

Multilingualism Didactics and German as a Second Language. Why and How the Multilingual Resources of Immigrant Students Should be Recognised in Education

The globalised space of teaching and learning languages includes newly immigrated children, adolescents and adults who enter the education systems of the countries of immigration at a late point of their lifespan. These newcomers (in German also “Seiteneinsteiger:innen”) are faced with the challenge of having to learn the local majority languages with its various conversational and academic registers as well as subject-specific skills in a very short period of time in order to participate in education and society in general. The affective, cognitive, professional, social, multilingual and multicultural resources that immigrant students can access to master this task vary greatly, depending on their individual (language) biography, actual living situation and language ideologies, e.g. recognisable in attitudes towards different languages and their speakers. This presentation focuses on didactic aspects that enable second language learners of German to use their multilingual resources to participate in education. After describing the specifics of late second language acquisition by newly immigrated students, I will present professionalisation prospects for language educators at Humboldt-Universität within the certificate programme “German in multilingual contexts” (“Deutsch im Mehrsprachigkeitskontext”) and didactic approaches that enable teachers and learners to use multilingual competences in classrooms to meet the learners’ educational needs.