

## Multilingual Assessment of Basic Print Literacy in Adult Second Language Learners. Word Recognition in L2 German and in L1 Arabic

Christine Czinglar, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena

Although the need for literacy classes for adult second language learners (L2) with heterogeneous literacy skills is high, studies on language and literacy acquisition of adult L2 learners are scarce, especially in Germany (e.g. Deygers et al. 2021; Lemke-Ghafir et al. 2021; Markov & Waggarschauser 2018). Literacy classes for migrants in Germany, which are organized by the BAMF (the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees), are aligned to the CEFR, though it does not contain scales on literacy skills (Lemke-Ghafir et al. 2021). However, new scales below A1 have recently been developed (Council of Europe 2022; Schramm 2021), which will hopefully induce changes, also for the BAMF curriculum. Furthermore, as reading and writing skills in the first language (L1) have a strong impact on the development of literacy skills in the second language (L2) (e.g. Kurvers, van de Craats & Van Hout 2015), the need for multilingual assessment instruments targeting literacy is high (e.g. Lemke-Ghafir et al. 2021). This was the main focus of the ongoing project ELIKASA.

After briefly introducing L2 literacy education and research in Germany, I will give an overview of the ELIKASA project: In a quantitative study, we developed multilingual instruments to assess technical skills on three levels and for four languages (L2 German; L1 Arabic, L1 Farsi-Dari, L1 Turkish) and some measures for influencing factors (see figure 1; Czinglar et al. 2022).

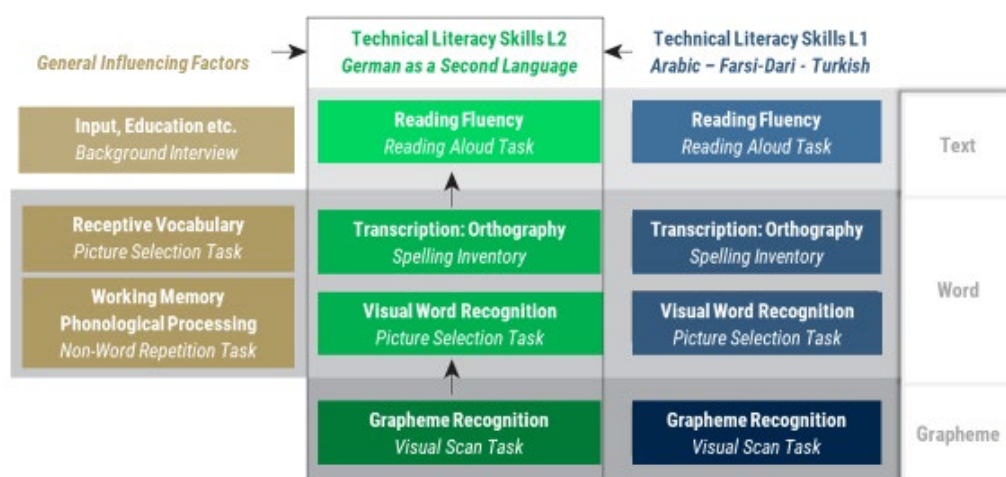


Figure 1: ELIKASA Research Design for Assessing Technical Literacy Skills in Second Language (L2) German and three First Languages (L1); Czinglar et al. (2022)

The instruments were used to investigate the literacy development of about 100 participants in L1 homogeneous literacy classes (Arabic, Farsi-Dari, Turkish) devised within the KASA project. Attempting to bridge technical and functional literacy approaches in the spirit of Purcell-Gates, Jacobson & Degener (2004), we also investigated everyday literacy practices in an in-depth interview study with 12 participants speaking Arabic (Förster et al. 2022). Further details on the instruments and preliminary results of both studies will be presented in talks and posters by ELIKASA team members throughout the conference.

In my talk, I will discuss a major challenge of our project: Our sample of test takers turns out to have more education than earlier groups of KASA learners – we attribute this largely to changes induced by the pandemic (data assembly one year later, online teaching). I will also discuss some difficulties when

measuring L1 influence on L2 performance. To do this I will briefly introduce three ELIKASA picture selection tasks: (i) for receptive vocabulary in the L2 German, (ii) for word recognition in L2 German and (iii) for word recognition in L1 Arabic (see also the poster session for the word recognition tasks). I will show that L1 influences on L2 literacy (here word recognition) can only be measured when taking into account other influencing factors (e.g. receptive vocabulary, exposure or length of residence and others). As the data analysis in ELIKASA is still work in progress, I will indicate further directions for research.

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