(Foreign) Language Education and Its Impact on Equal Opportunity and Sustainability. Lessons Learned from A Bilingual German-Turkish Program at An Urban Elementary School in Germany

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of an ethnographic case study in which the socio-cultural effects of a bilingual German-Turkish language program at an unusual elementary school in urban Hanover were examined. Not only children from families with a history of immigration from Turkey can learn Turkish in this school, but all children can. Findings indicate that valorizing a stigmatized migrant language and using it as an educational resource for all learners can lead to greater equity and social cohesion, as well as better academic performance. Based on the findings of the study, it is discussed what contribution a reorientation of (foreign) language education in the selective German school system could make to overcoming the dividing line between "belonging" and "foreign" and as a contribution to sustainable learning. The findings will furthermore be reanalyzed against the backdrop of the COV-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Turkish as a foreign language, Heritage language education, Bilingual education, Foreign language education, Educational equity, Sustainable learning

1. Introduction

It has often been reiterated that on a global scale the consequences of the worldwide Corona pandemic have hit the poorest the hardest; some even speak of COV-19 as the inequality virus (McGreal, 2020). Likewise, the poorest of the poor in the Global South will suffer more and have started to suffer earlier from the impact of climate change, loss of diversity and deforestization (Göpel, 2016, 2020). This research paper will commence in pre-pandemic times and ask how a pluralistic society in the Global North like Germany has dealt with the winds of change posed by the side-effects of globalization and the urge to address climate change - and in the wake immigration, mobility and increasing linguistic, social and cultural diversity. For the past decades, multilingualism has been regarded as a salient feature of culturally and ethnically diverse societies in the Global North and the multilingual paradigm has been challenging European nation states - in particular in the domain of their state education. In Europe, piecemeal, the former ideal of the monolingual nation state citizen has been substituted by the idea of a multilingual European citizen who speaks at least the language of the country they live in plus at least two other languages (Kruse, 2012). However, top-down language policies in countries like Germany are still heavily influenced by monolingual ideologies and a preference for English as a foreign / global language. Despite the official paradigm shift from regarding multilingualism as a problem to looking at (linguistic) diversity as a resource and potential for individuals as well as the society, plurilingual children who grow up in poor families with a history of migration still do not have the same chances to succeed in the selective German educational system. The Corona pandemic can be seen as striking evidence to prove this claim (Fickermann & Edelstein, 2020; El-Mafaalani, 2021; Stanat et al., 2022).

Hence, one of the pressing challenges in the migration receiving Western European societies can be seen in the question as to how to reconstruct educational systems which are deeply rooted in the 18th and 19th century nation states and which are based on the "one nation - one people - one language" ideology (cf. Schiffauer et al., 2002; Küppers et al., 2016a). Moreover, many nations are also struggling to find answers as to how to meet the United Nations' demand of inclusive education for all as well as the 17 United Nations' goals of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015). Germany for its part has very reluctantly and only recently come to accept that the country has developed into an immigrant society.[1] Since then, many voices demand that the democratic right to freedom and equality guaranteed by the German Basic Law (Grundgesetz) must be achievable for everyone. In consequence, it is claimed that state institutions have to be adjusted to the realities of the diverse and pluralistic German society. The narrative of the post-migrant (Foroutan, 2019) helps to describe a society which can be characterized by a constant intake of immigrants as well as a steady flow of outgoing emigration. The suffix "post", thus, indicates a democracy *after* having arrived at

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1   Since the publication of a report issued in 2001 by the independent so-called Süssmuth Commission, it is widely acknowledged by the political establishment that Germany is a country of immigration; large parts of the public and population see it also that way, argues Foroutan (2019, pp. 224-225).

the realization of being a migration society. In a society which accepts being radically diverse, the term post-migrant also helps to overcome the well-established dividing line between those who "belong" and those who are usually perceived as being "foreign" (Foroutan, 2019, p. 18).

However, national state school systems have had a hard time in adjusting to fast changing realities of interconnected, digital and diverse new world orders. Pressing issues can be seen in growing segregation, institutional discrimination, educational and social injustice and finding pedagogical answers to dealing with increasing diversity (cf. Ball, 2011; Morris-Lange et al., 2013). In many countries the linguistic integration of immigrant children but also of adult migrants has become a major concern (cf. Beck, 1999). In some cases – e.g. like Germany – language barriers (e.g. language testing before immigration) have even been pulled up to prevent migration intake from certain world regions.[2]

Looking at the specific German context, large comparative studies repeatedly show that in hardly any other countries is educational success so closely linked to the socio-economic family background of a child as in Germany (cf. Ammermüller, 2005; Merkens, 2019; El-Mafaalani, 2020). Aladin El-Mafaalani, sociologist, educationist and author of a bestselling book on the myths of education ("Mythos Bildung") strongly points out that growing up in a family with a history of immigration to Germany is certainly not irrelevant; but by far the most decisive impact on success in education can be seen in the general state of "wealth" in a family – in terms of economic power, cultural and social capital (cf. El-Mafaalani, 2020, p. 70). The best indicator to predict success in education, he claims, is in fact the address of a child (El-Mafaalani, 2020, p. 94). While school is the only place where all children can be reached and where inequalities which exist in the society can be compensated; a school may also be a place where inequalities are being reinforced and the social divides can even increase. According to El-Mafaalani, one of the reasons can be seen in assessment procedures which deviate from the prevailing meritocratic performance principle. Studies show that those who experience hardship in their families and have much poorer starting opportunities in life anyway, are often being evaluated more strictly than privileged children when it comes either to grading or recommendations from elementary to lower secondary school (in Germany mostly after fourth grade at the young age of ten).

El-Mafaalani elaborates on the phenomenon which he calls "double disadvantage". Academic achievements are usually assessed by teachers without having detailed knowledge of a child's social background or family situation. Subsequently, the influence of parents who can act as support teachers and supervise homework – and / or who even do the homework for their children – often also gets assessed. During the COV-19 pandemic and while schools were locked-down for weeks in a row, for the first time ever parents were officially asked to support their children at home academically with homework and learning. Many privileged children could surely

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2   For the European rhetoric cf. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/ and http://www.assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-DocDetails-EN.asp?FileID=19772&Lang=EN

benefit from parental supervision, poor children in contrast, often suffered immensely from the lockdown conditions at home (Stanat et al., 2022). As most teachers usually do not receive assessment training in the field of heritage and equity, El-Mafaalani argues that they develop hardly any sensitivity for the impact of socio-economic family status on school performance: "Diagnostic skills [of teachers, AK] are oblivious to social background and what you cannot see, you cannot support", El-Mafaalani concludes (2020, p. 80; translation by AK). With the following example he illustrates this claim: Assuming a 9-year-old boy performs not too badly at school, his grades are average, yet fate has given him a huge burden to carry: After school he has to look after his disabled younger brother because his mother passed away a year before. His father is unemployed and has an addiction issue. The boy's early life experience is presumably dominated by poverty and deprivation. In his everyday life there might be a shortage of love, compassion and inspiration and all types of capital are lacking: economic, social, and cultural. Resignation of the adults around him is surely palpable. However, if a child achieves average grades under these conditions, it is likely that s/he may have above-average potential, possibly even huge hidden talents, El-Mafaalani assumes (2020, pp. 80-81). Yet, as this boy may seem unfocused at times, distracted, or insecure, would a teacher perceive him as a high achiever? he questions.

The language potential of plurilingual children gets also often overlooked or cannot be assessed by teachers. Educators are sometimes aware of other family languages used besides or instead of German, yet often they lack the knowledge as to whether a child is a fluent speaker of the family language and can read and write, or whether the child is a so-called heritage speaker (Bremer & Melhorn, 2018; Woerfel et al., 2020), maybe with little command of the family language and often with no literacy skills at all. Hence, in this paper it will be argued that in the field of language education, injustices can be reinforced further, while at the same time, language education could help to increase more equal opportunities at school. Evidence for this claim derives from findings which emerged from an ethnographic case study at an elementary school in urban Hanover where a bilingual German-Turkish program was introduced not long after the – for Germany "shocking" - results of the first PISA study were published by the OECD (cf. Christensen & Segeritz, 2008; Faas, 2014)[3]. The Hanover case study shows, furthermore, how language education can be adapted to the realities of the multilingual post-migrant society and how this approach can help to overcome the wide-spread binary perception of "we" and "not-we" and, thus, how to promote sustainable learning.

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3   Cf. https://www.oecd.org/pisa/

2. Theoretical considerations. Language Policies in the global perspective[4]

Schools around the globe are forced to rise to the challenges which the side-effects of globalisation, in particular the myth of endless economic growth (Göpel 2016), have posed to them since the second half of the 20th century. In times of emerging super-diversities (Vertovec, 2015), "local diversity and global connectedness" (The New London Group, 2000) have been identified as key challenges which have to be translated into new learning objectives, new curricula, and new teaching materials. Around the turn of the millennium, The New London Group called for a multiliteracies pedagogy which puts cultural and political participation centre stage. This global concept of education is embedded in an interdisciplinary and international approach to teaching literacy, in addition, it calls for new multimodal and multilingual forms of learning, and, thus, can be seen as a benchmark for educational policy (cf. The New London Group, 2000: 14).

Likewise, European education policies communicate a clear commitment to inclusive societies in which the promotion of multilingualism can be seen as benchmarks for schools and teaching: "Linguistic diversity is part of Europe's DNA" (Europäische Kommission, 2017, p. 3). For reasons of linguistic rights, cultural identity and social integration, language policy milestones issued by the European Commission in the past couple of decades all aim to protect linguistic diversity and promote the knowledge of languages. The formula 1 + 2 still represents the popular ideal that every European citizen should (be able to) learn a first language and at least two other languages (Kruse, 2012).[5] However, regional and minority languages and immigrant languages like Arabic or Turkish have only recently been deliberately included (Extra & Yağmur, 2012)[6]. Moreover, EU initiatives to promote the learning and usage of those languages are still scarce while under the guise of "multilingualism" a powerful "Englishization"' has gained momentum not only in the private sector but also in schools and especially higher education institutions (Hu, 2016, p. 264; similar House, 2003). In the large horizontal *Language Rich Europe* study, the authors even fear that English has turned into a force which will become a substitute for multilingualism and undermine diversity (Extra et al., 2013, p. 5). Hence, during the past decades of stable transatlantic relationships with the USA and Great Britain, English has developed into the undisputed hegemonic superpower in classrooms across Europe (Küppers 2022) as almost all children learn English, while on

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4   This article is based on a talk given at the 26th bi-annual conference of the German Association of Language Research (DGFF / Deutsche Gesellschaft für Fremdsprachenforschung) which took place in Ludwigsburg 2015 (Sept. 30 – Oct. 3); selected revised paragraphs of the congress publication have been used for this publication; cf. Küppers, Almut (2017).

5   cf. http://ec.europa.eu/languages/languages-of-europe/index_en.htm

6   Arabic and Turkish are so-called "non-European languages" which are spoken and learned by millions of inhabitants of the EU member states, boasting more speakers than small national tongues like Estonian or Latvian, two official EU languages. In the big urban European areas "immigrant languages" have emerged as vital community languages which the minority groups who speak them at home usually conceive of as a core aspect of their identity. However, in comparison to regional minority languages like Sorbian or Welsh, "immigrant languages" are almost unprotected in the EU.

average about 60% of upper secondary students learn an additional – mostly European – 2nd foreign language (cf. Eurostat, 2021; European Commission, 2017).

2.1. Language Policies in Germany

In Germany, too, there has been an obvious mismatch between European and internationally acclaimed benchmarks like "multiliteracies" or "inclusion" and an overall unfavourable atmosphere towards minority languages and multilingual pupils who speak immigrant languages. Despite the powerful multilingual rhetoric, immigrant languages are still likely to be seen as the "culprits for low achievement at school" (Yağmur & Konak, 2009, p. 277).

In contrast, multilingualism has clear positive connotations in the context of added school bilingualism which is promoted through Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), a flagship EU program which has been very successful in Europe since the mid-1990s. On the one hand, privileged monolingual pupils from the majority population benefit from CLIL since it is mostly grammar schools that have introduced CLIL streams and English is by far the most often used vehicular language to teach a content subject (Eurydice Report, 2006; KMK Report, 2006; Language Rich Europe Report, 2013). As CLIL attracts and wants to attract the top group of very able pupils, internal creaming effects have further contributed to the selectivity of the German school system and, therefore, seem to foster the growing segregation in the German school system (Morris-Lange et al., 2013), and thus, unwillingly educational inequality (Küppers & Trautmann, 2013). On the other hand, in the submersive German school system bilingual minority children used to be subjected to a kind of "unintentional CLIL" since German has been used as a vehicular language for many of them to develop concept knowledge in content subjects – yet, without any bilingual methodology applied. With the current pressure to (yet again) integrate large numbers of non-German speaking refugee children into the school system, however, valuable approaches of language sensitive teaching across the curriculum (e.g. *Durchgängige Sprachbildung* cf. Gogolin, 2011, 2020; Gogolin et al., 2013) which have been developed in the past two decades and deliberately integrate multilingualism as a potential are once again put to the test.

Two misconceptions about the learning and the teaching of immigrant languages have been widespread and persistent. First, it is believed that speaking an immigrant language at home is an obstacle to integration, and second, many believe that it hinders these students' ability to succeed in the mainstream educational system (Esser, 2006). After the advent of the first PISA results in Germany, there was a general tendency to ethnicize problems surrounding the academic achievement of immigrant students, in particular those of Turkish origin, and to blame the victims for their failure (Beck, 1999, Goglin & Neumann, 2009). Second, multilingual language acquisition research, however, provides clear evidence of the interconnectedness of language development and cognitive development (Cummins, 2013, 2014). Young children grow into the world and store their life experience in either one or two (or more) languages.

Measured against the prevailing monolingual norm in institutional settings, a child's bilingual or plurilingual competencies are likely to be perceived as "problematic" or – at best – as a challenge that the student is expected to work hard to overcome. Despite the multilingual turn in education and paradigm shift in the official language policy in Germany towards the idea that migration-induced multilingualism should be developed as a resource for learning and that linguistic diversity should no longer be regarded as a deficit (KMK, 2013), it can be assumed that in the context of formal monolingual education plurilingual children across the country still learn "that they are supposed to replace their (socially worthless) family language as soon as possible with the prestigious second language" (Niedrig, 2011, p. 93 in Fürstenau, 2016, p. 78). Children from minority groups speaking other languages at home are generally perceived as in need of having extra support in learning German as a second language. Their first language competencies, however, are usually ignored, as is the part of their identity that has developed in their first languages. "Assimilatory pressure is huge in schools where the monolingual habitus dominates teaching practices and children learn to leave half of their identities at home in order to live up to the school's monolingual expectations" (Küppers, Pusch & Uyan Semerci, 2016a, p. 19).

3. The Hanover Case-Study: Methods and the Field

The Hanover case study was carried out as an ethnographic field study as part of the Mercator funded Fellowship program in the academic year 2013-2014. The project titled "Exploring Multilingual Landscapes" was based at Istanbul Policy Center with an affiliated infrastructure to Sabancı University. It aimed to deliver an ethnographic in-depth study of multilingual practices at an urban multicultural German elementary school which could be identified as a best-practice model. The school's bilingual Turkish-German program was implemented in a bottom-up fashion and in 2004, Turkish was introduced as a foreign language in two year groups of first graders. Thus, the grassroots character as a special feature of the school made it especially interesting to thoroughly analyze the success factors and positive aspects of the environment in which the bilingual school program came into existence and still operates. Consequently, the study aimed at providing a deeper insight into the causes and impact of bilingual Turkish-German schooling in Germany. By drawing a picture of the rich fiber of the web of interactions, routines, and processes in the wider school community and by assigning voice to the actors in the field, this vertical study also intended to complement horizontal studies like e.g. PISA. Cummins points to the necessity of such studies as policy makers have largely ignored research related to the role of migrant students' first language (L1) as both "a cognitive tool and a reflection of student identity" (Cummins, 2014, p. 7). He further argues that "in no case have considerations related to either teacher-student identity negotiation or patterns of societal power relations been explicitly integrated into causal or intervention frameworks despite the extensive research evidence attesting to the significance of these factors" (Cummins, 2014, p. 6). The absence of these factors from

policy considerations is especially striking, he continues, as these constructs feature prominently in applied linguistics, foreign and second language research and theory building. Against the theoretical backdrop developed in part 1 and 2 of this paper, the Hanover study has been embedded within the framework of linguistic landscape studies (Blommaert, 2013) which acknowledges the situatedness of language as speech:

Speech is language-in-society, that is, an active notion and one that deeply situates language in a web of relations of power, a dynamics of availability and accessibility, a situatedness of single acts vis-á-vis larger social and historical patterns such as genres and traditions. Speech is language in which people have made investments – social, cultural, political, individual-emotional ones. It is also language brought under social control (...) marked by extreme cleavages and inequalities in repertoires and opportunities. (Blommaert & Jie, 2011, p. 8 with reference to Hymes, 1996)

As the research process had been collaborative and interactive and "sharing knowledge" with stakeholders in the field had been a common feature, the study can be characterized as an ethnographic monitoring study in Hymes's sense and approves of ethnography as "social practice" which accepts agency of the researcher in the field and in the research process (Van der Aa & Blommaert, 2011, p. 324). A variety of qualitative research tools were employed in order to bring out the success factors of the school in general and in particular to tentatively describe the socio-cultural impact of the CLIL program with regard to changes in attitude and self-perception as well as quantity and quality of interactions within the school community. The ethnographic narratives presented in the study report (Küppers & Yağmur, 2014)[7] are based on numerous informal conversations and talks in the corridor, the cafeteria, the team-room or on the school yard as well as on classroom or schoolyard observations and intensive focus interviews based on guiding questionnaires. The account of the principal, the most important stakeholder in the field, was complemented by numerous informal talks, telephone conversations, email exchanges and also debriefings. Yet, voice was given to all actors in the field. Formal focus interviews were conducted with almost all stakeholders: students, parents, teachers as well as school management, in particular and in-depth with the principal – but also staff, social workers, local shop owners and the local vicar. These were complemented by participant observations in lessons, conferences, meetings, parent evenings, events and extra-curriculum activities. Data collections were either stored as field notes in a research diary or, if recorded, transcribed and subjected to qualitative content analysis according to Mayring (2014). All data were anonymized in all publications. Moreover, the school archive was browsed for statistics and concept papers were analyzed (cf. Küppers, 2016 and Küppers & Yağmur, 2014). In all, the ethnographic narratives draw a rich picture of the school and the school development process which took place between the years 2004 and 2014 and provide evidence for the important role of the protagonists in the process of

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7   The report can be accessed via Sabancı University / Istanbul Policy Center https://ipc.sabanciuniv.edu/Content/Images/CKeditorImages/20200327-00030807.pdf

educational change. However, due to the ethnographic nature of the case study, findings from Hanover can, of course, not be generalized.

3.1. Diversity at Albert-Schweitzer-Schule

With approx. 3.5 million speakers, Turkish is a very vital language in Germany – yet only a few tens of thousands of learners participate in the Turkish classes called *Herkunftssprachenunterricht* i.e. heritage language instruction (cf. Küppers et al., 2014; Bremer & Melhorn, 2018; Woerfel et al., 2020). Albert-Schweitzer-Schule, the school under investigation, is located in an urban multi-ethnic neighborhood in Hanover which used to be a working class quarter where predominantly immigrants from Turkey settled down. In the neighborhood which is also known as "Little Istanbul", Turkish has been the dominant community language besides German for decades. Around the turn of the millennium the school had had a very bad image and was called "school for the Turks" (*Türkenschule*) and, subsequently, suffered from massive white flight: German middle class families as well as Turkish middle class families unregistered their children from the school as they feared a) violence on the school premises and b) that their children could not develop their full potential in this environment. As a consequence, the school had been highly segregated and still operates under challenging conditions with many families being poor, single parent or with a family history of immigration. With the advent of a new principal in combination with an unusual idea, a remarkable process of school development was sparked: Turkish as a foreign language was introduced in a bilingual fashion. The most outstanding feature: The program was implemented with the aim to promote intercultural learning and understanding and to achieve an opening towards the neighborhood. Unlike most CLIL school programs, balanced (school) bilingualism has never been an acclaimed objective of this program (Albrecht, 2016).

The two bilingual classes per year group are attended by Turkish speaking children as well as speakers of German and other languages.[8] Turkish and German are taught in a coordinated literacy education approach and in five lessons per week, Turkish is also used in content areas like mathematics, science or the arts. Alongside the unusual language program, the school introduced a number of other structural changes which have been of paramount importance with regard to the language program's success and sustainability. These included: 1) an all-day school structure with teaching times from 8am to 3pm. The school opens at 7 am in the morning and closes at 5pm in the afternoon and offers hot meals for all pupils; 2) abolishment of homework and integration of autonomous learning supported by trained social workers; 3) open beginning in the morning with a first block of autonomous self-learning; 4) language sensitive teaching across the curriculum; 5) youth welfare workers and social workers on the school premises who work closely together with teaching staff in year groups; 6) very close

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8   Around 400 students attend four classes per year group of which two are bilingual classes. The school would like to run the German-Turkish program in all four classes but has massive problems in finding suitable teachers as there are no teacher training programs at German universities with such offers.

working relations with parents as partners to support the educational progress of their children (Albrecht, 2016).

The classroom is a stage for identity negotiations. Here, not only teacher-student relations matter but also the perceptions of students about each other evolve. In other words, if Ali is always late for classes in the morning and rarely brings in his homework, he is likely to be perceived as an underachieving student not only in the eyes of the teacher but also by his fellow pupils. One of the reasons why socio-economic status (SES) matters so much in relation to school success can be seen in the fact that parents can heavily influence the teacher's perception of a child's academic achievement. SES middle class parents from the majority population not only know the German school system inside out, they also tend to monitor their children's progress and homework. Sometimes they can offer extra input and explanations or they can organize additional coaching. The subtle influences of the "domestic support teacher system" (on which some schools rely heavily), could be mitigated in the Hanover school context by introducing an all-day school structure with an open beginning and by implementing an autonomous learning approach backed up by trained personnel. However, equally important has been the abolishment of homework. Presenting homework is an ideal arena for those students who can shine with work whose quality was enhanced by a parent who helped with the task. In Bourdieu's sense, the subtle impact the ruling elites have on the academic achievements of their children should not be underestimated. Changes on the classroom level have therefore also brought about changes within the existing social texture of power relations in class. In other words, abolishing homework at the Hanover school means that it is much easier for Ali's classmates to see him as an equal now – as no one really notices any more when he is late or what kind of quality his work is. For Ali the changes have been even more tangible as painful moments of public humiliation in class have ceased while his overall academic achievements have probably improved (see figure 1 below).

4. Results: Breaking the Power Difference between Children

As the bilingual program is also geared to non-Turkish and especially monolingual children from German middle-class families and the bilingual classes are not streamed according to language competencies but are always taught together, the Turkish-speaking children soon realize that other children take an interest in the language and culture of their parents and grandparents. Taking pride in seeing how friends start to learn their family language positively influences the self-confidence, especially of the Turkish speaking learners, and this, in turn has a positive impact on their identity development and general learning attitude. Without being streamed, they also learn that some speak better Turkish, but some others speak better German and some even speak other languages on top. Hence, learning that diversity is a normal feature of the human condition is deliberately being fostered in this setting. Moreover, as the Turkish language is used in a number of content areas like sports, arts or maths, this will boost the

Turkish vocabulary and often helps some of the weaker learners to gain access to the academic content in the apparently "harder" subjects like maths or science.

Due to the fact that high achieving monolingual German children also take part in the bilingual program, bilingual and plurilingual pupils will spend the school day amongst peers who are linguistic role models and friendships tend to develop beyond language barriers. Being exposed to the German language in informal interaction will help children who are learning German as a second language to grow into the language of instruction more easily, and this eventually improves their German competencies. Many of these confident bilingual children leave the school with quite remarkable academic achievements (see figure 1 below).

Monolingual German-speaking children also benefit from this particular multilingual language program which is, in fact, perceived as an intellectual enrichment program by many of the middle-class German parents. In contrast to learning a seemingly easy Germanic language like English, learning Turkish is seen to be more challenging for the powerful first grader brains. Learning an agglutinative language like Turkish is a valuable language learning experience as such and contributes to the development of an overall language learning awareness which in return will lay the foundations for life-long language learning. Children in the bilingual classes also realize that learning a language like Turkish must be similar to learning a language like German for other children. Hence, monolingual German speaking students neither look down on those pupils who have not yet acquired "perfect" German nor do they develop the feeling that being monolingual means being superior at this school. Besides encouraging respect and improving equality, there is yet another valuable aspect of the bilingual program in Hanover. Turkish is a lively community language and commonly spoken, heard and seen in the neighborhood of the school. Some of the German first graders soon realized that the language they learn in the morning is a language they can use in the afternoon on the way back home. Hence, by learning Turkish they not only have better access to the multilingual reality of the neighborhood they are growing up in, they also carry an unprejudiced positive attitude towards the language into their families and into the broader society (Küppers, 2016, 2017; Küppers & Yağmur, 2014).

4.1. Improvements of Academic Achievements

By removing the practice of giving homework, Albert-Schweitzer-Schule was able to diminish the power difference between families. In spite of weaker SES and low schooling of most immigrant parents, Albert-Schweitzer-Schule has been able to mobilize immigrant parents in different ways, which has created a strong spirit of whole school community and made cross-linguistic encounters possible. The results of the fundamental changes which took place at Albert-Schweitzer-Schule between 2005 and 2014 also clearly show in the school's records of the so-called *Schullaufbahnempfehlungen* i.e. recommendations for one of the three tier German secondary school types. In most federal German states, the decision as to which

type of secondary school a child is sent is made very early, namely after year 4 and when most children are just ten years old. A couple of months before primary education is completed the school will suggest a specific secondary school type to the family (yet, eventually, the family will have the final say and decide where to register their child). As school recommendations are based on academic achievements, these data nonetheless provide a very good picture of how Albert-Schweitzer-Schule developed in the decade under investigation.

Schullaufbahnempfehlungen 2005 bis 2014
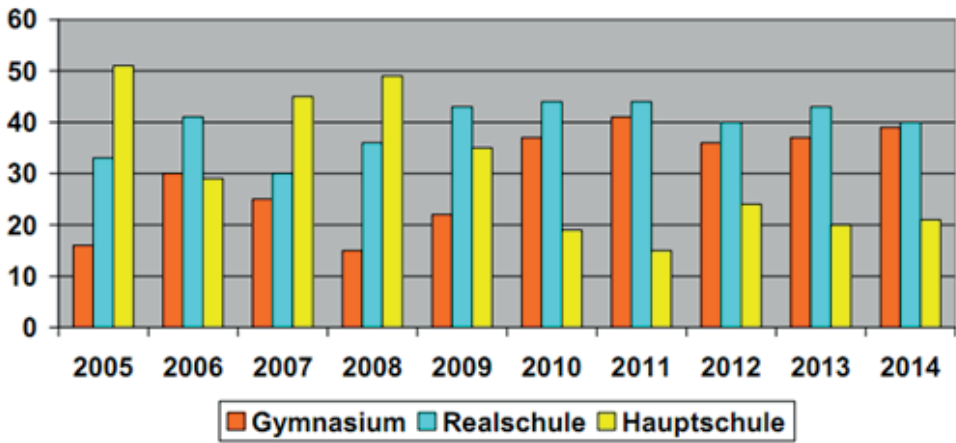
2007 Beginn des Modellprojekts Schule / Jugendhilfe, Offene Ganztagsschule

Figure 1: School recommendations at Albert-Schweitzer school from 2005 to 2014: Gymnasium (left column) = Grammar school, Realschule (middle) = Middle school, Hauptschule (right) = vocational school. In 2007 the school began to operate as an all-day school.

When the new school director took up her position at Albert-Schweitzer-Schule in 2004, only around 15% of children were sent to the prestigious grammar schools after four years of elementary school. Around 50% of pupils were continuing their education in the very low status Hauptschule (manual vocational schools) or in middle school (Realschule 34%). Apparently, it took six years to reverse the tide. The bilingual program started in 2004, yet the all-day-school concept was only implemented in 2007. The full impact of these measures show in 2011 when the first generation of pupils had been progressing through the all-day school program for four years. In 2014, while only 20% of the forth-graders were sent to Hauptschule, almost 40% of children were recommended for the highly prestigious German grammar school, the Gymnasium, and 40% for the middle school, the Realschule. It is important to note that the graph in figure 1 is based on data from all children in the final year 4 and not just on data

from the two bilingual classes. The two bilingual classes have most probably had a positive impact on the overall outcome as children from middle-class families who visit the German-Turkish program have changed the social and cultural texture of the whole school. These results give rise to the assumption that the Turkish-Program developed powerful synergies in concert with all other structural measures and pulled up the overall academic achievement of this school in general.

5. Discussion

Within just a decade, the fatal downward spiral of segregation was not just broken but was actually reversed at Albert-Schweitzer-Schule. A number of structural changes and the introduction of an unusual language program have turned the seemingly deprived and ill-famed "school for the Turks" into a prize-worthy school with a long waiting list for the bilingual classes.[9] In a context in which multilingualism is valued and diversity is cherished, children have no reason to devalue Turkish. Monolingual German speaking children who learn Turkish at this school carry a positive attitude for the language and Turkey into their families and the community. For Turkish speaking learners, especially from disadvantaged homes, the school provides access to high quality education and, thus, dishes out equal opportunities more evenly amongst pupils. Neither in the classrooms nor in the schoolyard is there a dividing line as all children can develop a feeling of belonging despite their individual differences. As such, the school in Hanover can be seen as a role-model not only for promoting equal opportunities but also as an example how to valorize the potential of migration induced multilingualism.

Likewise, the school is an excellent example of how to successfully implement the so-called Adoptive language model (Maalouf, 2008) which was presented about fifteen years ago by a board of experts appointed by the European Commission and which unfortunately never received much attention, neither from policy makers in administrations nor from the scientific community. According to this model, European trilingualism is achieved by promoting the school language which every child has to learn – and which is usually the dominant language of the country the child lives and grows up in; in our case study German. Besides this, a child should also learn a language with global outreach, namely one of the common lingua francas. In the case of Germany, this is currently English, the only compulsory foreign school language. Finally, a child should be able to learn a so-called "culture language", a language the learner has a special and / or emotional relationship to, for instance because older family relatives speak the language, or a best friend, or the soccer trainer or a favorite music band. At Albert-Schweitzer-Schule, Turkish, the dominant community language which is spoken by 40% of the multilingual children who visit this school (Albrecht, 2016), had been turned into such an adoptive language.

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9   In 2014 the school was amongst the final 15 schools of the prestigious Deutsche Schulpreis; cf. www.haz.de/
     Hannover/Aus-den-Stadtteilen/West/Albert-Schweitzer-Schule-aus-Hannover-Linden-gewinnt-nicht-Deutschen-
     Schulpreis

In theory, any other language could be a possible "adoptive language"; in practice however, implementing the Adoptive language model would of course entail an abundance of challenges on various levels - ranging from questions of teacher training, qualifications and recruiting, access to teaching and learning materials or the availability of standardized test formats. Yet still, the Adoptive language model could make a decisive contribution to reducing educational injustice in Germany in the area of language education. Currently, children who are aiming for the highest degree in secondary education, the Abitur (high-school diploma) must provide evidence that they have successfully attended classes in a 2nd foreign language for four years[10]. For many children who grow up with one or two family languages besides or instead of German at home, learning e.g. French as a 2nd foreign language would be the 4th of 5th language they had to learn. Karakaşoğlu and Vogel (2021a + b) call this a clear disadvantage compared to those learners who learn German at home and who can concentrate on learning English and a 2nd foreign language at school. In other words, not actual family language competences (which can be quite astounding) are being used as 2nd foreign language proof but regular attendance in language lessons serve as a qualification for the Abitur (Karakaşoğlu & Vogel, 21a+b). Via the *Rat für Migration* (Council for Migration)[11], Vogel (2020) submitted a proposal which suggests the introduction of a legal right to language testing in order to valorize actual language competences and to use them e.g. as 2nd language proof on the way to a high-school degree. The proposal was received positively in the scientific community and there was little doubt that if such a legal entitlement to language testing was introduced by the government one day, structures for language testing could be implemented in particular with support of digitization[12].

6. Conclusion and Outlook

Results from Hanover should eventually be viewed against the backdrop of the pressing need to subordinate all human activities to the requirements of the Paris climate agreements. In sight of the planetary boundaries all learning in the 21st century can be seen as part of overriding transformation processes (Göpel, 2016), hence it will finally be asked: What contribution can a re-orientation of language education in post-migrant societies make to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)? The school management and other stakeholders at Albert-Schweitzer-Schule did not wait for educational reforms from above, but courageously began to use their leeway creatively in order to adapt the microcosm of their school to the needs of predominantly poor children in the super-diverse neighborhood of

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10   Continuous attendance in a 2nd foreign language subject is required for four years if secondary education lasts eight years; if secondary education lasts nine years, the attendance requirement is extended to five years. Cf. https://www.kmk.org/themen/allgemeinbildende-schulen/unterrichtsfaecher/fremdsprachen.html

11   Rat für Migration is an independent nationwide association / NGO of about 150 scholars in Germany who deal with questions of migration and integration. https://rat-fuer-migration.de/

12   The complete public online debate which followed the initial proposal "Drei Sprachen sind genug fürs Abitur!" (Three languages are enough for the Abitur) in summer 2020 can be accessed via a PDF document https://rat-fuer-migration.de/2021/01/25/abschlussveroeffentlichung-der-rfm-debatte-2020/

Hanover. Compared to the (unrealistic) mammoth task of reforming a country's entire school system, the microcosm of a school can be changed with relative ease. El-Mafaalani (2020, p. 217) points out that elementary schools as well as preschool education can be seen as the most important institutions for the fight against social injustice and for equal opportunities. He therefore encourages schools to analyze their particular microcosm, look for potentials and to bring about changes in bottom-up fashion - just like Albert-Schweitzer-Schule.

Furthermore, this school serves as an impressive example which proves the case that transforming an elementary school can also promote sustainable learning: Secondary school recommendation statistics show how academic achievements generally improved, yet in particular for poor children which contributes to social development goal / SDG10 – reduced inequalities as well as to SDG4 – high quality education. Power differences between children have been mitigated and learners who speak Turkish at home can develop their vocabulary and language skills which contributes to their identity development and, thus, to SDG3 – health and well-being. All learners in the bilingual Turkish-German classes are able to experience themselves as teachers in peer-learning situations and develop a better understanding as to how languages are learned which, again, contributes to SDG 3 and SDG4. Eventually, just to name but a few of the 17 SDG, Albert-Schweitzer-Schule makes use of sources and places in the urban civic society for local language learning and usage which applies to SDG11 – sustainable cities and communities.

Modern migration societies like Germany are dynamic, digital, diverse - and multilingual. In the 21st century, competences in "foreign" languages are not just important for people who travel physically for reasons of trade, commerce or tourism. Languages have a high practical value in everyday life – be that in urban, local or digital settings. Hence, language skills have become increasingly important for those, too, who stay at home, who work globally from their local (home-) offices, who welcome newcomers and who help others find their way around in institutions and new environments. As "adoptive languages", Turkish, Arabic, the Serbo-Croatian language/s, but also Pashto, Urdu, Hindi, Korean and others have the potential to make a special contribution to the development of language education in the post-migrant German society through their matchless ubiquity in everyday life and as community languages. Upgraded as fully blown foreign languages subjects for elementary as well as secondary and upper secondary level in the school curricula, open to all children, and / or used in CLIL programs, these language subjects could also open up new alleys for conceptualizing language teaching such as *green education*[13] i.e. sustainable social learning for an increasingly glocal, transnational and digital world. At the end of the day, an open society needs to be complemented by an open language curriculum.

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13 Green education is a term coined by the EU in accordance with the green deal and aims to "encourage stakeholders in the education and training sector to take action to contribute to the green transition and to strengthen the sustainability competences of all learners"; https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/green-education

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