ‘parallel society’ of muslim immigrant families in Austria and their ‘large distance to the educational system’. This debate even lead to the perception of muslim families in general as a ‘potential risk for national security’ by the right wing of the Austrian political spectrum.¹ The situation has not changed considerably up to now: the fact that pupils belonging to Turkish families have been the weakest group in almost all recent studies on linguistic and educational success even seems to confirm political trends of the above-mentioned kind.²

The prior aim of my study was to counter views and trends like these by a detailed analysis of the Turkish labor immigrants’ actual linguistic and educational background, thus opening up new explanatory possibilities for the children’s weak performance. As a result, a new model concerning origin-specific failure was created/formed?. In this paper, my goal is to, first, present evidence that there is in fact need for such a model, for origin-specific differences in immigrant children’s language acquisition have so far been inexplicable. Second, I will discuss why the model should be interdisciplinary and which elements deriving from which disciplines it should comprise. Third, I will specify the new

¹ Cf. e.g. an expertise on the homepage of the Austrian Ministry of Defence (<http://www.bmlv.gv.at/wissen-forschung/publikationen/beitrag.php>, 28.3.2004), where first language classes for Turkish children in Austrian schools were equated with a threat to national security.

² Cf. Austria’s Interior Minister’s recent announcement that 45 percent of Muslim immigrants were “*unintegratable*” (cf. <http://www.antirassismus-plattform.at/Berichte.htm>, 29.5.2006) although the study the Minister referred to (see <http://www.antirassismus-plattform.at/Perspektiven%20und%20Herausforderungen.pdf>, 29.5.2006) showed that the mainstream of second generation Muslim immigrants would like to integrate into the Austrian society.

model's variables and hypotheses on the example of immigrant children (and their families) from former Yugoslavia and Turkey. Fourth, I will present the results of a sociolinguistic study in which the new model was applied to a sample of 65 second-generation immigrant children from the above-named countries of origin. Finally, I will sum up the consequences arising for further research on immigrant children's language acquisition in the different disciplines concerned, and shortly outline some interventions considered to result from my findings for the 'non-disciplinary' areas of education and language minority policies.

Why a new model? Recent findings and open questions

Is there any need for an explanatory model for origin-specific differences in language acquisition processes? To answer this question we will have to take a closer look at recent studies concerned with disparities of this kind.

Origin-specific differences are recurrently documented in the literature as a common phenomenon. As shown in French, Dutch, Swiss, German and Austrian sources, language proficiency regularly turns out to be weaker in migrant students of Turkish origin than in students from former Yugoslavia, Portugal, Spain or Italy; this is true not only for academic proficiency³ in the language of instruction in the immigration country (Jungbluth 1994, Hofman 1994, Driessen & Dekkers 1997, Müller 1997, Ruesch 1998, Wijnstra 2001, Stanat 2003) but surprisingly also for the – quite rarely tested – conversational⁴ and academic proficiency in the

³ Def. following Cummins (2000: 75)

⁴ Def. following Cummins (2000: 75)

respective first language (Aytemiz 1990; Olechowski et al. 2002).⁵ The failure to gain significant access to academic registers in either L2 or L1 in turn goes hand in hand with generally low educational success in Turkish migrant pupils in contrast to pupils of other origin (Fase 1994, Tilmatine 1997a, Andriessen & Phalet 2002, Crul & Doornik 2003).

Most of the above-named findings concern secondary school level. However, language acquisition processes during primary school should be of central interest to understand the genesis of later failure (cf. Baker & Jones 1998; Bayley & Schecter 2003; Barnard & Glynn 2003). A recent Austrian study that has focussed explicitly on language acquisition processes in primary school children from Turkey and former Yugoslavia is therefore especially worth noting: the psycholinguistic survey by Peltzer-Karpf et al. (2003)⁶. This survey⁷ was conducted in six Viennese schools with the aim to depict language acquisition processes during the first four years of schooling, i.e. from the age of six to ten, as detailed as possible; the survey was therefore designed as a longitudinal study (1999-2003). The sample comprised 65 second-generation immigrant children from Turkey and former Yugoslavia. The children were tested both in their assumed respective L1 (Turkish or Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian)⁸ and in German

⁵ Incidentally, this strikingly reminds of the findings on Moroccan migrant students, whose language proficiency is also reported to be noticeably weak (Hofman 1994, Driessen & Dekkers 1997, Wijnstra 2001, Tilmatine 1997b, Maas & Mehlem 2002).

⁶ "Bilingualer Spracherwerb in der Migration" (unpublished), available at the Austrian Ministry of Education. Members of staff: Vera Wurnig, Barbara Schwab, Reva Akkuş, Dijana Piwonka, Klaus Lederwasch and Marion Griessler, directed by Annemarie Peltzer-Karpf, University of Graz.

⁷ which concretely gave rise to my sociolinguistic study (cf. chapter 'The sociolinguistic study').

⁸ Information about the children's first language was drawn from the 'pupils' basic data' ('Schülerstammdaten') which parents are asked for at the school enrolment of their children. The only L1 languages given were Turkish and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, for two pupils also Albanian; in fact, however, pupils also had other L1 than the ones given by their parents. Accordingly, it will be shown in chapter 'Variables and hypotheses on the meso-level' that such data is often insufficient to find out the immigrant children's *actual* first languages.

(assumed to be L2).⁹ The results coincide with the outcomes of the above-mentioned studies as they reveal that already in the first four years of school the surveyed children of Turkish descent did more poorly than the children from former Yugoslavia, not only in German, but also in their assumed first language.

Though the mentioned studies derive from highly disparate disciplines, such as psycho- and sociolinguistics, pedagogy and sociology, there is much consensus on the results stated above. In addition, there is yet another result all these studies have in common: the reported origin-specific differences remain unexplained – a fact that is increasingly focussed on particularly by sociological migration researchers (e.g. Stanat 2003 and, most notably, Esser 2006). Thus it appears that there should in fact exist a demand for an explanatory model dealing with origin-specific differences in the first and second language proficiencies of immigrant children.

Why interdisciplinary? The components for a new model

Since each area of migration research deals with the study of language acquisition in its own way, the resulting wealth of approaches gives rise to some more questions: which of all these disciplines should supply the components for the new model? And which components should such an explanatory model consist of? My objective in this chapter is to answer these questions by providing insight into the linguistic, sociological and pedagogical ways of explaining success and

⁹ The tests included subtests of spontaneous and systemic linguistic skills as well as investigations of text proficiency and were evaluated according to a self-developed scoring system (cf. Peltzer-Karpf et al. 2000).

failure in general. It should thus be possible to isolate theoretical constructs or elements of constructs considered eventually to be of use to explain the strong link between origin and linguistic failure or success.

First of all, in *psycholinguistics* research on language acquisition has so far mainly been concerned with factors present in the individual (such as intelligence, motivation, self-esteem etc.; cf. e.g. Gardner & Tremblay 1998; Dörnyei 2002), in the family (such as language input; cf. e.g. Snow 1972; Krasnegor et al. 1991; Baker 1995; Bayley & Schecter 2003) and in the learning environment (cf. e.g. Robinson 2002). Likewise, interaction and interdependence between L1 and L2 (and L3 etc.) systems as well as between language and cognition in general have been of crucial importance in understanding the nature of bi/multilingual students' linguistic development (cf. e.g. Herdina & Jessner 1999; Cummins 2000). That is why explanations could primarily be found for *individual* differences in language acquisition and – furthermore – for the strong dividing line between migrant and non-migrant students, or language minority and language majority students *in general* (cf. Cummins 2000). But several problems arise when there are *origin-specific* differences at stake. Firstly, individual factors such as self-confidence or intelligence as well as quality of parental input can hardly be said to vary depending on ethnicity – and even *if* they did, this would not yet represent any explanation; rather, such findings would call for further research to account for such phenomena. Secondly and similarly, teachers' input as well can hardly be blamed to be the cause of origin-specific failure, for no matter what origin, migrant students are taught together in the same classrooms and therefore are exposed to exactly the same linguistic input. And thirdly, numerous studies show

that even a wide structural gap between L1 and L2 does not necessarily prevent successful L2 acquisition in migration (cf. Portes & Mac Leod 1999; Portes & Rumbaut 2001).

That is why *sociolinguists* have in several studies addressed themselves to the analysis of parental attitudes towards education and school (e.g. Durgunoğlu & Verhoeven 1998) possibly caused by a perceived ‘reluctance’ of Turkish parents to facilitate their children’s educational success (cf. e.g. Aytemiz 1990). But in this specific point at issue sociolinguistics has not been successful, for it is precisely in the case of Turkish parents that studies have shown exorbitantly high career aspirations for the children (cf. Beiwl, Galehr & Schmid 1995; Olechowski et al. 2002). In addition, any assumption of ‘attitude and orientation problems’ in Turkish families that would impede educational or linguistic success (cf. e.g. Ehlers 2001: 47) has proven to be false (cf. Nauck & Alamdar-Niemann 1998).

Pedagogics has therefore deviated more and more from the trend of looking for causes for educational failure in the individual as such. Both in European and in US studies there seems to be broad consensus that on no account individual and family factors can be considered to be the cause of poor performance of any population as a whole (cf. Kronig 2003; Portes & Zhou 2001).

From here, we can evidently move on to *sociology*, where the core issue traditionally is the so-called ‘macro-level’, i.e. the socio-political level and its impact on all aspects of human life. As has been shown, this socio-political level (e.g. in the form of socioeconomic status) has a strong impact on the group members’ average educational success (cf. Sasse 1999: 428; Hradil 2001).

In transferring this concept to the area of language acquisition, an analogous concept of the *linguistic macro-level* (e.g. in the form of language

policies) can be said to account for the *linguistic failure* of specific population groups, i.e. of specific autochthonous or migrant speech communities. The linguistic macro-level should therefore constitute the basis for a new explanatory model (cf. the bottom level in diagram 1 at the end of this chapter).

Nevertheless, complementary consideration is necessary, for sociological explanatory models have so far built exclusively on macro-factors belonging to the *immigration* context (cf. Portes & Zhou 2001; Portes & Rumbaut 2001). At the same time the background factors in the *countries of origin* have hardly ever been mentioned (e.g. by Esser 2006) and never been incorporated into the explanatory structure. However, since the immigration context does not offer sufficient explanations for our problem (Stanat 2003; Esser 2006) and since we are concerned with *origin-specific* failure, *origin-specific* macro-factors should play a crucial role in a new model. And here again linguistics comes into play: *research in language shift and language death* primarily deals with autochthonous minorities and consequently not with immigration countries, but, naturally, with the minorities' countries of origin and their macro-level. In this field, Sasse (1992a; 1992b; cf. also Dressler & de Cillia, forthcoming) has produced an especially elaborate model which depicts the decline in the L1 proficiency of autochthonous minorities. In his model, macro-factors are called 'external setting' and comprise the entire range of extra-linguistic factors, such as socio-political and other related processes. Following Sasse's model concrete linguistic behaviour in a speech community can only be explained from the standpoint of these macro-factors (Sasse 1992b: 10f.): It is the *socio-political assessment and treatment* (and not simply the affiliation to a group) that exerts the strongest influence on linguistic proficiency and behaviour, on the collective assessment of

one's language and on the collective experience of group identity (cf. Fishman 1999; cf. also Bourdieu 1983). Therefore, to be able to explain origin-specific linguistic phenomena in migrant population groups, a new model must at any rate include the *macro-conditions for language acquisition in the country of origin* (cf. again the bottom level in diagram 1).

Let us return to *sociology*, for the macro-level must definitely be linked with the level of the individual, the so-called 'micro-level' – and it is exactly this linkage that has at all times been a central task in sociological research. Usually this is managed by establishing a 'meso-level' in explanatory structures. In this regard one of the most approved concepts is Bourdieu's 'habitus', viewed as a pool of operation strategies acquired during socialisation (cf. Treibel 1997: 100). In the language sphere, the concept concerns linguistic behaviour and, as part of this behaviour, language transmission between generations – which is yet another approved sociological concept, namely that of 'intergenerational transmission', meaning the transfer of parental resources to the children (Nauck, Diefenbach & Petri 1998). Bourdieu refers to these resources as 'capital', in the field of education as 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu 1983).

As we are in the present case concerned with linguistic resources and linguistic behaviour, I shall introduce the terms *linguistic capital* and *intergenerational transmission of linguistic capital* for the new model. The transmission starts from the generation of the parents and therefore links the macro-conditions in parental language acquisition with the language acquisition processes in the generation of the children. The parents thus represent an intermediate level between macro- and micro-level and shall hence in the new model be referred to as *meso-level* (cf. the medium level in diagram 1).

Similar to the macro-level, the meso-level also needs linguistic complementation, this time from *sociolinguistics*. Since the number of languages brought along in migration is considerably higher than has been assumed until recently (cf. Extra & Yağmur 2004; Maas & Mehlem 2002) – a perspective that is largely missing in sociological migration research (cf. e.g. Esser 2006) – sociolinguistics has increasingly been addressing the question which and how many languages are *actually* spoken and transmitted in migrant families. In my study¹⁰ particular attention was therefore paid to obtaining accurate information regarding *all* family languages represented in the sample.

At the top of the new model, i.e. on the micro-level, it is again *sociology's* turn: numerous studies show that the cultural capital brought along by parents in migration and transmitted to children is a decisive factor in the immigrant children's educational success (cf. Nauck et al. 1998: 720; Bayley & Schecter 2003). Accordingly, it can be assumed that parents' *linguistic* capital and transmission behaviour also is a decisive factor in the immigrant children's *linguistic* success or, in other words, that the parents' language proficiency and language transmission behaviour form the seed capital for immigrant children's language acquisition. In the new model this seed capital shall be called *children's linguistic starting point in the country of immigration* (cf. the top level in diagram 1).

Especially the micro-level needs complementation by *psycholinguistics*, as this is the only discipline that focuses on interdependence between L1 and L2 proficiency. In sociology, by contrast, L1 exploration is almost completely left out in favour of L2 proficiency and L2 motivation (cf. e.g. Brettell & Hollifield

¹⁰ cf. chapter 'The sociolinguistic study'

2000).¹¹ However, although no ‘absolute’ validity of any of the existing theoretical constructs or frameworks about the interdependence of L1 and L2 (and L3 etc.) can be claimed (cf. Cummins 2000: 3), empirical evidence for an interrelation between all language proficiencies in bilingual/multilingual persons is much too powerful (cf. Bayley & Schecter 2003: 41; Cummins 2000: 201-231) to be neglected in any field of migration research (as e.g. by Esser 2006). In this respect, in contrast to considerable parts of sociological research, *pedagogical* research parallels the above-named psycholinguistic findings as it shows that educational success in the country of immigration is not necessarily a consequence of linguistic assimilation (cf. Badawia 2002). In fact, a positive attitude towards one’s L2 *and* L1 as well as towards the societies of the country of immigration *and* the country of origin have turned out to be a solid basis for educational and linguistic success as they usually go hand in hand with high linguistic self-confidence in L2 and a good command of both languages (Schiesser & Theurl 2001; Badawia 2002; Reich & Roth 2002).

In accordance with these findings the term *linguistic identity* shall be introduced for the new model, meaning the immigrant families’ and/or the immigrant children’s relationship to *all* their languages, i.e. to the parents’ language(s) as well as to the language of instruction at school. In the ideal case, linguistic identity should present itself as a flexible identity, neither sticking exclusively to L1 nor rigidly refusing L1 in favour of L2 (following Badawia 2002; cf. also Fishman 1999: 445 and 452-453).

Moreover, children’s linguistic starting point comprises not only linguistic identity but in fact all language-related conditions children come across in their

¹¹ except e.g. Portes et al., who normally collect data about L2 *and* L1 (though without testing language proficiency; cf. Portes & Schauffler 1996).

family from the very first day. This also includes the language proficiency parents bring along in migration depending on their linguistic capital. It shapes their children's linguistic starting point, which shall therefore be called *children's starting point in their parents' L1* (or *in their parents' L1 and L2*, if the parents transmit more than one language to their children).

To recapitulate, the new model shall comprise elements from sociology, sociolinguistics and pedagogics as well as from psycholinguistics and research in language shift and language death. It shall be structured as follows (cf. diagram 1):

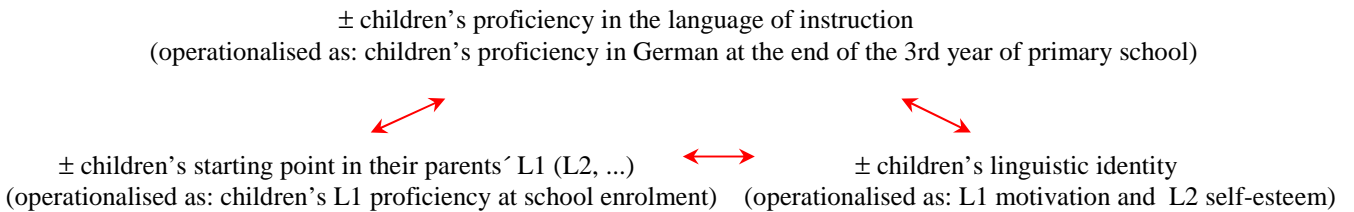
- the model shall be composed of *macro-, meso- and micro-level*, of which the macro-level should be of basic relevancy;
- as the linguistic aspect is of greatest significance in the model, the macro-level shall be represented by the *macro-conditions for language acquisition in the country of origin*;
- as a result of the macro-level, the meso-level shall comprise *parents' linguistic capital* acquired in the country of origin and brought along in migration, as well as *parents' intergenerational transmission of language(s)* to their children;
- and as a result of the meso-level, the micro-level shall be *children's linguistic starting point in the country of immigration* (comprising *children's starting point in their parents' L1 (L2, ...)* and *children's linguistic identity*). This starting point will be considered¹² to be of relevance for *all* languages children have to acquire in the course of time

¹² Cf. the corresponding hypothesis in the following chapter 'The new model'

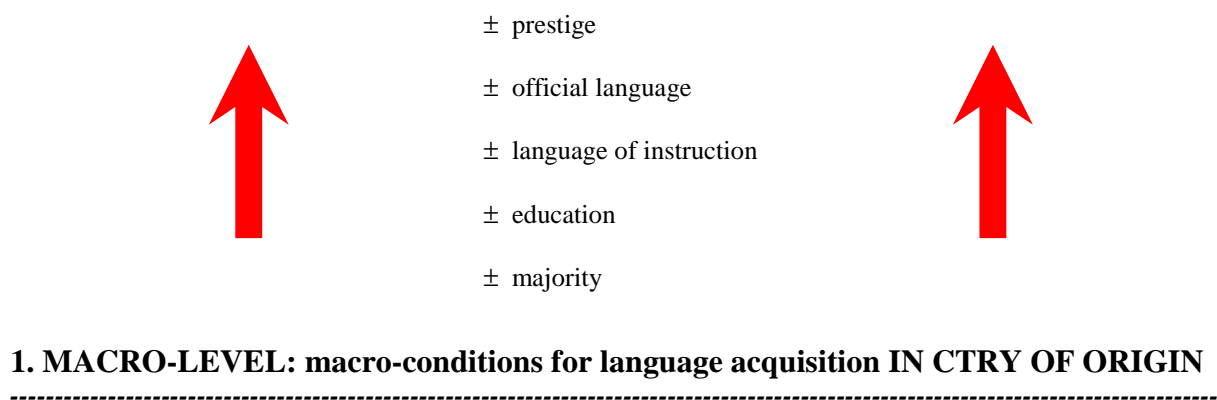
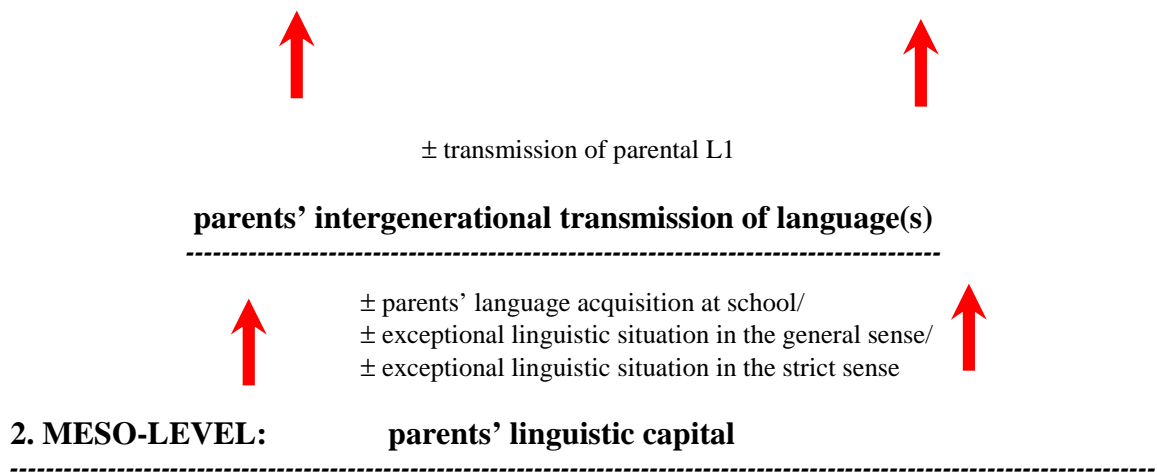
(and therefore also for *children's proficiency in the language of instruction* in the country of immigration).

My way of connecting several disciplines of (migration) research in the form of an interdisciplinary model aims at contributing to the understanding of origin-specific differences through an approach hitherto inaccessible to the individual and as yet unconnected disciplines.

Diagram 1:
Interdisciplinary model of language acquisition in the country of
immigration
 (see pages 7-14 and 16-32)



3. MICRO-LEVEL: childrens' linguistic starting point IN CTRY OF IMMIGRATION



The new model. Variables and hypotheses based on the example of two countries of origin: Turkey and former Yugoslavia

In the following the new model shall be described on the macro-, meso- and micro-levels, and exemplified by the two largest migrant groups in Austria: those from former Yugoslavia and from Turkey. Diagram 1 (see previous page) illustrates the model's structure, i.e. the three levels and the respective variables. Diagram 2 (at the end of this chapter) shows the hypotheses arising from the model. The terms in bold found in the following sections refer to the model's levels and to the variables as represented in the two diagrams.

Variables and hypotheses on the macro-level

Following Sasse's 'external setting', on the macro-level the core issue shall be *language policies of the countries of origin*. In terms of my basic research question¹³ I will primarily discuss those aspects in which Turkey and former Yugoslavia differ to a considerable extent.

In former Yugoslavia and its successor states, the languages of instruction at school were (and still are) the respective varieties of the *majority* language spoken in the different parts of the country: the Bosnian, the Croatian or the Serbian variety of Serbocroatian (cf. Bugarski 1999). Furthermore, most of the *minority* populations' classes also were (and still are) taught in their respective first languages (i.e. Hungarian, Albanian etc., c.f. Breznik 1991). Not only this almost area-wide supply with L1 instruction, but also the foundation of a

¹³ cf. chapter 'Why a new model?'

sufficient number of schools since 1945 ensured a continuously growing educational level within the Yugoslavian population. There are only few exceptions to be named: First, Roma minority children have hardly ever received any incentive for education nor for the preservation of their mother tongue. The illiteracy rate therefore is still extremely high, as well as the degree of social exclusion this group has to face. Hence, the Romanes language is almost exclusively restricted to the family domain and often even abandoned in favour of a dominant majority language (Matras 1997). Secondly, the Albanian minority as well has been exposed to strong assimilation attempts by the Yugoslav government. The social status of the minority and the educational situation has heavily suffered from these attitudes (Janjetović 2001) so that the amount of illiterates and of people with only a few years of school attendance is far beyond the country's average (Breznik 1991). Thirdly, the Vlahian¹⁴ speech community is rather disadvantaged, since school education has never been provided in their mother tongue. There is, however, the advantage that the Vlahian language is almost identical to the language of neighbouring Romania (Kahl 1999). Consequently, for this population there is sufficient access to educational institutions in the mother tongue within geographical reach.

Thus, the language-political and educational conditions in former Yugoslavia differ greatly from those in Turkey, where the population is cut into strictly separated sections by dividing lines that are much more striking than in the Yugoslavian context. First, Turkey's 40 to 60 *minority* languages (which are the L1s for at least 35% of the total population; cf. Kreyenbroek 1996; Andrews

¹⁴ in Serbia 'Vlasi' for the minority and 'Vlaški' for the language

2002) have never been conceded a place in the education system.¹⁵ Moreover, the minorities have been subject to far-reaching linguistic and economic discriminatory measures, even up to displacement and deportation (Peker 2000). The renunciation of the minority languages and the shift to dominant Turkish therefore determines the language use of many minority families in Turkey (Andrews 2002). Second, the Turkish society is even characterised by a striking dividing line between the Turkish-speaking *majority* population in Anatolia¹⁶ and the educated urban elite, due to fast and extensive reforms with the aim of westernising the country. Among these changes, the reform of the Turkish language may be regarded as the most radical (Robins 2000; cf. Brendemoen 1998: 242). The rural population, which constitutes the vast majority of the Turkish population, has had no opportunity to participate in the ambitious linguistic changes (cf. Boeschoten 1997: 376). That is why even today there exists a large linguistic distance between modern Turkish and the regional Turkish dialects (cf. Andrews 1989: 631; 2002); it therefore takes rural children very long to cope with the written form of the modern Turkish language (Boeschoten 1997).

It can be concluded that at the macro-level the divergent population groups find themselves in very dissimilar linguistic circumstances¹⁷, for the above-mentioned conditions have so far exerted a strong influence on the possibilities of language acquisition in the countries of origin. Thus, the fact that almost all Turkish immigrants in European countries belong to the Anatolian rural population (cf. Six-Hohenbalken 2001; 2002) and that at least 35% of these

¹⁵ with the exception of the Jewish, Armenian and Greek minorities (that are hardly represented in labour migration and not at all in the sample of my study; cf. diagram 2 at the end of this chapter)

¹⁶ today also living, to a growing extent, at the periphery of the metropolises (cf. Six-Hohenbalken 2001).

¹⁷ Recently new measures regarding all minorities are being taken in both countries of origin. However, their impact has so far been too weak to achieve the expected improvements (refer e.g. to <http://www.ecoi.net/>).

immigrants belong to a language minority (Andrews 2002; Herzog-Punzenberger 2003; Uçar 1996) is quite significant for my investigation.

To recapitulate what has been said about the model's **macro-level** (see diagram 1), the dividing lines between the different *population groups* can be specified as follows:

- a first line can be drawn between
 1. language communities which have language-political power (**+majority**¹⁸, as e.g. the Turkish-speaking educated stratum),
 2. language communities which are 'powerful' only numerically but not in regard to language-political impact (**±majority**, as e.g. the Turkish-speaking rural population), and
 3. language communities which represent a minority concerning both number and language-political impact (**-majority**, as e.g. the Kurdish minority in Turkey);
- a second line can be drawn between
 1. language communities with a relatively high educational level¹⁹ (**+education**) and
 2. language communities with a relatively low educational level (**-education**);
- a third line can be drawn between
 1. language communities whose L1 is the language of instruction as well as a subject at school (**+lg of instr.**, as is the case e.g. for the Albanian

¹⁸ The terms in bold with the symbol +, ± or - refer to the research variables represented in diagrams 1 and 2.

¹⁹ meaning that the illiteracy rate was noticeably *below* 20% in the 1970s. The 1970s were chosen here as this was the decade when the surveyed children's parents (cf. chapter 'The sociolinguistic study') were attending school in the respective countries of origin.

minority in former Yugoslavia and the Kurdish *educated* stratum in Turkey²⁰) and

2. language communities whose L1 is neither the language of instruction, nor is taught as a subject at school (**-lg of instr.**, as e.g. in the case of the Turkish-speaking rural population²¹ in Turkey);

- a fourth line can be drawn between

1. language communities whose L1 is the official language either in the country of origin or in a neighbouring country (**+off. lg**, as e.g. the Vlahian minority in former Yugoslavia²²),

2. language communities whose variety *bears the name* of the official language but is de facto rather a ‘negative antipole’ versus the official variety of this language (**±off. lg**, as e.g. the Turkish-speaking rural population²³), and

3. language communities whose L1 does not have an official status in any country (**-off. lg**, as e.g. the Kurdish minority);

- a fifth line can be drawn between

1. language communities with high social prestige²⁴ (**+prestige**, as e.g. the Turkish educated stratum) and

2. stigmatised language communities (**-prestige**, as e.g. the Roma minority, the Turkish-speaking rural population etc.).²⁵

²⁰ Despite the fact that Kurdish is not a language of instruction in Turkey, the Kurdish educated stratum is also regarded as + with respect to this dividing line because this population group has L1-like command of Turkish (cf. Kreyenbroek & Sperl 1992). Therefore, no linguistic barrier must be overcome by children of this group at school enrolment in Turkish schools.

²¹ Despite the fact that the majority of the rural population in Turkey speaks Turkish, it receives a – (instead of a + or a ±) in this category because there is a wide gap between modern Turkish and the rural dialects. It therefore takes rural children very long to cope with the written form of modern Turkish.

²² whose L1 is the official language in Romania

²³ Concerning this exceptional position of the Turkish rural population and its social consequences cf. Robins 2000.

²⁴ Definition following Wode (1995: 38).

The dividing lines outlined above define the five variables that exist on the model's macro-level, i.e. majority, education, language of instruction, official language, and prestige. Together these variables form the **macro-conditions for language acquisition in the country of origin** (see diagrams 1 and 2), viewed as a continuum in which an unlimited amount of possibilities to add or remove situations²⁶ is thinkable.²⁷

The dividing lines and variables on the macro-level give rise to the following hypotheses (see diagram 2):

Between the two countries of origin, Turkey and former Yugoslavia, sharp differences arise at the macro-level when we consider that, in contrast to former Yugoslavia, most of the population groups in Turkey have to deal with an extremely difficult linguistic situation. Not only the Turkish-speaking rural population, but even more so the language minorities (i.e. at least 35% of the population) have to face conditions that heavily aggravate the acquisition and transmission of L1 and/or L2. While in Turkey these population groups form the majority, in former Yugoslavia only a small section of the population was (and still is) similarly impeded in the fields of language acquisition and transmission.

²⁵ It goes without saying that in a different context *many more variables* than the ones selected here (majority, education, language of instruction, official language, prestige) and *many more values* than +, - and \pm could be chosen, depending on the country and the linguistic context a language community is situated in. In the context of the language communities represented in the sample of my study, however, the variables given above were completely sufficient to define the differences between the population groups. – This holds not only for the macro-level, but also for the meso- and the micro-levels.

²⁶ cf. the footnote above

²⁷ For the sake of clarity, I have completely left out the macro-conditions of the *country of immigration* in my model. Besides, Portes & Zhou (2001) have already provided a comprehensive model for the immigration context which does not need further complementation. I have rather focussed on the macro-factors of the *countries of origin*, which have so far been omitted in sociological models.

Variables and hypotheses on the meso-level

On the meso-level, the core issue is formed by the macro-level's concrete consequences for language acquisition and transmission in the *first generation of migrants*, i.e. in the *parents' generation*.

Following the concept of Bourdieu's cultural capital, I have assumed the existence of a linguistic capital for the parents. With this term I refer to the language proficiency acquired by the parents in their primary and secondary socialisation in the country of origin.

Due to the described language policies, the amount of this capital is assumed to depend highly on the macro-conditions for language acquisition in the country of origin. As a consequence, typical conditions for language acquisition in every language community arise. When defining the different manifestations of such 'typical linguistic situations', research in language shift and language death can be of great value, for this is the only discipline focussing exclusively on language proficiency under particularly aggravating circumstances like e.g. collective stigmatisation (cf. Sasse 1992a). Therefore, I have adopted Sasse's concept of 'incomplete language acquisition' (as greatly differing from 'normal acquisition processes'; cf. Sasse 1992a: 63f.) as a basis for the definition of *exceptional linguistic situations* in my model:

The concept of *exceptional linguistic situations in a general sense* refers to the lack of possibilities for first language acquisition or the acquisition of the corresponding state language at school. This is considered an exceptional situation

since the possibility to access comprehensive academic proficiency in any language is strongly limited by such circumstances.

An *exceptional linguistic situation in a strict sense* entails the loss of the first language in favour of a dominant language. This is considered an exceptional situation particularly when at the same time the school does not facilitate sufficient mastery of the dominant language. Situations of this kind exert a strong negative effect both on language proficiency and on the individual's self-esteem (cf. Wodak & Rindler-Schjerve 1985; Boeckmann et al. 1988). Contrary to the general sense of exceptional linguistic situation as defined above, the strict sense views language proficiency as being negatively affected not only at the academic level but also in conversational every-day use. This is due to the fact that the new 'first language' is very often acquired under strongly discriminating circumstances and without the possibility to completely expose the speakers to all repertoires of their new L1.

Not only the linguistic capital, but also transmission behaviour is supposed to represent an implementation of the macro-level's conditions for socialisation. This is corroborated by numerous research findings in the area of language shift, showing that the non-transmission of L1 is practically always associated with the parents' personal experience of discrimination and stigmatisation (cf. Gugenberger 1995: 243; Boeckmann et al. 1988; Wodak & Rindler-Schjerve 1985; Kouritzin 1999; Fishman 1999).

To recapitulate, the dividing lines that separate the migrant *parents* on the model's **meso-level** (see diagram 1) are specified as follows:

- a first line can be drawn between

1. parents whose capital is high²⁸ (**+parents' language acquisition at school**),
 2. parents whose capital is lower²⁹ (**+exceptional linguistic situation in a general sense**) and
 3. parents whose families have undergone language shift and who therefore have abandoned all their L1 capital and need to start again from zero in a new 'L1' (**+exceptional linguistic situation in a strict sense**);
- a second line can be drawn between
 1. parents who have transmitted their L1 capital to their children (**+transmission of parental L1**) and
 2. parents who have abandoned their L1 and transmitted a new 'L1', i.e. a foreign language, to their children (**-transmission of parental L1**).

The dividing lines outlined above define the variables on the model's meso-level, i.e. parents' language acquisition at school, exceptional linguistic situation in a general sense, exceptional linguistic situation in a strict sense, and transmission of parental L1. Together, these variables form **parents' linguistic capital** and **parents' intergenerational transmission of L1 and/or L2** (see diagrams 1 and 2).³⁰

²⁸ because they were able to acquire their language(s) at an academic level

²⁹ because they were not able to acquire their language(s) at school

³⁰ The wide bars in diagram 2 symbolise the fact that parents' linguistic capital is not static, but rather dynamic and can change over time (cf. Herdina & Jessner 1997). Diagram 2 also shows the specific kind of mono- or bilingualism that is transmitted from parents to children: the wide arrow represents L1, the thin arrow L2. A continuous arrow stands for the language that the parents know best. Such a language does not necessarily have to be the parents' L1, since this language may not even be represented in the school system of the country of origin. Still, it is assumed that speakers normally have a closer relationship to their first language than to the second (cf. Kouritzin 1999); therefore, the L1 arrow is wider.

The dividing lines and variables on the meso-level give rise to the following hypotheses (see diagram 2):

As on the macro-level, sharp differences between former Yugoslavia and Turkey can also be expected on the meso-level, where the macro-conditions become manifest in the parents' linguistic capital and transmission behaviour.

Firstly, in Turkey conditions render it much more difficult than in former Yugoslavia to acquire high linguistic capital – for the Turkish-speaking as well as the linguistic-minority rural population. To reach the level of academic language proficiency in modern Turkish, both population groups would need relatively long schooling, but that is hardly ever provided. Exceptional linguistic situations are therefore frequently found in Turkey – in the *general sense* mostly within the Turkish speaking rural population, in the *strict sense* mostly within the linguistic-minority rural population. For the language majority in former Yugoslavia, in contrast, no especially long schooling was³¹ necessary to acquire the literary language; correspondingly, exceptional linguistic situations are rarely found in Yugoslavian language minority settings.³² It follows that the linguistic capital brought along by first-generation immigrants from Turkey (i.e. by the *parents* of second-generation immigrant children in Austrian schools) is on average lower than that of first-generation immigrants from former Yugoslavia.

Secondly, parents' (i.e. first-generation migrants') transmission behaviour is also viewed to mirror the country of origin's macro-conditions. Parents from Turkey are much more likely to tend towards language shift³³ than parents from former Yugoslavia.

³¹ nor is it nowadays

³² with the exceptions of the Roma and, to a lower degree, the Albanian minority

³³ if language shift has not already taken place in the former generation (cf. Zentrum für Türkeistudien Essen 1998).

Thirdly, when minority languages are heavily stigmatised in the country of origin even the *determination* of actual family languages tends to be problematic in empirical studies because the members of stigmatised groups tend to hide their affiliation. As this is precisely the case in Turkey, the parents' true affiliation can be expected to be far more difficult to ascertain in a Turkish sample than in a Yugoslavian one (cf. Zentrum für Türkeistudien Essen 1998; cf. also footnote 6 !).

Variables and hypotheses on the micro-level

On the micro-level, the core issue shall be the macro- and meso-levels' consequences for *second-generation immigrant children's* individual language acquisition.

There, my model is based on the supposition that language acquisition by migrant children (in the country of immigration) is closely connected with the language acquisition of their parents (in the country of origin). This assumption is supported by findings showing that parental input generally plays a decisive role in language acquisition (Sasse 1992a: 62).³⁴ It therefore makes a considerable difference whether the parents were able to acquire their language(s) up to an academic level or not. Furthermore, parental input is considered to be restricted to certain registers or parts of the repertoire when parents – as a consequence of language shift – actually transmit a 'foreign' language. Due to aggravating circumstances, this language will not be completely at their disposal, neither linguistically nor emotionally. Therefore, it is not only language proficiency but also linguistic self-confidence and identity which may suffer under such

³⁴ In addition, linguistic research in the field of foreign language acquisition has also demonstrated that certain aspects cannot be learnt without input (Wode 1995: 133).

conditions (cf. e.g. Wodak & Rindler-Schjerve 1985: 19; Gugenberger 1995; Kouritzin 1999). As a consequence, in my model children's linguistic starting point in the country of immigration is viewed to depend highly on these parental premises as well as on the macro-conditions in the respective country of origin, which originally gave rise to the above-named premises. Furthermore, following numerous psycholinguistic findings supporting the interrelation between all languages in bilingual or multilingual persons, the linguistic starting point can be considered important not only for L1 acquisition, but also for the acquisition of any further language(s), in our case particularly for the acquisition of the language of instruction in the country of immigration.

As a result, on the **micro-level**, i.e. the level of the second-generation immigrant children (see diagram 1), the model considers dividing lines between the following groups:

- a first line can be drawn between
 1. children whose linguistic starting point is characterised by their parents' high linguistic capital (**+childrens' starting point in their parents' L1, L2, ...**) and
 2. children whose parents have provided a lower linguistic capital (**-childrens' starting point in their parents' L1, L2, ...**, in my study operationalised as 'children's L1 proficiency at school enrolment'³⁵);
- a second line can be drawn between
 1. children provided by their parents with a positive attitude towards their language(s) (**+childrens' linguistic identity**) and

³⁵ L1 proficiency at school enrolment was the children's earliest linguistic output accessible to our research team and was thus chosen as a manifestation of my concept of 'childrens' linguistic starting point'.

2. children provided with less positive attitudes (**-childrens' linguistic identity**, in my study operationalised as 'L1 motivation' and 'L2 self-esteem'³⁶). It is these attitudes that are viewed to account for the children's further approach towards language acquisition in general, i.e. towards their first *and* second language acquisition.

The dividing lines outlined above define the variables on the models' micro-level, i.e. children's starting point in their parents' L1 (L2, ...) and children's linguistic identity. Together, these variables form **children's linguistic starting point in the country of immigration** (see diagrams 1 and 2).

The dividing lines and variables on the micro-level give rise to the following hypotheses (see diagram 2):

Firstly, high linguistic seed capital, i.e. an advantageous linguistic starting point in the country of immigration (operationalised as: L1 proficiency at school enrolment, L1 motivation and L2 self-esteem) are viewed to go hand in hand with good to excellent command of L2, L3 etc. (operationalised as: command of German at the end of the 3rd year of primary school³⁷). In the case of a less advantageous linguistic starting point, the command of L2, L3 etc. (here: of German) is viewed to be weaker.

This implies that the children's linguistic starting point highly depends on their parents' linguistic capital. Children disposing of high capital in their parents'

³⁶ As L2 motivation has been proven to play a subordinate role in immigrant children's language acquisition (cf. Gardner 1985; Müller 1997), I have chosen *L2 self-esteem* to operationalise children's attitude towards L2.

In the case of children's L1 attitude, the investigation of *L1 motivation* represents a first, for to my knowledge this variable has so far not been investigated in language acquisition research.

³⁷ At school enrolment, many of the sociolinguistic sample's children were far from having any command of German. Thus it made no sense to correlate the children's proficiency in German with their L2 self-esteem and L1 motivation before the third year of schooling.

first and/or second language(s) are thus expected to have good to excellent command of their L1 and any further language(s) (L2, L3 etc.; i.e. in my study: German). The same can be assumed for those children whose parents have transmitted to them their full linguistic capital *without* abandoning or even silencing their L1, thus transmitting the language(s) which they feel rather ‘at home’ with.

Consequently, parallel to the meso-level, the country of origin’s macro-level is in the end also considered to noticeably influence the immigrant children’s language acquisition. That is to say, the better the conditions were in parental linguistic socialisation, the better children are expected to acquire L1 as well as any further language(s) (L2, L3 etc.; in my study: German). Any *origin-specific* differences in language acquisition can thus become plausible to a very large extent. Against the background described here, such differences are therefore no longer to be viewed as individual or parental ‘failure’ but rather as a phenomenon of *social inequality*, or, as in our case, of *language-political inequality*.

In summary, the new model is an attempt to provide, to the extent possible, a flexible representation of the various situations of language acquisition of migrant parents (in the country of origin) and their children (in the country of immigration). It differentiates between language-political circumstances (on the macro-level), ways of acquiring and transmitting language(s) that are characteristic of a group or a family (on the meso-level) and children’s individual language proficiency (on the micro-level) – thus considering that not only macro-factors, but also individual decisions play their part in language acquisition and transmission. One and the same language-political background does therefore not

necessarily lead to the same results in every single family. Nevertheless, it is an elementary assumption of my model that in the context of *origin-specific* success or failure, the macro-level contributes by far the most powerful explanations for differences in transmission behaviour and language proficiency.

The sociolinguistic study

This sociolinguistic study was performed with the aim to give clear empirical evidence for the assumptions derived from the interdisciplinary model presented in the preceding chapters. The study sample consisted of those 65 immigrant children from former Yugoslavia and Turkey who have already been referred to in this paper³⁸ as participants of a Viennese psycholinguistic study conducted from 1999 to 2003.³⁹ As the psycholinguistic results – in accordance with other studies – showed major origin-specific differences in the children’s L1 and L2 proficiency, it made sense to use the same sample for the sociolinguistic study, too, in order to establish whether the interdisciplinary model would be relevant for the language proficiency results obtained with these children.

Due to the small number of subjects, the study is not representative. However, as the investigation had to deal extensively with stigmatised or even silenced languages⁴⁰ and the core data could therefore only be collected in time-consuming one-on-one interviews with the children’s parents⁴¹, the small sample size was, in fact, an advantage: a large time-frame was available for each interview and it was thus possible to create a stimulating atmosphere that facilitated free narration. By the same token, the conversations with the parents were conducted in what was presumed to be the parents’ first language⁴². This proved to be effective: after a warm-up phase the conversation seemed to appeal

³⁸ cf. chapter ‘Why a new model?’

³⁹ cf. footnote 4

⁴⁰ cf. chapter ‘The new model / Variables and hypotheses on the macro-level’

⁴¹ i.e. about one hour per parent (either father or mother) and family

⁴² i.e. the official language of the respective country of origin, for it was not clear *before* the interviews which language(s) would turn out to be the parents’ L1

to the parents, evidently fulfilling a need that schools are all too often unable to meet due to linguistic barriers.⁴³

Only a small selection of the findings of my study can be presented here;⁴⁴ the sequence is the model's macro-, meso- and micro-levels as presented in the previous chapters.

Results on the macro-level

As macro-level information (i.e. the historical and political background) cannot be collected empirically, my findings are based on extensive study of literature from Turkish and Slavonic research, ethnology and history as presented in the previous chapter. To recapitulate: at the macro-level there are *distinct differences between the surveyed children's two countries of origin*, namely Turkey and former Yugoslavia. Notably, the main part of the population in *Turkey*, i.e. both the Turkish-speaking as well as the linguistic minority segment in the rural areas, are faced with an extremely *difficult linguistic situation*.⁴⁵ Furthermore, most Turkish immigrants in Austria are members of these two highly deprived groups: nearly all Turkish immigrants belong to the Anatolian rural population (cf. Herzog-Punzenberger 2003), 35% of whom are members of linguistic minorities (Six-Hohenbalken 2001; 2002). This proved quite significant for the results on the meso-level.

⁴³ The data thus obtained were supplemented by data collected in one-on-one interviews with all teachers of the surveyed children.

⁴⁴ For complete results of this study see: Brizić (forthcoming).

⁴⁵ cf. chapter 'The new model / Variables and hypotheses on the macro-level'

Results on the meso-level

A central finding of the sociolinguistic study is that an unexpectedly large number of the immigrant families in our sample are members of linguistic minorities (cf. in diagram 2 the language communities represented in the sample): for 32.4% of the parents from former Yugoslavia and – to varying degrees – for up to 39% of the parents from Turkey, a minority language is the L1; this is a minority proportion which exceeds that in the respective country of origin.⁴⁶ Furthermore, as the minority languages are heavily stigmatised in Turkey, and as the members of stigmatised groups tend to hide their affiliation, even the *investigation* of the family languages was far more difficult in the Turkish part of the sample than in the former Yugoslavian one (cf. also footnote 6).⁴⁷

Apart from those parents who are members of linguistic minorities, the remaining parents in the sample originally belonged to the rural or small-town population in the respective country of origin, which in the Turkish context stands for deprivation, too. That is because reaching the level of academic language proficiency in modern Turkish requires relatively long schooling for the Turkish-speaking rural population – a condition fulfilled only in the case of very few Turkish parents in our sample.

Exceptional linguistic situations are therefore common throughout the Turkish families in our sample. Accordingly, a considerably lower level of

⁴⁶ 12% in former Yugoslavia and at least 35% in Turkey; cf. chapter ‘The new model / Variables and hypotheses on the macro-level’. The above-stated results of my study correspond with findings corroborating that minorities in general are much more likely to migrate than majorities as the minority situation is far more often characterised by deprivation (cf. Zentrum für Türkeistudien Essen 1998; Chaker 1997; Lie 2002).

⁴⁷ Therefore, possibly more than 45% of the Turkish sample belonged to a linguistic minority. For 45% of the families the minority affiliation could be established with certainty.

linguistic capital, i.e. language proficiency, is found in the parents from Turkey than in the parents from former Yugoslavia.⁴⁸

Results on the micro-level

In my study, the children provided with high linguistic seed capital, i.e. high *L1 proficiency* at school enrolment, high *L1 motivation* and high *L2 self-esteem*, accordingly turned out to have a good to excellent command of *German*. In the case of low L1 proficiency at school enrolment, low L1 motivation and low L2 self-esteem, the children's command of German is also low in my sample. In diagram 2, this is illustrated by the origin-specific children groups of the sample being ordered according to their linguistic performance in German – the best group on the left, the weakest on the right. As many more children from Turkey than from former Yugoslavia show low seed capital, the question arises whether or not there is a connection between these micro-level phenomena and the meso- and macro-levels.

As assumed, *poor command of German* in the surveyed children noticeably goes hand in hand with *low parental L1 capital* on the meso-level. As can be seen in diagram 2, children's proficiency in German correlates with the location of the wide grey bars – the higher the bar, the better. In addition, the study unexpectedly clearly revealed as a central finding that *the children's low level in German* significantly correlates with the *non-transmission of parental L1* to the children.⁴⁹ Those children, in contrast, who were able to acquire their

⁴⁸ The parents' linguistic capital, i.e. their linguistic proficiency, was investigated by asking the children's L1 teachers to grade the parents' language proficiency.

⁴⁹ This non-transmission is a common phenomenon throughout the Turkish families in our sample: *all* parents with L1 Kurdish, with a single exception, shifted to Turkish when raising their children.

parents' L1, score particularly well in L2/L3 German.⁵⁰ This is illustrated in diagram 2, which shows the children's proficiency in German to be high when a red arrow, or a blue as well as a red arrow, can be found below the children's linguistic starting point. Actually, parental L1 transmission turns out even to compensate for aggravating macro-factors.⁵¹

As well as the results connecting micro- and meso-level, those connecting micro- and macro-level are also highly significant in the statistical evaluation. The more conducive the macro-factors were to *parental L1 acquisition*, the higher is the *children's proficiency in German*. Thus, the macro-conditions in the parents' *country of origin* evidently remain effective during the immigrant children's schooling career, including L2 acquisition in the *country of immigration*.⁵²

To summarise: the interdisciplinary model was based on the assumption that *origin-specific differences* in language acquisition processes of immigrant children from former Yugoslavia and Turkey are a phenomenon of *social*, or more precisely, of *language-political inequality*. This assumption is affirmed by the results of the present explorative study.

⁵⁰ For instance, German is the L3 in the case of a Kurdish boy highly proficient in Turkish, Kurdish and German, as well as in the case of a Vlahian girl highly proficient in Serbian, Vlahian and German.

⁵¹ With reference to the Kurdish educated stratum and the Vlahian group in diagram 2: despite several aggravating macro-factors, the two groups *with parental L1 transmission* are only slightly behind the best group (the Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian children with exclusively positive macro-factors). The case of the *Roma children with parental L1 transmission* is similar (although on a quite different level): they exceed the *Kurdish group with language shift to dominant Turkish*, although both groups suffer from the same aggravating macro-factors.

⁵² Furthermore, the linguistic background problems as illustrated in my study and brought along in migration are compounded by the educational approaches of the Austrian system, where educational success still greatly depends on the children's social background (cf. Herzog-Punzenberger 2003).

Consequences for research

Before modelling the new approach presented in this paper, several disciplines had to be consulted in order to be able to answer certain open questions in the field of migration and language acquisition research.⁵³ Now that the combination of various disciplines into a new model has opened up new perspectives, in turn suggestions can be made for further research in the disciplines involved.

With regard to *psycholinguistic* surveys on the linguistic proficiency of immigrant children, some considerable innovations should be taken into account. As mentioned earlier, at least about 35% of the Turkish families either do not speak Turkish as their L1, or ‘L1’ Turkish has been acquired only recently. In the case of children from former Yugoslavia, still about 12% or even more speak a minority language. Yet, in practically every study conducted thus far, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and Turkish have been the only languages ascertained (cf. e.g. Olechowski et al. 2002). Under these conditions, it is not surprising to obtain inexplicable results.⁵⁴ A monolingual concept⁵⁵ is thus pursued, most likely unintentionally, while the actual phenomenon at play is multilingualism. Thus, at the very beginning of every survey, it should *always* be clearly ascertained if the children are going to be tested in their *actual first language*. This means that experts familiar with the possible language community contexts should from the outset find out which languages are actually spoken in the children’s families.

⁵³ cf. chapter ‘Why a new model?’

⁵⁴ A Viennese study came to the conclusion that first language classes for the observed immigrant children “were of no significant advantage”, and that some children who have learned their L1 at school do worse in L2 than those who have not (Olechowski et al. 2002: 48). No explanation for these results (which created an uproar) was found.

⁵⁵ as e.g. the concept of the Turkish government that the mother tongue of all inhabitants is Turkish (cf. Kreyenbroek & Sperl 1992: 47; Robins 2000).

Explorations of this kind are time-consuming and not always necessarily successful, e.g. when speakers consider their language to be especially stigmatised. However, if successful, they provide a much more adequate and explicatory background.⁵⁶ Quite different but still analogous is the case of the immigrant population with L1 Turkish: the majority of the tests addressing these children is aimed at measuring the children's command of modern standard Turkish. Indeed, if the children were tested in their actual first language, namely dialectal Turkish, it would probably be easier to gain insight into their actual linguistic proficiency.⁵⁷

With regard to *sociological* migration research, on the other hand, I believe that an important claim can be made as far as the study of language and educational success is concerned: if conducted in close cooperation with psycholinguistics, such research could likely reveal interesting innovative insights, for factors such as interdependence between L1 proficiency and educational success in L2 (to cite only one of the central issues in current research) cannot be verified when language proficiency is examined too cursorily.⁵⁸

For *research in language shift and language death*, in turn, it would be meaningful to embrace certain sociological concepts. Being familiar with the concepts of 'capital' and 'capital loss', for instance, would at the same time imply considering not only proficiency in the 'dying' language but also, and even more

⁵⁶ In this respect, a clear analogy is found between Turkish and Moroccan immigrant children and their families (cf. footnote 3 !) as the large majority of each immigrant group belongs to linguistic minorities (cf. Maas & Mehlem 2002).

⁵⁷ There seems to be another clear analogy between Turkish and Moroccan immigrant children (cf. footnote 3): in both cases a wide gap exists between the dialectal (Turkish or Moroccan) L1 and the written (Turkish or Arabic) standard (cf. Maas & Mehlem 2002).

⁵⁸ Usually, language proficiency is not tested but the probands are asked for their *self-estimation* (cf. e.g. Portes & Schauffler 1996). A limitation to be kept in mind is that results obtained in this manner are likely to represent not only language proficiency but also linguistic self-esteem, or rather a combination of the two variables.

controversially, *in the new 'L1'*.⁵⁹ In fact, taking into account that language shift or death frequently means a considerable disadvantage for the communities concerned (Elégoët 1978; Dorian 1982: 44; Rindler-Schjerve 1986; Sasse 1992a: 75 f.; 1992b; Hornberger 1996; Fishman 1999: 451), the study of the proficiency-related consequences of a linguistic new-start in highly education-oriented⁶⁰ societies should be topical. So far, however, the vast majority of research in language shift and death has focussed exclusively on proficiency in the disappearing language, whereas the extent to which speakers in different contexts master their newly gained 'L1 capital' is still unclear.⁶¹

To conclude with *sociolinguistics*, finally, and to speak from my own experience, this discipline is also most likely to need sociological 'refreshment'. Origin-specific differences have so far remained unexplained mainly because of the absence of the macro-level in sociolinguistic theory. Accordingly, in such contexts, I would highly recommend a multidisciplinary approach to research in language acquisition, and I would like to conclude by stressing the great value of this approach for my own study, too.⁶² As D. Cameron has put it:

If sociolinguistics is to progress from description to explanation (...) it is obviously in need of a theory linking the 'linguistic' to the 'socio'. (Cameron 1990: 84)

⁵⁹ Compare with the highly informative findings obtained by Kouritzin (1999).

⁶⁰ and therefore highly academic-language-proficiency-oriented (cf. e.g. Steinig & Huneke 2002).

⁶¹ An exception is e.g. Rindler-Schjerve (1986), who predominantly investigates the proficiency in the new 'L1' (cf. also Wodak & Rindler-Schjerve 1985).

⁶² I am especially grateful to Rudolf de Cillia (linguistics), Christoph Reinprecht (sociology), Rainer Bauböck (political science), Claudia Römer (Turkish studies) and Reva Akkuş (psychology), who have made this interdisciplinary approach possible.

Implications for practice

The prior aim of my study was to open up new explanatory possibilities for Turkish immigrant children's weak linguistic performance resp. for origin-specific linguistic failure in general. I hope the results of my work have been able to show that innovative answers in fact can be found by closely looking at the collective background brought along in migration: From this perspective the weak performance of an immigrant group as a whole evidently results essentially from a composition of *social inequalities and stigmatisations* not only in the country of immigration, but just as much, if not primarily, in the *country of origin*.

Of course this fact should bear considerable consequences for the handling of what is generally perceived as the 'weak performance of Turkish children' in Austrian and other European schools. It will, for instance, hardly be of help to aggravate former stigmatisations (brought along from the country of origin) by further ones (in the country of immigration) - as e.g. by segregative L2 training for the children (which they often experience as social exclusion, cf. Schiesser & Theurl 2001) or by coercive language courses for their parents.⁶³ Rather, a fortification of the children's self-confidence and an intensive involvement of the parents into everyday school matters can be regarded as highly promising factors for successful L2 acquisition.⁶⁴

But by no means consequences should be limited to the individual and the school levels. For the central findings of my study are that, above all, the *socio-political* (or *language-political*) *macrofactors* facilitate or impede the linguistic success of socio-linguistic communities, and that particularly the macrofactors of

⁶³ Cf. <http://www.sprachenrechte.at/> (link [Abschlussklärung](#)), 29.5.2006.

⁶⁴ Cf. a project being elaborated at present, with the prior aim to fulfill the above-named needs (conception: Reva Akkuş, cf. Akkuş, Brizić & de Cillia 2005).

the *countries of origin* last effective even up to and including children's language acquisition in the country of immigration. *Linguistic human rights* for minorities, e.g. in Turkey, the successor states of former Yugoslavia and other countries of origin, therefore no longer must remain a subject matter only in the area of Human Rights, but should as soon as possible become a *matter of educational policy*, too. In this spirit, a new field of educational policy should be established in immigration societies like Austria, with the challenge to act in a completely innovative way, cooperating specifically and increasingly with the countries of origin, precisely because stigmatised groups in the countries of origin are all too often becoming marginal groups in the education systems of the countries of immigration. The present paper has been written with the aim to call attention to this disastrous coherence and to contribute as possible some ideas for new ways of effectively facing this specific, but widespread form of 'doubled' social inequality.

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