

Multilingual education in primary school context in Germany:

Developing a teacher training measure in order to enhance metalinguistic awareness of primary school children

Sebastian Krzyzek, Melina Andronie, Anja Wildemann & Lena Bien-Miller

Outline

- Theoretical Background
 - Metalinguistic Awareness
- Our research project „MoreLanguages“
 - Teacher Training
 - Data assessment and Perspective



Metalinguistic Awareness...

...is defined as the mental ability to comprehend the structure and function of language/s in order to use it/them for appropriate linguistic behaviour (Wildemann et al., 2016).

... is improved and enhanced through explicit language reflection (Spada & Tomita, 2010).

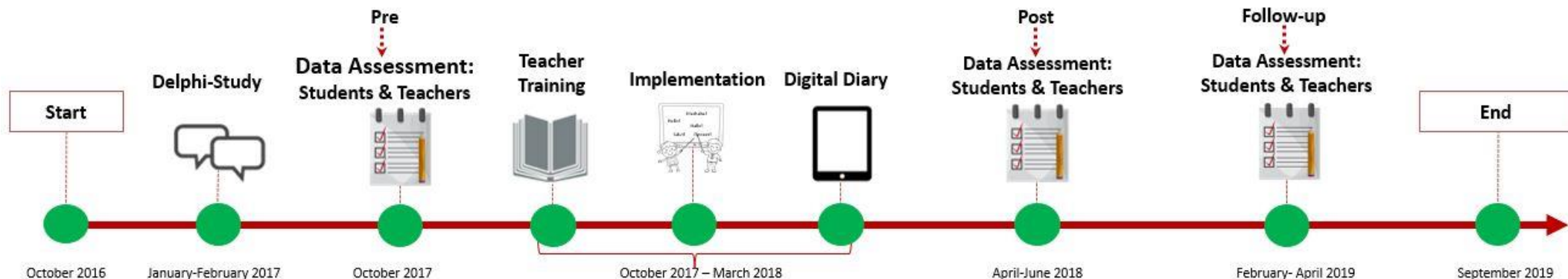
...is visible when individuals make language/s the subject of discussion (Wildemann et al., 2016).

...is an implicit as well as an explicit goal of language lessons at school (KMK, 2004).

Children raised in multilingual contexts develop specific metalinguistic abilities, which result in an increased language awareness (Bialystok, 1991, p. 134).

„MoreLanguages“

- Experimental study on multilingualism and multilingual education
- Three data measurement times (pre – post – follow-up design)
- Experimental (teacher receive training) & Control group (teacher conduct classes as usual, without any training)
- Level-nested participants
 - N = 34 primary-school teachers (data assessment; teacher training; implementation)
 - N = 509 primary-school children (data assessment: language abilities, metalinguistic awareness, etc.)
- Developing and conducting a teacher training on the use of multilingualism in German language classes (N = 18)



Guidelines of the Teacher Training

Flexibility	Teacher should let go of control and be open to try new methods and to use multilingualism in German lessons
Student-orientation	Teacher should be aware of the students' multilingualism and use their languages in the German classes
Teacher Language Awareness	Teacher should be able to reflect on the language/s
Practicability	Materials and methods on the use of multilingualism should require little time and costs
Resources-orientation	Materials and methods should grasp students' languages and use them for language comparisons and reflection
Integration in the language lessons	Materials and methods should be used during the regular German lessons and on long term

... is to provide teachers with materials and methods, which may be used in multilingual classes and integrated in regular language lessons.

Making Language a Subject of Discussion and Comparing Languages, by ...

- ... including more languages in the German lessons
- ... discovering similarities and differences between languages
- ... understanding multilingualism widely:
 - Dialects
 - Heritage language of children in the class
 - Other foreign languages

Developing Metalinguistic Awareness, by ...

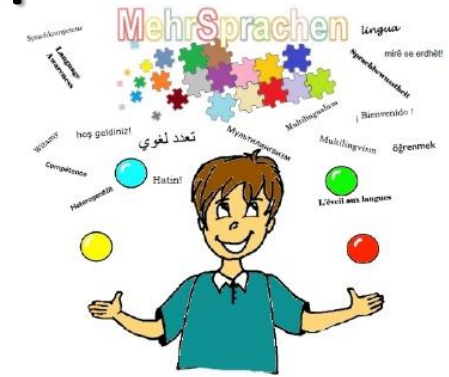
- talking about language/s
- analyzing language/s
- reflecting on language use
- being aware of language structure
- thinking about language functions
- developing language knowledge

Promoting Language Skills

- ... of ALL children, no matter their origin or their initial language abilities

Teacher Training on the Use of Multilingualism in German Language Classes

- Once a month x 6 months
- Theoretical & methodological input & materials
- Weekly digital diary
- “Reflective experience-based learning” (Esteve et al. 2010; Wildemann et al. 2014)



1. *One language, many Languages, MoreLanguages*
2. *Be aware of your language/s: Crazy language classes*
3. *To language discovery through language comparisons*
4. *Language reflection*
5. *Puzzling with language/s*
6. *Keep it up!*



Methods & Materials

1. Allowing other languages

2. Recognizing metalinguistic awareness

3. Implementing children`s ideas

4. Picking up on other languages

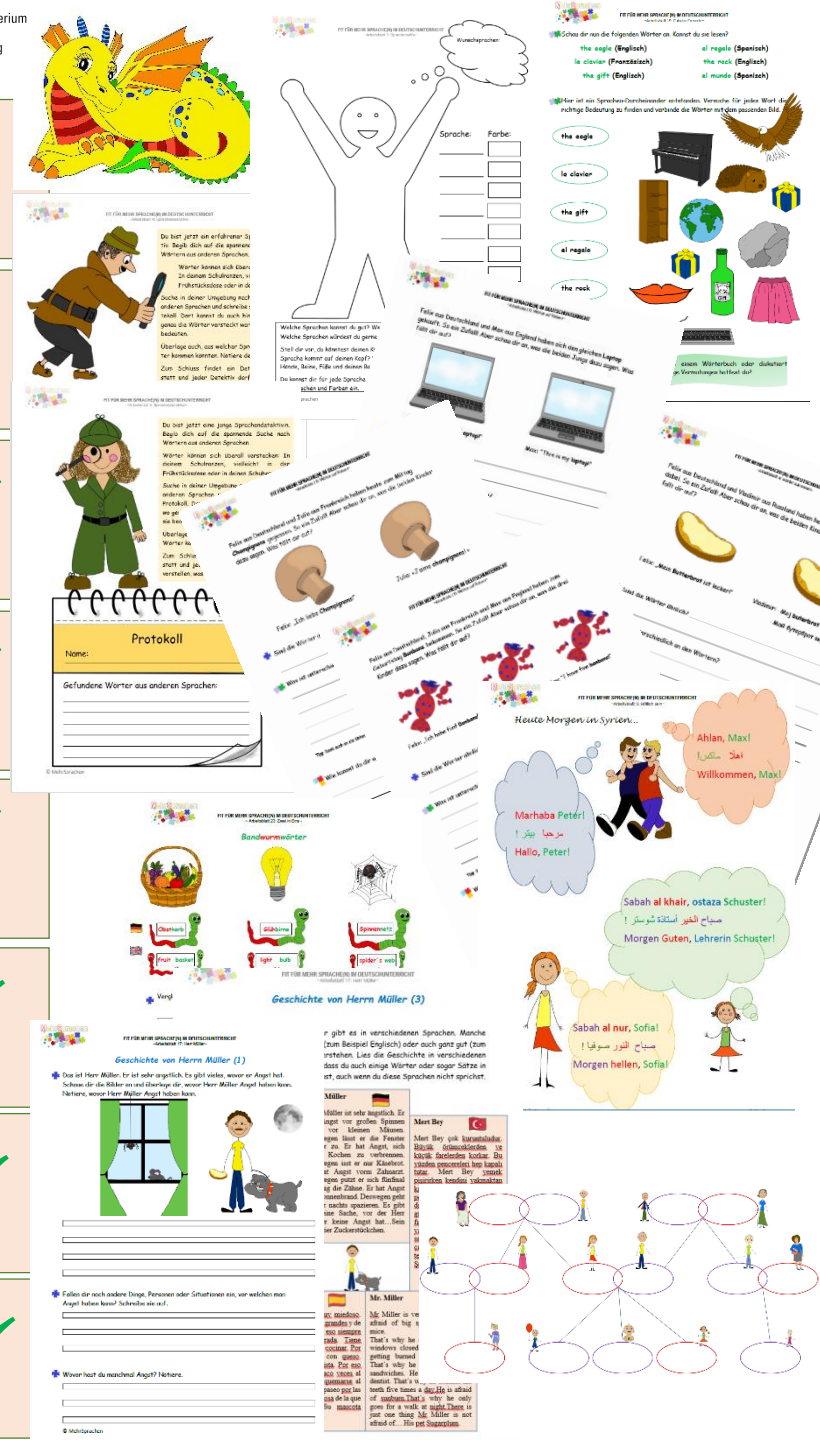
5. Contrasting texts

6. Contrasting language systems

7. Contrasting daily routines

8. Reflecting about languages

Oomen-Welke (2000)



Evaluation of the Teacher Training

Evaluation through participants:

1. Organisation of the training
2. Theoretical background
3. Methodological background
4. Requirements on participants
5. Provided materials
6. Training's atmosphere
7. Motivation on participation
8. Motivation on further work with materials
9. Students' motivation through materials
10. Use of tablets
11. Support through the training team



Effectiveness of the teacher training on primary school children's metalinguistic awareness

- 1st measurement point: Mai-June 2018;
- 2nd measurement point: February-March 2019

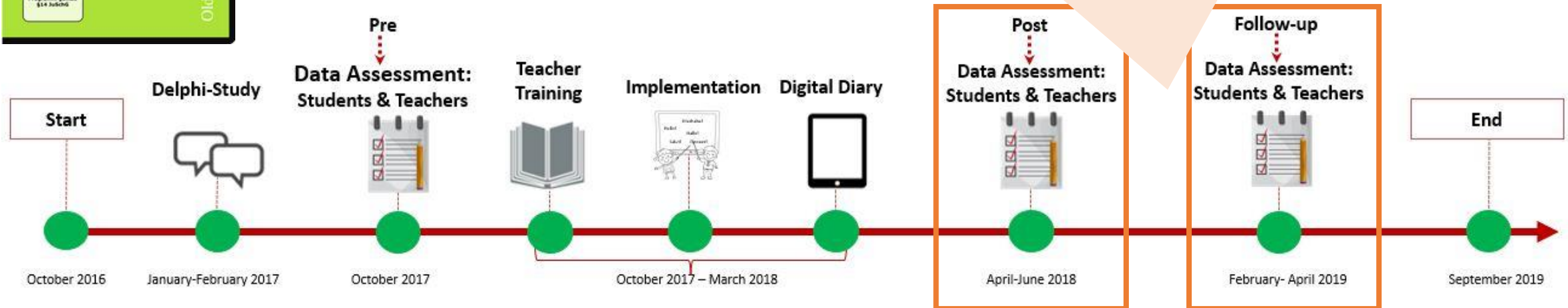
Assessment of metalinguistic awareness



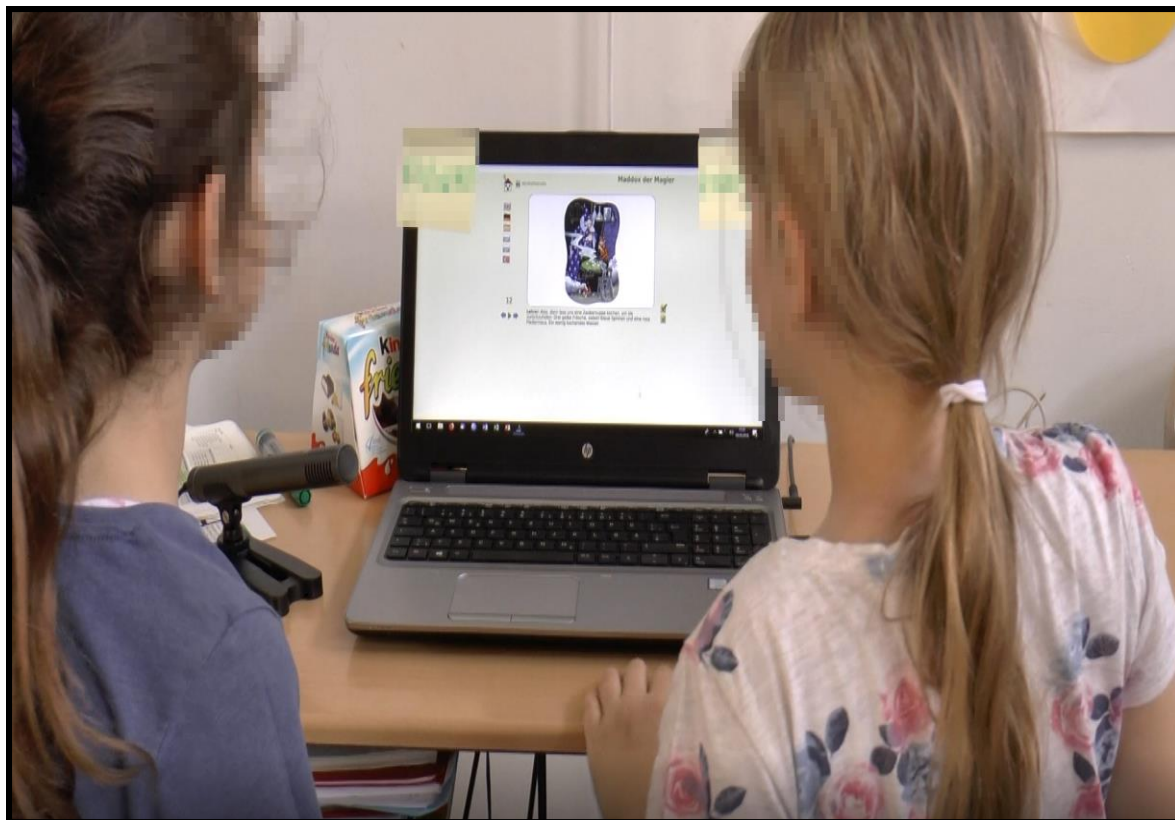
(Oldenbourg, 2013)

Elicitation tool „M-SPRA“ (Wildemann et al. 2016)

- Multilingual Software „My first stories“
- Story „The story of the ice cream“
- Languages: German, English, Russian, Turkish, Spanish
- Guided Interaction (no assessment of language skills)
- **Five prompt interaction-sequences that guide children to reflect on language/s**



Elicitation-Setup



Example of an Interaction-Sequence: *Capital Letters*

TA: Well! Ok! Now you can look in another language how many capital letters are there.

C1: This one?

C2: Let us take English!

TA: Right, you can take English.

(Children read the text.)

C2: There are three capital letters or four, if we also count the introduction word.

C1: Mhm (approval)

TA: Mhm (approval). Why are here only few capital letters?

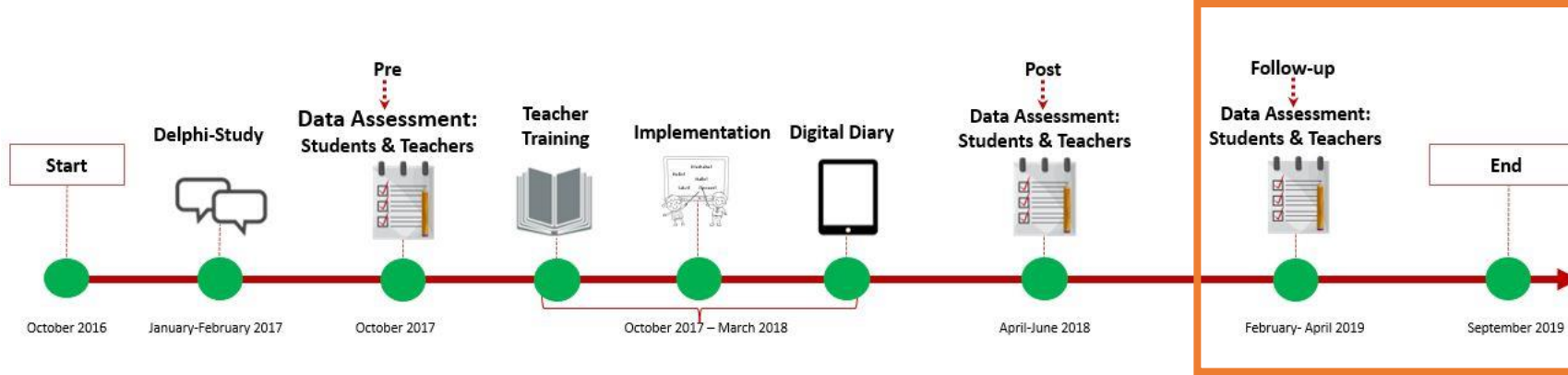
C1: Because here is “yellow”, this means “gelb” (German word for yellow) and both are written with a lower case, but “spider” is “Spinne” (German word for spider) and in English it is written without a capital.

C2: Really?

C1: Yes!

TA: What do you think, C2?

C2: I think the same.



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What we already know:

Empirical studies have already shown that multilingual children reflect on language/s more frequently and more elaborately than their classmates do, even after controlling for age, general cognitive ability and language abilities (Akbulut et al., 2017; Bien-Miller et al., 2017).

Expected findings on...

... whether explicit language reflection (promoted through the teacher training) enhances teachers' attitudes towards multilingualism and motivation to teach (more) languages ...

... how the teacher training influences the use of language/s and multilingualism in German lessons ...

... and whether students' metalinguistic awareness profit from such lessons.

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... our project head: Prof. Dr. Anja Wildemann
... our coordinating institution KoMBi

Contact us:



Project head: Anja Wildemann
Contact: wildemann@uni-landau.de



Project coordinator: Lena Bien-Miller
Contact: bien@uni-landau.de



Project assistant: Melina Andronie
Contact: andronie@uni-landau.de



Project assistant: Sebastian Krzyzek
Contact: krzyzek@uni-landau.de

Homepage: <https://www.uni-koblenz-landau.de/de/landau/fb5/bildung-kind-jugend/grupaed/projekte/mehrsprachen>

KoMBi-Page: <http://www.kombi-hamburg.de/projekt.html?id=66&lang=de>

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