

# The role of spelling in (assessing) multilingual students' writing skills: Insights from a pilot study with German-Russian and German-Turkish adolescents

Irina Usanova<sup>1</sup>, Christoph Gabriel<sup>2</sup>, Ingrid Gogolin<sup>1</sup>, Thorsten Klinger<sup>1</sup>, Anja Müller<sup>2</sup> & Birger Schnoor<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universität Hamburg, <sup>2</sup> Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz

irina.usanova@uni-hamburg.de

Mittwoch,  
04.03.2020  
16:30–17:00  
ESA1 HG HS C

According to existing writing models, both spelling competencies and handwriting represent fundamental skills within the process of transcription (Puranik et al. 2012). Researchers have further revealed that the automaticity of transcription skills fosters the development of text generation (Alamargot & Fayol 2009) and that both transcription and text generation need to be considered while investigating students' writing skills (Arfé et al. 2016). However, recent studies have considered the relationship between transcription and text generation only in monolingual students. In multilinguals, due to the heterogeneity of writing skills in different languages and the potentially available multiple linguistic resources, the relationship between spelling and text generation may deviate from those found in monolinguals.

Our study aims to explore the relationship between students' spelling skills and their ability to compose texts in multiple languages: (1) the surrounding language German, (2) the heritage languages Russian or Turkish, and (3) the foreign languages learned at school, English and French. We analyze data collected within the scope of the BMBF-funded panel study "Multilingual Development: A Longitudinal Perspective (MEZ)." MEZ is a longitudinal cohort-sequence study with two starting cohorts (7th- and 9th-grade students) and with four waves. The panel comprises more than 2000 participants and encompasses, in addition to German monolingual subjects, students who speak Russian or Turkish as heritage languages along with German. We selected the written production data in German, Russian, Turkish, English, and French of the second wave of data collection to analyze students' spellings skills (n=150). In a first step, we aim to develop a score for the assessment of the participants' spelling skills in different languages. In doing so, we will classify spelling errors to track different patterns within and between the different languages of our sample. In a second step, we aim to analyze the relationship between spelling and other indicators of text quality applied in the MEZ project. Finally, we will make a record of all spelling errors that mirror the interrelation of specific spelling and pronunciation skills. Our results will provide the first insights into the complex relationship between spelling, text generation, and pronunciation skills in multilingual students.

AG 8

**References:** Alamargot, D. & M. Fayol (2009). Modelling the development of written composition. In R. Beard, D. Myhill, N. Nystrand & J. Riley (Eds). *The Sage handbook of writing development*. London: Sage, 23–47. Arfé, B., Dockrell, J. E. & B. De Bernardi (2016). The effect of language specific factors on early written composition. The role of spelling, oral language and text generation skills in a shallow orthography. *Reading and Writing* 29, 501–527. Puranik, C. S., Wagner, R. K., Kim, Y.-S. & D. Lopez (2012). Multivariate assessment of processes in elementary students' written translation. In M. Fayol, D. Alamargot, V.W. Berninger (Eds). *Translation of thought to written text while composing. Advancing theory, knowledge, research methods, tools, and applications*. New York: Psychology Press, 249–274.