Monolingual Writing Support with Bilingual Benefits: The Majority Language as *aide-de-camp* for the Heritage Language

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Title: “Writing Skills Support in Multilingual Secondary Schools. The Effect of Profiled Revision Tasks on Written Production of 6th Grade Students in the L1s German and Turkish and the L2 German” (SimO)

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Project Funding Reference Number: 01 JM 1304 A/B

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Follow-up project TimO: 01.10.2016-30.09.2019
Paradigm shifts, HL literacy skills and bilingual pedagogy

Two starting questions:

- Is there a *causal* relationship between writing in two languages?
- Can specific instruction in *one* language lead to higher proficiency in *another* language? (=> multilingualism pedagogy)
Research interest

Interdependence hypothesis:
“To the extent that instruction in Lx is effective in promoting proficiency in Lx, transfer of this proficiency to Ly will occur provided there is adequate exposure to Ly and adequate motivation to learn Ly.” (Cummins 2010: 15)

Supporting majority language literacy can support HL literacy

Goal:
Foster *transformation* of literacy skills from German to the HL (cf. Larsen-Freeman 2013)
Design

Intervention Tasks

Forms

German Text Production

Functions

Forms & Functions

Control Group

Effect

No Intervention

Turkish Text Production

Control Group
Hypothesis

Writing tasks emphasizing **functions** in German result in better texts in the HL Turkish than other writing settings.
Design: Material-based writing (intervention) task in German

Step 1: Basic Description
Rocket Rob, super hero. There are houses. Rocket Rob is like a human. He has arms. At the bottom: feet. He has a pizza there. He flies. There are reasons for that.

Step 2: Image
- super tube: repairing buildings
- pizza: invulnerability
- rockets: flying

Step 3: Intervention
e.g.: “Comparison”
Function: “Compare Rocket Rob to other figures or people your reader might know.”
Possible form: “…looks like…”

Step 4: Text Production
Design: Material-based writing task in Turkish

**Step 1:**
**Basic Description**


**Step 2:**
**Image**

- pis su tuluması: pis su sıçratmak
- dağış gözüğü: karanlıktan görünmek
- içinde kiri su olan bardak: görünmezlik
Design: Chronology

- **Pre-test**
- **Weekly interventions 1–4**
- **Post-tests 1–2**

**German Class**
- 7 writing tasks (control condition)

**Turkish Class**
- 7 writing tasks (control condition)
Results: Analytical rating for Turkish ($n = 64$)

Main effect for task condition ($F(3,60) = 5.19, p < 0.01, \eta^2 = 0.21$)

$\Rightarrow$ HL texts are better after function-based intervention in German.
Conclusions

- Consistent improvement of all four groups over time ("practice makes better")
- Interlingual skill transfer occurred from the majority language into the heritage language when writers received explicit functional support
- This suggests that
  - more intensive cooperation between teachers of different languages could be beneficial for writing,
  - provided support focuses on functional aspects of texts relevant to all languages in similar discourse contexts and genres