

Call for Papers - English

Language and Literacy Acquisition of Adults in the Context of Migration, Multilingualism and Second Language Learning

March 16-18, 2023, Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Germany

Since the foundation of the international LESLLA network (*Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults*) in 2005, it has been clearly and repeatedly stated that there is a strong need for empirical studies on second language acquisition of adult migrants with low literacy skills and that the amount of research devoted to this area is still limited (Lemke-Ghafir et al. 2021; Tarone & Bigelow 2012; Young-Scholten 2013; Young-Scholten & Naeb 2020). Low-literate adult migrants differ significantly from other well-studied groups of learners, e.g. children, adult L1 speakers and well-educated L2 learners. That is to say, in addition to the age factor, adults have to communicate using an L2 in their everyday life already in early stages of its acquisition and thus have completely different communicative needs than children. Unlike L1 speakers with low literacy skills, adult L2 learners cannot often rely on substantial oral competences in the L2. In contrast to well-educated L2 learners, they often have poor reading and writing skills in their first or heritage language(s) and therefore lack literacy-based learning strategies, metalinguistic awareness, cognitive abilities such as working memory and transferable literacy skills (Kurvers, van de Craats & Van Hout 2015; Tarone, Bigelow & Hansen 2009). In addition to age, multilingualism and educational/literacy background, there are other factors that influence language acquisition of adult refugees and migrants (Kurvers 2015).

Language acquisition of LESLLA learners in literacy and language courses is much slower than that of other groups of learners (Kurvers, van de Craats & Van Hout 2015; Carlsen 2017). On the didactic level, various approaches and techniques have already been developed for literacy practice to meet the needs of LESLLA learners (e.g. the contributions in Marschke 2022, Markov, Schramm & Scheithauer 2015). Also, there are now scales for classifying basic literacy skills at four levels below the A1 level of the GER (Council of Europe 2022; Schramm 2021), which enable teachers to better assess and evaluate the literacy level, but these are so far based on teachers' evaluations and not on language acquisition data of this group of learners.

In order to develop instruments that can be used for a fair classroom assessment of the learning progress of this group of learners (see e.g., Edeleva et al. 2022), we need more studies on the acquisition of different target languages. For example, the instruments developed so far to investigate language and writing acquisition in German are aimed at educated L2 learners, low-literate L1 speakers or children. The applied methods, tasks or items are often not suitable for LESLLA learners, or the instruments are not sensitive enough to trace small-step developments or learning effects. In order to be able to record a comprehensive spectrum of literal competences in the context of multilingualism and multiliteracy, it is necessary to develop tools to assess the literacy skills also in different first and heritage languages (Lemke-Ghafir et al. 2021).

When investigating the development of adult migrants' second language literacy, the focus should not be narrowed down to the basic technical skills of reading and writing (Purcell-Gates, Jacobson & Degener 2004). Rather, it must also be considered how LESLLA learners use their reading and writing skills in different contexts (functional literacy), e.g. in everyday life, to cope with communicative challenges and to pursue their goals in a society shaped by literacy. The development of functional literacy as situated social practice goes

hand in hand with the acquisition of technical skills (Council of Europe 2022: 19). Since literal activities are embedded in socio-cultural contexts, they have to be captured using other methodical approaches. Also, the research topic and the relationship between technical and functional literacy have to be redefined in the context of multilingualism and multiliteracy.

Two international keynote speakers **Bart Deygers** (Ghent University, Belgium) und **Kristen Perry** (University Kentucky, USA) will each be highlighting one of these facets of literacy (assessment of technical skills and learners' functional uses of literacy).

The aim of the conference is to better understand language and literacy acquisition of adult migrants with low literacy skills and to promote scientific exchange and collaboration on this vulnerable learner group. The conference is organized as part of the ongoing ELIKASA research project (<https://www.dafdz.uni-jena.de/elikasa>), in which we developed a set of literacy assessment tools to measure basic literacy skills in L2 German and L1 Arabic, Dari-Farsi and Turkish. This set of instruments has been used to test participants in 15 contrastive literacy courses of the KASA project (<https://kasa.giz.berlin>). In a qualitative interview study focusing on functional literacy, a selected group of 12 Arab participants report on the literal challenges they encounter in their everyday life in Germany and the strategies they apply to deal with these challenges (Czinglar et al. in press).

Abstracts for papers on second language and literacy acquisition of this target group from a technical or functional perspective are highly welcome. Particular topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Second language and literacy acquisition
- Methods for exploring reading and writing skills
- Influencing factors on L2 literacy acquisition
- Assessment of literacy skills in the context of multilingualism
- Literal competences and literal practices
- Relationship between technical and functional literacy

Formal requirements of the abstract:

- Title of the abstract (max. 20 words)
- Length of the abstract (max. 300 words, excluding literature)
- Short biographies of all authors (max. 50 words each)

Please send your abstract in two formats (anonymous and non-anonymous incl. short bios) no later than **November 2, 2022** to the following e-mail address: tagung.elikasa@uni-jena.de

All submissions will be anonymized before selection by the organizing committee.

Important dates

September 30, 2022	Call for Papers
November 2, 2022	Abstract Submission Deadline
December 5, 2022	Notification of Acceptance
December 15, 2022	Registration for Participation in the Conference
January 4, 2022	Registration Deadline for all Speakers (e.g. Accommodation)
March 16 – 18, 2023	Conference in Jena, Germany

The conference will be held at the Friedrich Schiller University Jena from March 16 to 18, 2023 in a hybrid format, i.e. presenters, organizers and other people involved in ELIKASA onsite in Jena and a wider audience online. There are no participation fees, but registration is obligatory. The conference is financially supported by the Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) as a part of the ELIKASA project (BMBF grant no. W146500).

Any further questions and inquiries can be addressed to the conference email:

tagung.elikasa@uni-jena.de

Organizing Committee

Christine Czinglar (principal investigator)

Yousuf Aboamer, Zeynep Arslan, Gina Do Manh, Yulia Edeleva und Franziska Förster

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