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Writing in two languages.

Argumentative and narrative texts of bilingual

Italian-German students

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5282/oph.11>

English summary

In most European countries, including Germany, bilingual people have the opportunity to learn writing skills only in the language they use at school. They use their first language orally in a family context, but do not learn to write in this language and therefore tend to be monolingual in written communication. However, the development of writing skills plays a central role in ensuring access to educational resources and professional career advancement. In this respect, previous studies show that further progress in the second language is limited if writing skills are not learned in the first language (see Cummins 2000, Riehl 2018d). The development and promotion of writing skills, not only in the school language but also in the language of origin, are therefore both decisive prerequisites for, and a challenge to, the development of multilingualism (Ehlich 2010: 59).

Based on the premise that bilingual writing skills are an important resource for both the individual and for society, the following study aims to understand which linguistic structures are transferred in the written texts of bilingual Italian-German students and which strategies they use in order to compensate for possible missing linguistic patterns in both languages. The work also analyses what kind of biographical factors influence bilingual textual competence.

This empirical study is based on 212 narrative and argumentative texts and 106 interviews with bilingual Italian-German students in the 9th and 10th grade. The data were collected from three school groups (*Realschule*, *Gymnasium* and *European School*) in Munich, Germany. For the analysis texts were also collected from a monolingual Italian and a monolingual German control group.