

“Without language you  
can’t do anything.”

*How can the education of newly arrived im-  
migrant students in Berlin be improved?*

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How can the education of newly arrived immigrant students in Berlin be improved?

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”Without language you can’t do anything.” – How can the situation of newly arrived immigrant students in Berlin be improved?

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# Abstract

Due to an increased number of newly arrived immigrant students the federal state Berlin established German language classes, that mainly focus on German language learning in order to prepare the students for their transfer to a mainstream classroom. The organization of these classes differs between the districts.

In a comparative case study the educational situation of newly arrived immigrant students in German language classes in two secondary schools in two different districts was analyzed. Semi-structured interviews and observations revealed how German language classes in both schools and districts work and how the stakeholders involved perceive this situation.

By comparing these cases the complexity of the issue became apparent. It is not the organization of classes that impacts the educational situation of newly arrived immigrant students most, it is rather a complex set of factors. Furthermore the German language classes' focus on language learning and integration is difficult to pursue in any of the systems under examination since one often outweighs the other.

Therefore I argue that a new strategy for the education of newly arrived immigrant students has to be created in order to ensure both language learning and integration as basis for a successful education pathway in Berlin.



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## **1 Introduction**

In spring 2012 I started working as a volunteer for an organization that offered accommodation and counseling for refugees in Berlin. I was introduced to Suna<sup>1</sup>, a twelve-year-old Yezidi girl from Syria, who had lived in Germany for already two years at that time. She had enormous problems in school and was at risk of not being moved up to secondary school because of her bad grades in almost all subjects. I tutored her for more than a year and tried to help her to cope with and get acquainted with the German education system. Suna's family welcomed me warmly and I spent a lot of time at their place, not only tutoring their oldest daughter, but also talking to her parents and playing with her four younger brothers.

Suna was a very open and talkative girl. Although her German was not perfect and she said that she would prefer to speak her mother tongue Kurdish, she talked a lot. After a while I realized that she could speak a lot of German, but she had problems understanding what she heard and read, which could be one of the reasons for her bad grades. She told me about her five school years in Syria. School did not take place regularly, the language of instruction was Arabic since her Kurdish mother tongue was forbidden in Syrian schools and she experienced corporal punishment for every mistake she made as well as for inattentiveness. When I first met her, Suna spoke three languages, but none of them perfectly and she had only basic skills in reading and writing in two of them. When she came to Berlin at the age of eleven, she was put into the 5<sup>th</sup> grade again.

Her annual school report at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade was a disaster. She failed all main subjects (German, math, English) and several others, too. Usually that means she would have to repeat the year, but her teachers decided to let her move up to secondary school since she was already older than her classmates and also quite ahead in her physical development. At the time I met Suna, she was very frustrated with her entire situation, missed Syria and was not motivated to do anything at school. Her parents were desperate since they did not know how to help her. Both of them had only been to school for four years and had worked as goat farmers in their village. They did not understand the German education system and struggled with their life in Germany in general. They had difficulties to learn German, did not find jobs and felt lonely.

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<sup>1</sup> I changed her name in order to ensure her anonymity.

The oldest of Suna's younger brothers faced similar problems and his story paralleled Suna's. However, their younger brother had entered primary school in 1<sup>st</sup> grade in Berlin and was among the best in his class.

Suna's secondary school brought big changes: Suna loved her new classmates, liked her class teacher, became very motivated and got better grades. Still, her grades in the main subjects remained on the lowest level. Her new teachers were very committed: they established contact with her parents, the family's social worker and the special needs education teacher of the school. Suna got tested in order to exclude a learning disability as a reason for her difficulties. Her intelligence proved to be average, but her gaps in basic knowledge such as basic arithmetic operations were big. Her lack of reading comprehension led to problems in all other subjects since she did not understand the explanations in textbooks or the instructions for homework. The days I did not tutor her, she would not do her homework simply because she did not understand what she was supposed to do.

When I left Berlin in order to begin my master's degree in Oslo, the school tried to gather further support for her such as learning therapy and a reading tutor. In a meeting with her class teacher, the special needs education teacher, the social worker and her father, it became apparent that everyone involved was willing to help her, but still nobody really saw a realistic opportunity for her in the formal education system. Suna's family moved to another city in the beginning of this year in order to live closer to their relatives and the German Yezidi community. Suna is in 9<sup>th</sup> grade now and I am afraid she will leave school without a graduation certificate next year.

I had been aware of the problems immigrant students faced in Germany, but Suna's case opened my eyes to the full extent of this issue. Suna was only eleven when she came to Germany. What happens to teenagers coming to Germany? Aren't there mechanisms in the education system to stop development processes like Suna's? During my time as Suna's tutor the war in Syria broke out and other conflicts were taking place increasing the number of refugees in the country. The media started reporting about them and education became an issue. I read about German language classes<sup>2</sup> that were established for these students. I wanted to know

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<sup>2</sup> The term "German language class" is not the official one. The official name is "special learning groups for newly arrived immigrant students without German language skills" (*besondere Lerngruppen für Neuzugänge ohne Deutschkenntnisse*). Since this term is not very practical most participants and the media call these classes "welcoming classes". I discussed this term with some of my interview partners who argued the overall atmosphere in the society for newly arrived immigrant students is not welcoming (I discuss this issue in chapter 7.2). Therefore I followed their example and used the term "German language classes".

how they were organized, what qualifications were required of teachers, what were the demographics of the students, how were students divided into the different classes, were they divided, and just overall, what was the learning environment like? Could such a German language class have helped Suna? In a conversation with a person working for the Berlin Refugee Council I learnt that the organization of German language classes is different in every district, that some schools work very successfully, while others struggle. I also got to know that there are various opinions at the school and the administrative level on how to organize these classes in the future.

## **1.1 Research Questions**

That was when I decided to make the issue of newly arrived immigrant students in the Berlin education system the topic of my thesis. I formulated three research questions:

1. How is the education for newly arrived immigrant youth organized in Berlin?
2. How do the schools work in order to achieve the goals of the German language classes?
3. What factors contribute to or interfere with fast German language acquisition and fast transition to a mainstream classroom?

These questions aim at answering the main questions how the education for newly arrived immigrant youth can be improved. This thesis presents the entire research process leading to answering this question.

## **1.2 Structure of the Thesis**

Chapter 2 presents the literature that was used in order to place the study into a research context. Since there is no research about newly arrived immigrant students in Berlin yet, the amount of literature available is small. However, research on related topics or the same topic in other parts of the world provided me with ideas on which topics should be covered in my interview guides and which findings I might expect.

In order to analyze the data I created an analytical framework consisting of two different theories on language learning that take the learning context into consideration. Furthermore I added two theories on exclusion and inclusion processes in the education system. The theories complement each other and build an exhaustive framework to evaluate the data. The analytical framework is explained in chapter 3.

In order to situate the topic in its historical and sociopolitical context chapter 4 provides basic background information on immigration to Germany during the previous decades. It also provides information on how the education system works in Germany in general, and in Berlin, in particular.

Chapter 5 describes the methodology of the study. The research purpose and research questions are explained in more detail. The sampling, the data collection methods, the data collection process and the data analysis are described. Additionally, quality and ethical issues that emerge are discussed.

Chapter 6 presents the main findings from the data I collected. The chapter is divided into three parts, each of them presenting the findings for one research question systematically. In chapter 6.2 and 6.3 the focus is on the opinions and perceptions of the participants. The use of theories and literature was limited here in order to give space for the participants' experiences and avoid anticipation through theoretical concepts that might not apply to the actual situation.

In chapter 7 these findings are discussed in the light of theory and literature. Due to the complexity of the topic the educational situation of newly arrived immigrant students had to be seen as a part of a larger sociopolitical context and proved to be very paradoxical in many cases. Within this complexity several ideas on how to improve the situation are discussed using ideas and concerns from the participants as well as relevant literature. These ideas were formed into very recommendations for the school-level and the sociopolitical level on how the education of newly arrived immigrant youth could be improved. It became apparent that further research is necessary in order to inform concrete reform processes and educational planning. Thus this thesis ends with ideas for further research projects.

## **2 Literature Review**

There is a lot of literature on the education of immigrant students in Germany, but it mainly refers to students who were born and raised in Germany and therefore usually speak German at a sufficient level in order to attend a regular school. But the students in German language classes usually do not speak German and therefore need a different kind of support. These students are a comparatively small group that for a long time has not received much attention. Due to the economic crisis and due to severe conflicts and wars in different parts of the world their number increased dramatically and is still rising. The media now reports a lot about the living situation of refugees in Germany and other countries. Education seems to become a relevant issue more and more (Pinson/Arnot, 2010, p. 247; Kunz, 2008, p. 191). Apart from that refugee students are only one group of students taught in German language classes. According to the study participants the other students are often European students, whose parents have a job in Germany or are hoping to get one. Another small group attending German language classes consists of students whose parents work for an embassy and will live in Germany for a few years. This heterogeneity is difficult to grasp within one study. That is why literature from different fields of education such as refugee education or foreign and second language education, inclusive education etc. will be used.

To come closer to the actual topic I have used literature focusing on language learning classes. As there is almost nothing available about Germany – except for two publications I found relevant to this study, I have used literature on similar language learning programs for immigrant students in the English-speaking parts of the world. The United States, Australia, Canada and Great Britain are Western industrialized states, too and furthermore they offer special programs for students without or with limited English language skills, similar to the German language classes in Berlin. Literature from these countries has helped me to identify main issues concerning the education of young immigrants. The interview guides include the identified issues (cf. Appendix C), but also left space for new topics that emerged in the German context. Furthermore these studies and reports supported the data analysis and contributed to answering the research questions.

The literature on the theories used in this study is explained in detail chapter 3 and ignored in this chapter to avoid repetition.

Before the literature is presented some terms have to be clarified. In the context of language learning several terms are used, to some extent interchangeably, even though they are actually

based on different concepts. When I use the term (*second*) *language acquisition* I use it literally as it is the closest translation for the German term “(Zweit-) *Spracherwerb*” used by the Senate Administration for Education Science and Research<sup>3</sup> in Berlin, but also because many scholars I refer to use that term, often in its abbreviated form SLA. Another abbreviation used for second language is *L2* in contrast to the mother tongue, which is *L1*. Cook and Singleton (2014, p. 4) use the term *L2 users* instead of *L2 learners* to describe bilingual speakers. In the context of this thesis *L2 learner* is appropriate in the way that it is about students at school learning German.

Similar to the situation Brock-Utne (2009, p. 22ff.) describes in an African multilingual context, second language and *L2* are still misleading terms as most students already speak more than one language. Some of them grew up as a multilingual person (many African students, Roma students), others have already learnt foreign languages at school in their home country. German is rather an additional language than a second language.

Foreign language learning usually describes the situation of students at school learning a foreign language, e.g. me as a German student who learnt English at school. Second language in Germany rather, refers to students who do not speak German as their mother tongue, but are surrounded by it in their everyday life. This applies, for example, to a lot of students in Germany who speak Turkish as their mother tongue and German as their second language in kindergarten, school and leisure time activities.

However, these definitions do not match the situation of the students in German language classes in Berlin. They would technically not be second language learners as they are not learning German as their second language from a very young age. As well, students in German language classes usually do not have German language skills, so they learn German as a foreign language, but they learn it in a context where they are exposed to German a lot. So one could argue these students fall in between second and foreign language learning. It became apparent that the traditional definitions do not match the situation of these students. Therefore I will use the most neutral term *language learning* in this thesis referring to the situation of these students in German language classes.

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<sup>3</sup> Due to a reorganization of the ministries in Berlin, the “Senate Administration for Education, Science and Research” (*Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung; SenBWF*) became the “Senate Administration for Education, Youth and Science” (*Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Jugend und Wissenschaft, SenBJW*). This is the official name for the Ministry of Education in Berlin. In the following I will use the term “Ministry of Education” in order to avoid confusion.

## 2.1 Newly Arrived Immigrant Students in Germany

Due to the lack of literature on the German context, only two main publications on this topic will be presented. Furthermore, official publications that provide the background information on the current situation in Berlin are presented.

### 2.1.1 The Situation in Germany

Kunz (2008) published a book which is the only publication focusing directly on the educational situation of newly arrived immigrant students in Germany. In her book she collects extensive data to give an overview about the educational situation of newly arrived immigrant students in all sixteen federal states. She analyzes the regulations on compulsory schooling and gives an overview about the different approaches to curriculum development and teacher training. She critiques that although immigration to Germany is not a new issue and the need of integration widely acknowledged, the federal states do not provide the conditions that are necessary for a successful educational pathway (ibid., p. 12ff.).

Later on she presents the current debates on SLA research. In the end she compares the different approaches in the federal states and combines them with the findings on SLA. She critiques separate classrooms as satisfying certain educational needs on the one hand, but also stabilizing the general formal education system in a way that it does not need to provide measures for students with any kinds of special needs on the other hand (ibid., p. 115). However, she comes to the conclusion that a long-term implementation of German language classes consisting of students from different ethnic backgrounds at all different school-types is most likely to achieve the main goals of fast language learning and early integration into the mainstream school system (ibid., p. 379f.). Reich and Roth (2002, p. 22) in contrast state:

„The success of preparation classes in Germany has never been scientifically evaluated; the field reports from the practice, however, show with great clarity, that the transition from these classes into mainstream lessons are often problematic and have negative consequences for the schooling career for those affected.”<sup>4</sup>

Kunz does not present her idea as solution par excellence, but rather as one possibility for the current situation. Her starting point is the status quo including a lack of didactic and method competences, lack of adequate material and a lack of sufficient teacher training programs.

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<sup>4</sup> All translations from German to English have been made by myself.

The role of German language classes is discussed controversially in the German context. That is the starting point of this thesis. These classes exist in Berlin and therefore I want to find out how they contribute to the education of newly arrived immigrant students.

Another publication by Holling (2007) focuses on the situation of teenagers who enter the German school system as illiterates. Even though this applies only to a small number of students in German language classes, it is one of very few publications that deal directly with students who nowadays are found in German language classes in Germany. The book was published in 2007, a time when immigration or refugees coming to Germany was not a major issue, thus the author mainly refers to literature from the previous decades, which to some extent lost its validity since the situation is different these days. Nevertheless, she describes the situation of young refugees very well as being marginalized in different ways (ibid., p. 70ff.). She states that there is no concept or guidelines available on how to deal with illiterate teenage students, but that there are few education resources similar to the German language classes in some federal states (ibid., p. 109f.). This situation has changed, since now most federal states offer some kind of course for newly arrived immigrant students due to the increased demand.

Holling has analyzed the situation of illiterate teenage students at different schools in the federal state Niedersachsen and came up with some recommendations. She argues that enough German language classes have to be available for students to learn reading and writing. Concerning her observation that many illiterate students are sent to schools for students with special needs, she warns to check carefully, whether there is no other option at a regular school. Furthermore she argues that it takes several years to learn a second language properly, thus educational resources for newly arrived immigrant students should be long-term plans. Another argument is that the transition between a preparation course and regular school has to be organized and improved in order to guarantee adequate education (ibid., p. 187). Holling found a lack of teachers who are qualified to teach reading and writing to teenagers, and in addition a lack of adequate teaching material (ibid., p. 190f.).

### **2.1.2 The Situation in Berlin**

Information on the situation in Berlin is mainly given by official institutions such as the Ministry of Education in Berlin. A key document in this context is a set of guidelines the Ministry published in 2012 focusing on German language classes in Berlin (SenBJW, 2012b). These

guidelines explain which students are entitled to attend a German language class, what the goals of these classes are and how the application process works.

In order to receive present information on the current situations short internet documents, e.g. from the Ministry's website and newspaper articles are used. Furthermore statistics by the federal office for migration and refugees and offices for statistics are examined. They provide information on the school system, measures for students without German language skills and statistical information such as the amount of students coming to Berlin and attending German language classes. Since these data are presented in the actual text, mainly in chapter 4 and 6, they will not be described in detail here in order to avoid repetition.

## **2.2 Education of Immigrant and Refugee Students**

“Forced migration and the presence of this marginalised group in society, to a large extent, have been neglected by educational research, which has offered only a very small body of empirical and theoretical work on the topic“ (Pinson/Arnot, 2007, p. 399). Pinson and Arnot refer to the situation in the Great Britain, but it seems to be the same for the German context as not much literature can be found there either. Behrensen and Westphal (2009, p. 46) even state there does not seem to be a political will to acknowledge refugees as educational subjects.

However, the small amount of literature available offers interesting ideas on how to approach this thesis' topic. In the following, studies on language learning programs in English-speaking countries are presented. Other studies focus on single aspects that influence the education of newly arrived immigrant students.

### **2.2.1 Language Learning Programs**

Articles from different journals, mostly from English-speaking regions, focus on students in language learning programs and form the basis of the support literature of my thesis.

To mention here is a case study by Valdés (1998) on two Latino girls taking part in an ESL program at a middle school in California. That school organizes its ESL program in a very similar way to school A in Berlin, which is in focus of this study. This study gave me very concrete ideas about the challenges and benefits that could come up regarding this way of organizing the education of recently arrived immigrant youth. The girls and their language skills developed in very different ways due to their personalities and home environment, but also in account of their experiences at school. Valdés observed classrooms that contributed to

segregation and exclusion because teachers who were insensitive used inadequate teaching techniques. There was little mobility between language levels and only few opportunities to speak English in a real setting (ibid., p. 8ff.). Valdés demands a critical pedagogy that puts education into its social, political and economic context (ibid., p. 15).

Woods (2009) also sees school as an important actor within its sociopolitical context. She provides a thick description of the situation of recently arrived illiterate refugee youth in Australia. These students usually attend ESL programs for six to twelve months before being integrated into mainstream education. She describes their situation as very difficult since some have to learn print literacy for the first time in a foreign language and probably in the first school system they ever entered. At the same time they are restricted by legal regulations according to their visa status and their age (ibid., p. 83f.). Arguing from a social justice approach Woods identifies three roles school should take in regards to education of newly arrived immigrant youth: providing education, providing welfare and the third role is both developing citizenship and building of a civil society.

Leung (2002) sums up the situation of reception classes for newly arrived immigrant students in England. In a short historical overview she explains that before the 1980s reception classes were established. This was changed later since separate schooling was not seen as adequate, but as discriminatory. Gitlin et al. (2003) show in this context very contradictory processes at the school level “whereby they [the students in ESL programs; explanation by author] are welcomed at the school and yet, simultaneously, made to feel unwelcome in many respects” (ibid., p. 92). They observed that ESL students at an US-American middle-school took part in school assemblies, but were still segregated by having less opportunities, being put in secondary groups or by a focus on them being different (ibid., p. 103f.). Similar observations were made in the lunchroom, the buses and in discipline policies (p. 105ff.). They conclude that although ESL programs definitely provide more than just English lessons, they can also contribute to segregation by producing a margin, which refers to the ESL students, and a center referring to the students in mainstream classrooms (ibid., p. 117).

Leung (2002) furthermore says that the narrow focus on language and the lack of providing other subjects was criticized (ibid., p. 95). Today ESL students in England are rather taught within the mainstream system. Not without difficulties: Norton criticizes a lack of funding and staff (ibid., p. 94).

Segregation of ESL students is also in focus of a study by Riggs and Due (2011). They observed students from ESL classes and students from mainstream classes in two Australian primary schools during their lessons and on the playground. They observe that ESL students from different backgrounds play with each other often, but usually not with non-ESL students (ibid., p. 284). Therefore the authors question the claim that speaking English is the necessary key to integration. They argue that integration is a two-sided process, which means an ESL student who speaks English is dependent on a member of the target language society, who is willing to listen (ibid., p. 281). Negative experiences of ESL students could rather lead to a resistance to learning English, if the English language has been experienced as a tool for discrimination (ibid., p. 283f.). The authors base their analysis on the identity approach by Norton (Norton Peirce, 1995) that is used for this study as well. Their findings result in implications for the education practice. They argue all students should understand power relations existing in schools. Furthermore inclusion has to be seen as a process all are benefitting from, not only the ESL students.

These studies revealed some of the common issues in regard to ESL classrooms. Exclusion and inclusion are apparently not always easy to distinguish in the ESL context. That is why theories on both exclusion and inclusion are used in this study. The studies by Valdés and Wood show problematic processes that emerge in the sociocultural context of ESL classes. Both describe social factors outside the school such as legal regulations or inadequate teacher training that impact the educational pathway of newly arrived immigrant youth to a major extent. Many of these factors apply to the German context, too, as became visible during the study.

### **2.2.2 Social Context**

Other studies focus on single aspects that are intertwined with education and refer to the social context surrounding it.

Palfreyman (2006) sees the social context, e.g. the community, as a set of resources for language learning (ibid., p. 353f.). He distinguishes between material and social resources. Material resources can be teaching materials, equipment, funding, which can be found at the school level usually, but also grammar books, dictionaries or TV channels that can contribute to language learning (ibid., p. 355f.). Social resources in contrast are persons that can support to learn a language, whether they are teachers, peers or family members. He stresses the im-

portance of social networks, but at the same time reminds that getting access to a supportive social network can be difficult (ibid., p. 356f.).

Hopf (2007) discusses the relation between language proficiency and academic achievement among immigrant students in Berlin. Even though he does not claim there is a causal relation, he found out that good skills in German are often accompanied by high academic achievement (ibid., p. 168). Thus he stresses the importance for immigrant students to learn German properly.

Jang and Jiménez (2011, p. 141) wonder why L2 learners' achievements are very different, although they are exposed to the same setting. They view a strong focus on cognitive predispositions as too limited and argue to consider other factors that might influence learning strategies (ibid., p. 142). In an ESL classroom consisting of four Korean and one French student they observed "factors such as race and ethnicity can influence the students' choice and use of learning strategies" (ibid., p. 143). The authors stress that teachers have to be aware of "subtle power dynamics among students" (ibid., p. 144). In that context Kumaravadivelu's (2003) article on cultural stereotypes among TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) should be mentioned. He found out that stereotypes about Asian students are widely spread and can also be found in the TESOL profession.

Teachers' attitudes are a topic researched by several scholars. Whiteman (2005) investigated teachers' attitudes towards the integration of refugee pupils into schools in Newcastle upon Tyne. In a study with 24 schools the interviewed teachers identified four main barriers to integration of refugee students. These are language difficulties (mainly with the students' families), misunderstandings or a lack of communication regarding the students' backgrounds, negative attitudes towards asylum seekers and the precarious circumstances asylum seekers have to live in (ibid., p. 385).

Hek (2005) sees attitude as an important factor among others that can influence the role of education in the settlement of young refugees. She acknowledges the difficult situation these students live in and argues that "the support refugee children need goes beyond the curriculum" (ibid., 159). The students she interviewed stated three main factors that helped them to settle: qualified teachers that speak their first language and know how to address the students' needs, support from friends or peers, whether they speak the same first language or are English native speakers, and a positive whole-school attitude to refugee children (ibid., p. 164ff.).

The role of friendships in academic engagement and achievement was investigated by Suárez-Orozco et al. (2009). They identify immigrant adolescent as being vulnerable to failure (ibid., p. 713) since they face challenges to social and cultural dislocation and additionally to learn a new language. Wilkinson supports this statement within the Canadian context, where 74% of ESL students do not complete high school (Wilkinson, 2002, p. 176). Language is important in order to detect social nuances in the school setting and has implications for academic success (ibid., p. 716). In their study the authors found out that school-based supportive relationships are a key influence on academic engagement (ibid., p. 730). They help students to feel accepted, provide information on school culture, but also emotionally support the new students. Not only friendships are important, the authors also found positive impacts on academic success due to stable relationships with teachers, other school staff, adults in the community and parents.

These studies focusing on single aspects impacting the education of newly arrived immigrant students such as friendships or attitudes were used in order to develop the research instruments. They gave ideas on what questions to ask in interviews as well as what kinds of topics might emerge during the interviews.

### **3 Analytical Framework**

In order to thoroughly analyze the research findings, it is useful to use an analytical framework to guide and structure the analysis.

This thesis focuses on German language classes that mainly have two goals: fast language acquisition and integration into a mainstream classroom (cf. chapter 6.2). Therefore I have chosen to focus on theories which are connected to these two topics.

Language learning is a topic covered by many different disciplines using different approaches. As this thesis focuses on how this learning is organized and puts it in a very specific context, it is useful to use theories that explicitly take context into consideration. By reading the official reports and guidelines about the education of newly arrived immigrant students in Berlin it becomes apparent that an interdependent and close connection is drawn between language and integration.

#### **3.1 Language and Social Context**

Sociocultural theory (see especially Vygotsky, 1978) puts learning into a social context and focuses on issues such as culture, mediation and peer groups. The parts of the theory that focus on the role of teaching can be applied to this study, but in general the theory appeared not to be sufficient to explain the influence of different organizational forms of learning for newly arrived immigrant students. Therefore Norton's identity approach is added. Norton Peirce<sup>5</sup> (1995) argues that traditional second language acquisition theories have neglected the relationship between the individual learner and the language learning context. From a poststructuralist perspective she draws attention to power dynamics and the continuing construction of identity in a changing world. Both theories combined can support the data analysis in regards to language learning in a specific social context as studies e.g. by Palfreyman (2006) and Jang and Jiménez (2011) show. Furthermore Norton (Norton/Toohey, 2011, p. 418f.) herself argues that sociocultural theory is used in an interdisciplinary way and goes beyond the original theory. Norton's work can be seen in close connection to sociocultural theory.

##### **3.1.1 Sociocultural Theory**

The sociocultural theory goes back to the psychologist Vygotsky (1978) and has been developed and expanded since by scholars from different disciplines. To name the most important:

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<sup>5</sup> Bonny Norton published her articles under two different names: Norton and Norton Peirce. I reference them in line with the very publication I refer to.

The linguist Lantolf expanded Vygotsky's theory to SLA (Second Language Acquisition; cf. discussion in chapter 2) research and conducted several studies in this context. He showed that several concepts of Vygotsky's theory such as mediation or the zone of proximal development are applicable to SLA (Lantolf/Thorne, 2006; Lantolf/Appel, 1994). The linguist Halliday worked on a "Language-Based Theory of Learning" viewing learning as a semiotic process, in which "language is the essential condition of knowing, the process by which experience becomes knowledge" (Halliday, 1993, p. 93f.).

The key characteristics of Vygotsky's original development theory are explained and put into the context of language learning in this section.

Language is an important element in Vygotsky's work: "Prior to mastering his own behavior, the child begins to master his surroundings with the help of speech. This produces new relations with the environment in addition to the new organization of behavior itself" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 25). In his view language has the double function of serving communication that leads to the creation of meaning, but also to mediate intellectual activity. The creation of meaning is mediated through social relationships (Vygotsky in: Moll, 2014, p. 33), either implicitly or explicitly, through an activity or some kind of teacher (Lantolf/Poehner, 2008, p.7ff.). This thesis focuses on explicit mediation by paying attention to the role of teachers, teaching methods and the interaction between students and teachers.

The mediation should take part in the zone of proximal development, which is an important term in Vygotsky's work and that of his followers (*ibid.*, p. 13). This zone "is the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Wells (1994, p. 62f.) argues that the zone of proximal development is not an attribute of the learner, but rather describes the potential for the individual's development which is created through interaction. This leads to the question of: which conditions are necessary in order to realize the potential? Vygotsky (1978, p. 117ff.) presents several criteria for adequate development conditions. He saw enabling assistance as an important part in order to achieve what the learner cannot achieve without support. This assistance has to be relevant for the learner and serve his or her own purposes.

Social interactions with peers, parents or teachers are highly relevant to development in general and to language development in particular. This has implications for the education sys-

tem, mainly in the context of teacher training since teachers are responsible for giving instructions which drive development (van Compernelle, 2014, p. 1).

The teacher's role is crucial in this context and is given special attention in this study. The classroom observations contribute in assessing whether students receive the assistance they need to reach the potential currently remaining in the zone of proximal development. Furthermore the interviews with different stakeholders show how the role of teachers is not only perceived by teachers themselves, but also by other stakeholders.

Not all responsibility lies with the teachers as Dixon et al. (2012, p. 9) state in reference to the contribution of sociocultural theory in SLA research: "Even though educators may not always be able to set up completely optimal conditions, knowing what to work towards, and improving those conditions over which they have control, can help educators improve their L2 students' achievement." Instead the education system as a whole has to guarantee a learning environment that enables the students to develop their potential. Van Compernelle and Williams (2013, p. 279) even add institutional policies and sociopolitical factors surrounding education. Which have implications for teacher training, professionalization, teaching methods, but also the general organization of schooling. Dixon et al. (2012, p. 35) see the main contribution of sociocultural theory in the context of language learning in the attention it draws to the cultural and social dimensions of language. It makes clear that learning of a language is more than just the acquisition of linguistic forms.

### **3.1.2 Identity Approach**

In 1995 Norton published an article called "Social Identity, Investment, and Language Learning" that laid the basis for the identity approach widely used in second language acquisition research. Norton aimed at developing "a comprehensive theory of social identity which integrates the language learner and language learning context" (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 9). In an ethnographic study with immigrant women in an ESL (English as a Second Language) program in Canada, Norton found several disagreements with SLA theories and criticized them for not paying attention to power dynamics that influence social interaction between language learner and target language speakers. Furthermore she points out the heterogeneity of the group of language learners that has to be considered, but has been largely neglected in previous studies. That is why she argues for a "conception of the language learner as having a complex identity that must be understood with reference to larger, and frequently inequitable social structures which are reproduced in day-to-day social interaction" (ibid., p. 13).

Her research is based on the assumption that exposure to the target language and opportunities to practice it are a necessary condition for language learning (ibid., p. 14). Furthermore three conceptions underlie her theory. First, the fact, that the individual is diverse and dynamic. Block (2007, p. 31f.), another identity theorist, describes the migrant identity, which is a useful concept to understand Norton's point. He draws attention to a multilevel migration system theory that sees migrant identities as very complex and working at three levels. At the macro level they are influenced by global forces such as global politics, economy and media. The micro level is characterized by individual values and expectations e.g. the idea to improve their living standard. The meso level is in between these levels and refers to networks such as social (family, work), symbolic (ethnicity, nationality, religion) or transactional ties (access to resources, solidarity).

Norton's second conception, social identity as a site of struggle, describes the position of the individual in different power relations that occur depending on the context. The individual "is conceived of as both subject of and subject to relations of power within a particular site, community, and society: The subject has human agency" (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 15). The last conception refers to subjectivity as changing over time, which means a social identity can change and therefore offers the opportunity of educational intervention.

Norton criticizes the fact that most SLA research that considers motivation as a strong factor refers to concepts based on psychology that see the individual as either motivated or not and therefore successful or not. Talking to the participants in her study it became apparent to her that even though the participants were highly motivated, they struggled to learn the language, because of contextual factors that had to be taken into consideration. In order to overcome this gap she uses the term "investment", based on Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital<sup>6</sup>, to describe the individuals' relationship to the target language and their "sometimes ambivalent desire to learn and practice it" (ibid., p. 17). That means "learners invest in the target language at particular times and in particular settings" (Norton/Toohey, 2011, p. 420). The women Norton interviewed often felt uncomfortable speaking English to their boss or to native speakers, but also in situations in which they felt socially constructed as "immigrant women" by others, which made them feel inferior.

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<sup>6</sup> Bourdieu (2006, p. 47ff.) distinguishes different forms of cultural capital. Education belongs to the "embodied cultural capital" and is linked to the body, which means that this form of capital – in contrast to other forms of capital – cannot be transmitted as a gift or inheritance. "Cultural capital can be acquired, to a varying extent, depending on the period, the society, and the social class, in the absence of any deliberate inculcation, and therefore quite unconsciously."

Another concept Norton observed is the right to speak. She argues that it is not enough to know the rules of the target language. One also has to know whose interests these rules serve. These rules are socially and historically constructed and serve the interests of a dominant group (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 18). In many cases the power relations would be in favor of the target language speaker and neglect the right to speak to the language learner.

Norton (*ibid.*, p. 26) claims that language teachers should help learners to claim the right to speak outside of the classroom. Therefore social identities should be discussed in class, on the one hand as reflection for the students themselves, on the other hand giving the teachers insight into their students' learning.

She suggests that students need to systematically find opportunities to use the target language, to reflect critically on interactions with target language speakers, to reflect on their communication through diaries and the recording of unusual events, and to share their data with classmates, in order to build a social network (*ibid.*, 27f.).

Norton focuses on adult immigrants in Canada, a group and context which differs substantially from the situation of newly arrived immigrant teenagers in Berlin. Nevertheless, the concept of social identity is applicable.

### **3.2 Exclusion and Inclusion**

Another set of theories on processes of exclusion and inclusion in the education system can complement the theories on language learning. Sayed and Soudien (2003, p. 14f.) recommend to use interlocking frameworks in order to capture the complexity of inclusion or exclusion processes in education. They stress that close attention towards identity issues and power dynamics is necessary and they therefore strengthen Norton's approach by linking it to exclusion theories. Norton's theory can in this context be seen as a bridge between language learning theories and exclusion theories as it focuses on the situation of language learners, but embeds them in a social context that is influenced by different power dynamics.

Integration or inclusion is the other main topic of this thesis, mainly the integration of German language class students into regular classrooms. If integration into the regular education system is viewed as an aim of German language classes, it would mean that those students are excluded as long they are attending a German language class.

This paradox of processes of exclusion and inclusion at several levels (class, school, district, society) taking place at the same time influence the students' educational situation (Gitlin et al., 2003). I therefore attempt to use a framework that considers this difficult situation using

both a social exclusion theory (Fraser, 1997) and an inclusive education approach (Booth/Ainscow, 2002; Mitchell, 2009).

Fraser (1997) provides a framework based on a social justice approach, describing the social exclusion of marginalized groups in society, that can be applied to the situation of newly arrived immigrant students. The social situation has an impact on the educational situation. In the context of school, scholars rather discuss inclusion compared to exclusion, mainly in the context of students with special needs. Although newly arrived immigrant students are not students with special needs in a traditional sense, they can be considered as having special needs, in this case language deficits, in a literal sense. Some of the literature on special needs education can be applied to this group of students too. Through an index for inclusion Booth and Ainscow (2002) created a school developing instrument in order to make schools (more) inclusive. Their indicators for an inclusive school can be used as criteria in order to evaluate the inclusiveness of a school. These indicators refer only to the school-level, but since this thesis also includes the district-level other indicators that are not part of the index have to be added. Mitchell (2009) comes up with sixteen propositions for inclusive education, that take a broader perspective on inclusive education and therefore complement the index for inclusion.

### **3.2.1 Social Exclusion**

Fraser (1997) developed a framework of recognitive and redistributive injustice.<sup>7</sup> She distinguishes between different forms of disadvantage, which are seen in a spectrum from economic forms to cultural forms of injustice and different hybrid forms in between (ibid., p. 12). Disadvantaged groups are affected in different ways by different forms of disadvantage. So it is necessary to analyze the kind of disadvantage a certain group faces in a certain context, in this case the disadvantages newly arrived immigrant children face in the school system of Berlin.

Socioeconomic injustice is “rooted in the political-economic structure of society” (ibid., p. 13) and is mainly characterized by exploitation, marginalization and deprivation. Marginalization in this context means that certain groups are excluded from the means of livelihood. It also includes poorly paid and undesirable forms of work. Deprivation means being denied an adequate standard of living. Cultural disadvantage refers to injustice because of social patterns of representation, interpretation and communication, that are manifested in the ways

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<sup>7</sup> In a previous term paper I used Kabeer’s (2000) framework on social exclusion which is based on Fraser (1997). Therefore part of the analysis was very similar and could be used here (cf. Richter, 2014).

dominant groups try to impose their values or devalue and disparage certain categories of people (ibid., p. 14).

Fraser (ibid., p. 15) states that the distinction between economic and cultural injustice is analytical, since in practice both forms are intertwined. Pure economic and cultural forms of disadvantages are the extreme ends of a broad spectrum that consists of several different hybrid forms of injustice as cultural discrimination is often accompanied by economic discrimination (ibid., p. 17ff.). Typical indicators for hybrid forms of injustice are gender, ethnicity/race and – in relevant contexts – caste. These indicators are characterized by both cultural and economic dimensions of injustice.

In order to do away with economic injustice, socioeconomic restructuring is necessary. Fraser calls it “redistribution”. To overcome cultural injustice cultural or symbolic changes, which she calls “recognition”, are needed. But since these concepts are strongly intertwined, redistribution can - in a certain context – become the remedy for cultural injustice and recognition can become the remedy for economic injustice (ibid.). As an example for this situation Fraser (ibid.) shows that changes in cultural values (recognition) are necessary to overcome homophobia, but also the legal regulations and practices (redistribution). Groups who are subject to both forms of injustice need both redistribution and recognition.

Newly arrived immigrant students and their education are somewhere in this conflict area between economic and cultural injustice and the struggle for redistribution and recognition to overcome it. Fraser’s framework is used in this thesis in order to analyze the social situation of recently arrived immigrant students.

### **3.2.2 Index for Inclusion and Propositions for Inclusive Education**

Booth and Ainscow (2002, p. 1) view the index for inclusion as a resource to support the inclusive development of schools. It does not only refer to students with special needs in a traditional sense, but rather to all students impacted by any form of exclusion defined as “all those temporary or longer lasting pressures which get in the way of full participation” (ibid., p. 3).

Booth and Ainscow (2002, p. 7) introduce three main interconnected dimensions that are all necessary for school improvement: creating inclusive cultures, producing inclusive policies and evolving inclusive practices. Each dimension consists of two sections that give a more concrete idea on how to improve a school.

The first dimension, creating inclusive cultures, is divided into the two sections: “building community” and “establishing inclusive values”. This dimension seeks to build a secure and

comfortable school community including staff, students and teachers. This community agrees on certain inclusive values, which guide the school development process (ibid., p. 8). Indicators for an inclusive school community are: a welcoming atmosphere, supportive relationships among the students as well as among the staff and in general cooperation between all stakeholders involved. Inclusive values are strongly connected to attitudes. They refer to a positive view on all students from staff and other stakeholders involved and by the students themselves. Moreover inclusive culture means that all stakeholders work on avoiding exclusion and reducing barriers to it (ibid., p. 42ff.).

The second dimension, producing inclusive policies, consists of the two subtopics “developing a school for all” and “organizing support for diversity”. With this dimension inclusion becomes part of all school plans and activities (ibid., p. 8). It refers to fair employment strategies, support for new staff and students, as well as acceptance and access for all students. Support for diversity means to coordinate all kinds of support that is necessary, but also to train staff to respond to diversity appropriately. Special Needs Education practices should not be used to segregate but to include students depending on additional support, which includes students with language deficits (ibid., p. 54ff.).

The dimension of inclusive practices is about orchestrating learning and mobilizing resources. It refers to the everyday school life in the classroom, e.g. teaching methods and materials that enable all students to participate in all lessons (ibid., p. 8). Orchestrating learning means to plan lessons having all students equally in mind. This should then enable all students to participate and be actively engaged in their own learning. As well, assessment and homework should contribute to achievement. It also refers to after-school and extra-curricular activities that all students should be able to access and participate in. Resources can be understood in different ways. First of all, the students’ differences and the staff’s expertise are considered as resources for teaching and learning. It also means to have access to and use of community resources, seeing to it that there is a fair distribution of school resources at the school level (ibid., p. 69ff.).

Mitchell’s (2009) propositions are not meant to be criteria for inclusive education, however, they demonstrate the complexity by presenting several dimensions of inclusive education. Mitchell presents them in regards to students with disabilities. But the first proposition argues that inclusion goes beyond disabilities and has to address other forms of disadvantages, too, such as language. Therefore I argue that most of the propositions aiming at students with disabilities are equally valid for newly arrived immigrant students.

I selected five out of sixteen propositions and arranged them thematically into two groups. The selection was based on relevance for the topic of this thesis. I ignored those that were already covered by the index for inclusion in order to avoid repetitions.

The first pair of propositions (7, 12) puts inclusive education into a broader societal context. It clarifies that inclusion has to go beyond the education system, but has to be part of all societal levels (ibid., p. 7f.; p. 14f.).

The second group of propositions (10, 14, 15) deals with issues of inclusive education at a more abstract level. Among others it refers to the gap between policy and practice. Despite the fact that inclusive education has become part of different legal texts in most countries, barriers of all kinds are still hindering full participation. The reasons are diverse and can be found at all levels of society: lack of political will, parental resistance, lack of skilled teachers, inadequate infrastructure, top-down introduction without preparing the schools etc. (ibid., p. 11). Cost-benefit thinking is another important factor that can influence the implementation of inclusive education. This is connected to attitudes towards students with special needs in a way that they can be seen either as potential workers that may contribute to the economy or as persons of low priority and a burden for society (ibid., p. 18f.). Each of these perspectives has implications for the implementation of inclusion. Since every country has to create its own inclusive system the risk of exporting or importing models, that do not match the country's setting is high.

For the analysis of the educational situation of newly arrived immigrant students in Berlin it is important to identify, whether they are a marginalized group and in what way and to what extent. Furthermore the education system they are part of has to be evaluated in order to see whether it provides the students with an adequate learning environment. The living situation of these students has to be considered since education is only one part of their life which is deeply intertwined with other parts, such as e.g. living conditions. Last but not least the underlying attitudes, discourses and policy developments play an important role in organizing an adequate education for all students.

Figure 1 presents the key characteristics of each theory and shows how these concepts are related to each other. The theories complement each other very well and build an analytical framework that guides the analysis in chapter 7.

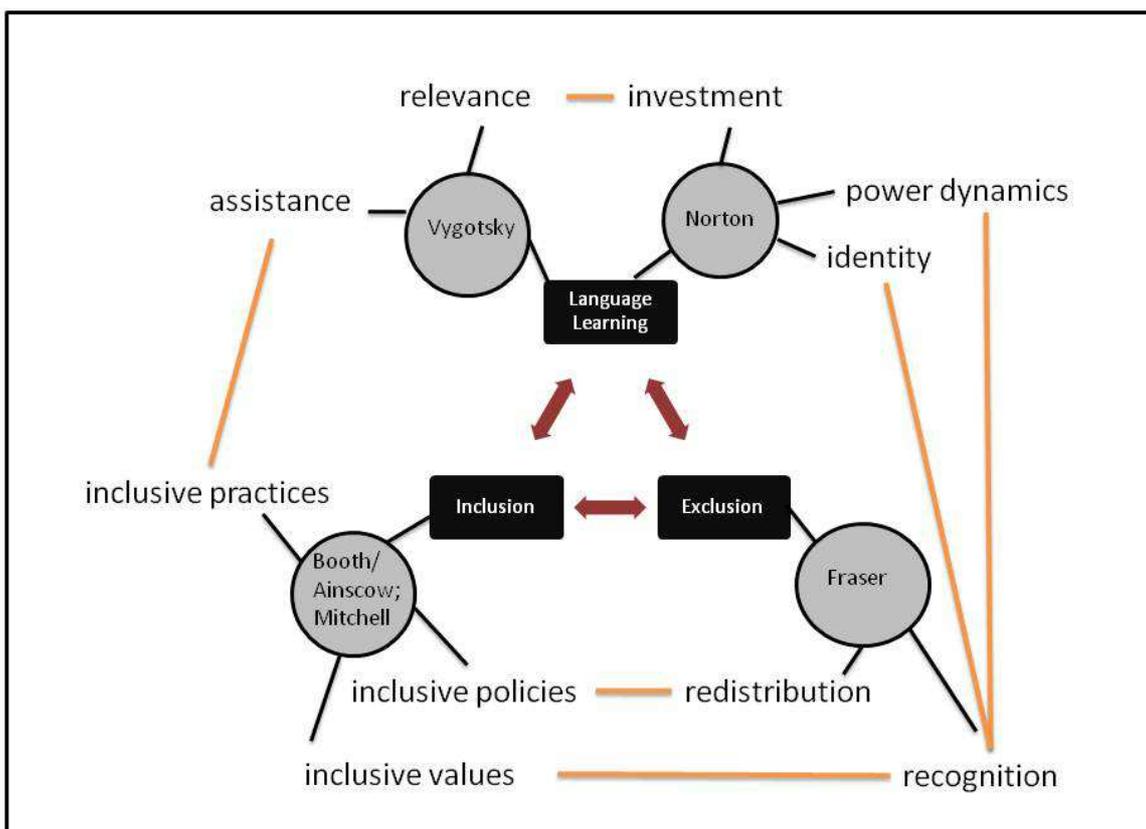


Figure 1: Analytical Framework

There is a strong connection between Booth’s and Ainscow’s (2002) index for inclusion and Fraser’s (1997) framework of redistribution and recognition. Inclusive policies, one dimension of the index for inclusion, can be considered as redistribution in order to overcome economic injustice. Mitchell (2009) also refers to economic and social aspects that have to be taken into consideration in order to create an inclusive school environment. Inclusive values, another dimension, can be seen as remedy for cultural injustice.

Cultural injustice refers to power dynamics that marginalize a certain group. These power dynamics are discussed by Norton (1995) since they influence the language learners’ identity to a major extent. This has implications for the education system. Norton argues that teachers have to discuss these power dynamics with their students and help them to claim their right to speak. Teachers are central in Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory (1978). He sees relevant and purposeful assistance through a teacher as fundamental to learn. This brings us back to the index for inclusion, which also covers the dimension of inclusive practices referring to teaching and learning.

## **4 Background Data**

This chapter aims at placing the topic of this study into a broader historical and political context. Background information on immigration to Germany can help to explain the current discourses about migrants and refugees in society and media. It also gives an idea about the situation newly arrived immigrants live in.

Since this thesis is about different forms of organizing the education system for newly arrived immigrant students, the complex German education system has to be explained. Due to the federal system of the country, Berlin as federal state has its own responsibility for the education system. Berlin's education system, in particular, has to be described, as well as the situation immigrant students live in.

### **4.1 Immigration to Germany**

Scholars see different phases of immigration to Germany that have taken place since the end of World War II.

As a consequence of the war many displaced people and refugees came to Germany to start a new life (Müller, 2005, p. 13f.). Most of them were Germans from regions that belonged to Germany before the war. All in all around twelve million people had to be integrated, which was not without conflicts, but worked out in the end. The fact that the refugees were Germans can be seen as a factor which contributed to them being more easily accepted by the host population.

In the 1950s the West German economy boomed and there was a lack of workers to maintain the increased productivity. So called "guest workers" from other countries were seen as a solution to this problem. Thus treaties with Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia and Yugoslavia were made (Woellert et al., 2009, p. 12). 14 million workers came between 1955 and 1973, often from poor, rural areas and usually untrained. They were supposed to work in Germany for a few years and then return to their home countries. Integration was not a topic of discussion at that time (ibid.). In the 1970s a recession came and in 1973 a recruitment ban made it more difficult for foreign workers to come. For those who already were in Germany this meant it would be difficult to return to Germany once they left the country, so many of them stayed and their families moved to live with them (Müller, 2005, p. 17).

Suddenly Germany had an immigrant population that had not been planned for. Nevertheless the opinion, that Germany is not an immigration country dominated the debate. There were still almost no efforts towards an integration of the immigrants already living in the country.

In the 1980s more refugees came, many from the former German settlement regions in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union. Their integration was supported by several measures through the state (ibid., p. 19ff.). This was not the case for the war refugees from Yugoslavia who came during the Balkan War in the 1990s. The number of asylum applications rose dramatically from 108,000 applications in 1980 to more than 400,000 in 1993 (Woellert et al., 2009, p. 14). In 1993 the asylum law was restricted: only people coming directly to Germany without entering a secure neighbor state were allowed to apply for asylum. Others had to return to the secure neighbor state they came through (ibid.). The number of applications decreased immediately.

In 2005 a new immigration law was introduced which acknowledged the importance of integration as a national responsibility for the first time. Already in 2007 some changes were made. The law was criticized by immigrant organizations for maintaining a policy of closure (Schneider, 2007) since it makes it in general more difficult to migrate to Germany.

Since 2007 the number of people migrating to Germany from other EU (European Union) - member states increased. This can be seen as a consequence of the EU accession of several Central Eastern European countries in 2004 and 2007 (BMI, 2008, p. 9). The statistics do not show the reasons why they came to Germany since they now enjoy freedom of mobility within the entire EU. For all of those who came from outside the EU, statistics show the main reasons for coming to Germany were family, employment, higher education and the receipt of a residence permit (BMI, 2015, p. 35). The number of people seeking asylum in Germany has been rising slightly since 2009, but has increased enormously since 2012 (BAMF, 2015, p. 4). In 2014 more than 200.000 people requested asylum, among them are mainly people from Syria, Serbia and Eritrea (ibid., p. 7).

These increased numbers creates challenges for the host country, as asylum seekers need accommodation, food, clothes, health care and education. This has led to difficult situations in some parts of Germany where shelters are overcrowded (Die Zeit, 13.10.2014) and authorities have not been able to cope with the work overload (Keilani et al., 04.09.2014).

Students in German language classes can be members of all these groups: many are refugees or asylum seekers, others came with their families for better job and education opportunities.

## 4.2 German Education System

The federal structure of the German political system also shapes German education policy. Education has always been one of the responsibilities managed by the federal states (*Bundesländer*) (Edelstein, 2013). Therefore Germany does not have one consistent education system, but several different systems in the sixteen federal states. Nevertheless, they all have a similar structure: students go to a primary school first for either four or six years and then to a secondary school (Lohmar/Eckhardt, 2013, p. 26). The secondary schooling is divided in several different tracks according to the students' achievements in primary school (ibid., p. 27).

In all federal states the highest-level track is called "Gymnasium", it leads to the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> grade and graduates can continue to higher education. The organization of the other tracks differs from one federal state to the next. Some states have a middle-level track and a lower-level track, leading to 10<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade respectively, that prepare the graduates for an apprenticeship (ibid., p. 113). In some federal states these tracks are combined in one school type. Another type of school is "Gesamtschule", which combines all tracks in order to give all students the opportunity to achieve as high as possible. As well, there is the system of special schools for children with special needs that is even more divided in itself (ibid., p. 26f.). Compulsory schooling lasts nine or ten years and usually starts at the age of six (ibid., p. 25).

There are no general guidelines as to how the federal states should integrate newly arrived immigrant students. In several federal states (among them Berlin) additional classrooms that focus on German language acquisition have been established. These German language classes that exist in several federal states under different names, have never been evaluated systematically (Kunz, 2008, p. 186).

Compulsory schooling is interpreted in different ways in the different federal states in regard to newly arrived immigrant students. Often they distinguish between compulsory schooling for students with residence permit and the right to go to school for students who are still in the asylum application process (Pelzer et al., 2003). Several studies, among them the PISA-study have shown that migrant students are disadvantaged in the German school system and often achieve below average (Hopf, 2007, p. 166; Berg, 2011, p. 17).

## 4.3 The Situation in Berlin

Teenagers in Berlin are the focus of this study, thus the social situation of immigrants in Berlin and Berlin's education system are presented in more detail with a special regard to secondary education.

In 2007, 25,7% of the population in Berlin had a migration background<sup>8</sup>, but the percentage of migrants differs from 44,5% in the district Mitte to 9,9% in the district Treptow-Köpenick (Die Beauftragte für Integration und Migration, 2007). Migrants face a high risk of poverty (27,2%) compared to 10% for persons without a migration background (Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg, 2013, p. 18). 13,5% of the students in Berlin do not have German citizenship and 36,9% do not speak German as their mother tongue. Both numbers are much higher than average in district B and much lower in district A<sup>9</sup> (SenBJW, 2015a, p. 5ff.).

Very high-achieving students can in some cases already transfer to the *Gymnasium* after four years, although primary school usually lasts six years in Berlin. Most primary schools offer a so called flexible starting phase, which means that 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students are taught together in one group. Each child can learn the subject matters of grade 1 and 2 within either one, two or three years depending on its abilities (SenBWF, 2010b).

Secondary schooling is provided in different school types: *Gymnasium*, integrated secondary school and comprehensive school. The *Gymnasium* lasts until 12<sup>th</sup> grade and students can enter higher education after they have attained the graduation certificate (*Abitur*). Integrated secondary schools are a school type that has merged the former school types *Hauptschule* and *Realschule*. Both schools in this study are integrated secondary schools. These can lead either to 10<sup>th</sup> grade to enable students to start an apprenticeship or vocational training or it continues to 13<sup>th</sup> grade and the *Abitur*, after which students can also proceed to higher education. Not all secondary schools offer grade 10 to 13. If their students want to proceed they have the opportunity to transfer to an *Oberstufenzentrum*, which can be seen as a vocational college. Students going there can either choose a vocational track or proceed to the general *Abitur* (Bartels/Paselk, 2001, p. 8f.).

Comprehensive schools offer education from 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> (sometimes also to 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup>) grade within one school and provide students with different kind of graduation certificates depending on how many years they attend and the results they achieve.

In rankings on the different education systems of the German federal states Berlin is usually among the last (IQB, 2011; IQB, 2012). Similar to the federal level, students with a migration background in Berlin achieve lower in academic terms (ibid.).

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<sup>8</sup> The term migration background is used widely in Germany in order to refer not only to immigrants who came to Germany themselves, but also to their children and grandchildren who have been born and raised in Germany. It has no regard to citizenship, but rather to migration experience of at least one parent (Berg, 2011, p. 11).

<sup>9</sup> I do not use the concrete numbers here in order to keep the districts and schools anonymized (see chapter 5.7).

## **5 Methodology**

In this chapter all methodological issues concerning the research project are presented and discussed. The purpose of the study and the research questions are explained. Furthermore it describes how sampling, the actual data collection and the data analysis were done. Special attention is given to questions of quality, which are often controversial in qualitative research. Ethical considerations are important during the entire research process, especially when field work is done, where human beings are involved.

### **5.1 Research Purpose and Questions**

This study seeks to explore how education for newly arrived immigrant students in Berlin can be improved. Therefore it first gathers information on how schooling for recently arrived immigrant youth is currently organized and run in two different districts and how this is perceived by the different stakeholders involved. Benefits and challenges of the different approaches can then be identified on a comparative basis and used to inform schools, policy-makers and other involved stakeholders.

This thesis deals with three main research questions with a few sub-questions each, which are presented and explained in the following paragraphs.

1. How is the education for newly arrived immigrant youth organized in Berlin?
  - What social factors constitute education for newly arrived immigrant students in Berlin?
  - What legal factors constitute education for newly arrived immigrant students?
  - What is the goal of the German language classes?
  - How is schooling for newly arrived immigrant students organized within the districts A and B, comparatively?

This first set of questions aims at gathering general background information on the topic and the situation in the chosen districts. It embeds the issue in a social and legal context. This general information is necessary in order to understand the situation before going deeper into the stakeholders' perceptions.

2. How do the schools work in order to achieve the goals of the German language classes?
  - How do the schools work in order to achieve fast German language acquisition?

- How do the schools work in order to achieve fast transition into mainstream classrooms?

The second set of question focuses on the activities at the school-level and inside the classroom on the one hand and on how this situation is perceived by those involved on the other hand. The stakeholders' experiences and opinions are in the center.

3. What factors contribute to or interfere with fast German language acquisition and fast transition to a mainstream classroom?

- What do the stakeholders perceive as challenges and benefits of the different approaches in district A and B?
- How can those factors that contribute to fast German language acquisition and fast transition to a mainstream classroom be strengthened in order to improve the educational situation of recently arrived immigrant youth?
- How can those factors that prevent fast German language acquisition and fast transition to a mainstream classroom be weakened in order to improve the educational situation of recently arrived immigrant youth?

The last set of questions seeks to identify factors that can either contribute to or interfere with a good educational situation for newly arrived immigrant youth. The districts work in different ways and these differences have to be identified on a comparative basis in order to understand what challenges and benefits each school provides according to the stakeholders. To know these factors is important in order to be able to improve the situation by strengthening the positive and reducing the negative factors. This part uses the findings derived from the data and interprets them in a broader context.

## **5.2 Research Approach**

There is not much information on German language classes in Germany as it is – at least to the current extent – a relatively new field that needs to be explored. Corbin and Strauss (1990, p. 19) state that qualitative approaches “can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known”. Therefore a qualitative approach seems well suited for this study.

Among the different qualitative approaches a case study design was chosen. Many scholars underline the ambiguity of the term “case study” (Merriam, 1998, p. 27; Hamilton/Corbett-Whittier, 2013, p. 10f.; Gerring, 2007, p. 17ff.). So it is necessary to define what case study

means in the context of this project. Following Hamilton's and Corbett-Whittier's argumentation (2013, p. 10) case study here refers to a research approach or genre rather than a method, "which can capture rich data giving an in depth picture of a bounded unit or an aspect of that unit." Yin (2009, p. 18) defines case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." The research phenomenon studied here is the education of non-German speaking students in Berlin and due to the before mentioned lack of literature and other background information the boundaries are not clear. In order to answer the research questions two secondary schools in two districts were chosen. Furthermore the stakeholders that seemed most likely to be able to provide me with the necessary information in order to answer the questions have also been selected. Each districts' organizational model of German language classes is considered as one case.

The term "case" usually refers to a location, such as a community or an organization (Bryman, 2012, p. 67), like in this study to a district. This case is studied in depth through qualitative or quantitative methods or a combination of both. In this study multiple qualitative methods such as interviews, observations and document analyses were used. One can also distinguish between different kinds of cases. Following Yin's (2009, p. 48) classification the chosen cases in this study can be called "representative" or "typical cases", which are meant to "capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation" (ibid.). The schools chosen within the districts are not special or extreme, but representative of secondary schools teaching youth without German skills in those districts.

Yin (2009, p. 10) links the choice to use a case study design to three conditions: type of research question, which has to be explanatory, the extent of control over actual behavioral events, which should be strictly limited and the degree of focus on contemporary events, which should be given. Explanatory research questions like the ones posed above are likely to lead to the use of a case study. The researcher in this case does not have control over the actual events and a contemporary event is studied. These arguments are in favor of a case study design for this research.

Bryman (2012, p. 72) comes up with the "comparative research design" which describes this study even closer. It means to study two contrasting cases with the same or similar methods. This kind of design is often used in studies comparing two nation states, nevertheless, it can be applied to smaller units (ibid., p. 74), such as districts in Berlin in this context. A strength

of this approach can be seen in improved theory building as new concepts may emerge through comparison.

Like any research approach the case study has its limits. One often mentioned weakness is the lack of generalization potential. Yin (2009, p. 15) argues in this context that theoretical generalization can be achieved by case study research, albeit generalizations about populations or universes cannot. Gerring (2007, p. 65) then again states that the results can be generalized, but only across similar cases.

A qualitative comparative case study design in which each district under examination is regarded as one case seems to be the best option to answer the stated research questions. This provides the opportunity to get a deep insight into two districts that deal with the same issue in different ways. The results could inform other schools and districts that follow similar strategies to provide education for newly arrived immigrant youth.

### **5.3 Comparison**

This study is meant to be a comparative case study, so it is necessary to define the actual levels and units of comparison.

The two cases are districts in Berlin, which means the comparison is a geographic one at the district level. The units are the way both districts handle the education of recently arrived immigrant youth. One could also expect a comparison between the different stakeholders. Comparisons between them emerge, but they are not in the focus. The purpose of the interviews is rather to gather information from different perspectives in order to get the bigger picture.

A comparative approach was chosen on the one hand in order to show the existing variety of issues connected to the education of youth living in Germany without German language skills. On the other hand it is useful to compare two districts which deal with the issue in different ways to identify positive and negative factors. By contrasting one can generate hypotheses and ideas on how to improve the situation by strengthening the facilitating and reducing the preventing factors.

### **5.4 Sampling**

As common in qualitative research the sample was selected purposively, which means that sampling took place in a strategic way rather than from a probability design. Bryman (2012, p. 417) distinguishes between two levels of sampling which are the sampling of context and

the sampling of participants. In the following paragraphs it will be described, how sampling of context and participants was done.

### Sampling of Context

Berlin was chosen as research site because contact to the Berlin Refugee Council and their work group on educational matters could be established. This group came up with the issue of the organization of German language classrooms in the different districts. They provided a contact person, who supported the research process on site, mainly as a “door-opener” to access the field.

Apart from these practical reasons Berlin is an interesting site in its function as major city, capital of Germany and federal state at the same time. Berlin does have a high immigrant population of about 25% (Engler, 2012), though it is not higher than in other major cities such as Frankfurt am Main, where the immigrant population is 43% of the entire population (ibid.). Berlin is in a financially difficult situation (Brenke, 2008, p. 500; BMF, 2014) and in rankings on the different education systems of the German federal states it is usually among the last (IQB, 2011; IQB, 2012). These are no optimal conditions to deal with a complex issue such as the integration of newly arrived immigrant students. On the other hand the decentralized structure of the education system in Berlin offers favorable research conditions due to different ideas and strategies regarding education in a relatively small area which can be evaluated, and if successful, probably be transferred to other parts of the city or even other regions (Hopf, 2007, p. 166).

In order to answer the research questions two districts in Berlin that organize the education of recently arrived immigrant students differently were chosen. The different models are visualized in Figure 2. My contact person worked in a secondary school and was eager to make that school accessible for this study. This district, which will be called district A here, organizes the German language classes for newly arrived students in the following way: All adolescent students without German language skills living in district A attend German language classes in that certain secondary school.

In contrast to this a district B was chosen where these classes are organized in a more decentralized way. That means all students without German skills living in that district attend German language classes at different schools. The classes are spread all over the district in different school types. The responsible person on the administrative level was asked for permission for me to study this district and agreed. She recommended two schools that have a good repu-

tation concerning the education of immigrant students and have several years experience with non-German speaking students. I selected one of them which was an integrated secondary school. Therefore it has similar attributes to the school in district A. Both schools are experienced, have a good reputation, are located in the former Western part of the city and therefore underwent similar historical developments.

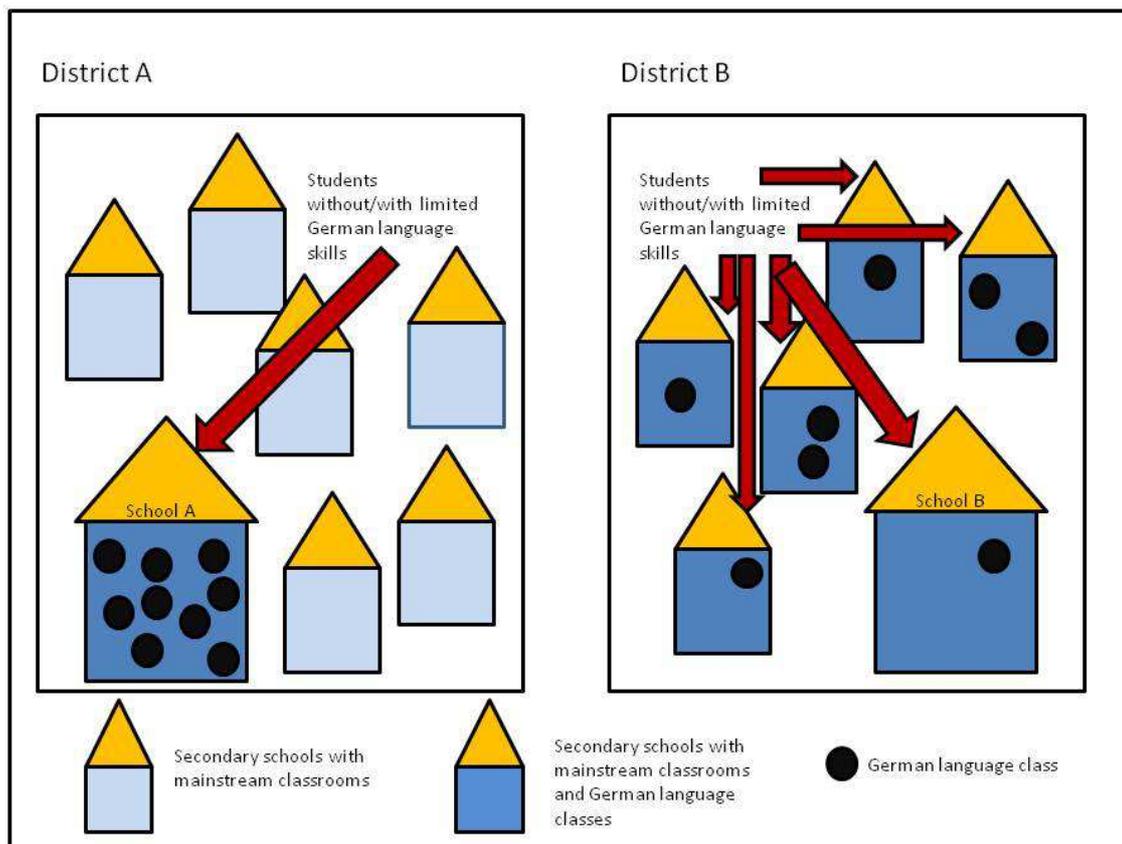


Figure 2: Organizational models of German language classes in district A and B

The schools seem to be similar, the districts they are located in are not. According to a report on social structure in Berlin (SenGS, 2013) district A has a very good social structure, which means only few people out of work, high incomes and also a low amount of immigrants (ibid., p. 27). District B in contrast is a district with many people with low social status. It has a high amount of people without German citizenship and a high percentage of people with either low or no salaries<sup>10</sup> (ibid., p. 34ff.).

These differences do impact the study to some extent, as it seems that the conditions in district A are in general much better compared to in district B. But one must consider that district B is a typical immigration district, so schools and population have experience in dealing with

<sup>10</sup> I do not use concrete numbers here in order to keep the districts anonymized.

different languages, cultures and educational needs, whereas these issues are a relatively new phenomenon in district A. The experiences of district B can probably outweigh the more difficult general circumstances, while district A has better conditions but less experience.

For the observations the schools suggested classes and lessons I could attend. So it was less a choice based on certain criteria, but rather on who was willing to open the door. Nevertheless, the sample was very interesting and useful. In district A two classrooms were observed: the students of one class were those soon to be transferred to mainstream classrooms. So they had been to the school for at least a year, spoke German quite well already and some of them took part in the individual interviews later, which gave a good opportunity to triangulate data from interviews and observations. The second classroom was a group of students who were illiterate when they came to Berlin, because they had never been to school. This gave a good contrast to the other class and provided me with a good overview on how the entire school works. In district B there was only one German language classroom and I observed part of a German lesson as well as a geography lesson.

### Sampling of Participants

Following implications by the Educational Governance, principals, teachers, students and administrative staff were chosen as study participants. Kussau and Brüsemeister (2007, p. 28) state that "[t]he key stakeholders in a public school - students, parents, teachers, policy and administration - control only certain resources respectively. That none of these stakeholders alone can constitute and run the school is so self-evident that it even seems trivial." This means all stakeholders involved have certain resources that would help me to answer the research questions, therefore they all were included.

The principals of both schools agreed on participating in the study. Their position is the link between the policy level and the school. They have to follow the directives coming from the Ministry of Education and implement them in their schools. They have according to the school law and among other tasks (SenBJW, 2010a, part VI, section 1, §69) the main responsibility for the school, decide about human and material resources and should cooperate with all other stakeholders. Furthermore they admit new students to their school. Huber (2008, p. 97) describes their role as being "part of the linear administration hierarchy of the school system" on the one hand and "being part of the complex hierarchy within the schools themselves" on the other hand. This complex role and the different responsibilities can impact the educational situation of newly arrived immigrant youth, that is why the principals were asked to participate.

Due to their important role in the literature teachers as links between principal and students were included. As the school in district B has only one German language class with one main responsible teacher and two other teachers who teach there from time to time, the sample could not exceed the number of three teachers. In both schools two teachers were chosen. All of them had worked in German language classes for at least three years, even though one of them is not constantly teaching in these classes. In each school it was one female and one male teacher, one of them had very long experience (more than 20 years), the other one less (3-5 years). The job as a teacher includes more than just teaching, it also means to guide students and to give advice to them (SenBJW, 2010a, part VI, section 1, §67). These tasks can have a tremendous impact especially on students in difficult living situations such as the ones in focus of this study.

The central group of interest is as a matter of fact the students. Their expectations and experiences in a German school are central for the research, thus they had to be part of the study. A language barrier existed in most cases. So only those students were included, who spoke German well enough to understand and answer the questions in a proper way. One could see that as a limitation, but it also means that those students have experienced being in a German language class for at least one year and were able to reflect upon that time. In district A three students with different backgrounds and genders were chosen by the teacher. After I had obtained their parents' or legal guardians' permission those three students were interviewed. In district B four students were chosen to take part in the study with their parents' permission. All students were in the age between fourteen and sixteen, had been in Berlin for at least one year and six months and expected to transfer to a mainstream classroom within the next six months.

In order not to only have data about two single schools, the district administration of both districts were included. The role of the administration was often mentioned during the first interviews and seemed to be very relevant to the project. This is supported by the literature that sees them as working in an area of intersection between education policy, science, school development, evaluation and administrative tasks (Brüsemeyer/Newiadomsky, 2008, p. 4). Each district has a school supervising authority (*regionale Schulaufsicht*), that is responsible for all schools within that district. The responsibilities for the different school levels and types are shared among different people. For this study the person responsible for secondary schools was chosen in each district. The school supervising authority is responsible for the organization of the schools, the distribution of human and material resources and moreover

decides about the aim, content, organization, quality and amount of lessons (SenBJW, 2010a, part VIII, section, §105). Therefore they are directly involved in the schools and their role had to be considered.

If one differentiates between different forms of sampling, the sample of this study can be seen as a combination of a typical case sampling and a maximum variation sampling (Bryman, 2012, p. 419). Both schools were selected as typical cases, but their organization of German language classes is totally different. Apart from that convenience reasons such as time and location played an important role, furthermore recommendations about whom to interview by different participants. It can be seen as limitation that the teachers chose the students, but they could not really influence them since they did not know the interview guide. I did not give them any criteria apart from that the students have to be able to conduct the interview in German or English since I did not know the students their class consisted of. However, both teachers provided a group of students with diverse background and from both genders.

## **5.5 Data Collection**

Because of a lack of information concerning German language classes in Germany, an exploratory data collection method was used. Semi-structured interviews with involved stakeholders in both districts were aimed at both providing me with the necessary background information on the topic and describing the stakeholders' perceptions of the educational situation of recently arrived immigrant youth in Berlin. The second method used to collect data was classroom observation.

### Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews give the opportunity to ask for specific aspects that might have come up during the literature review. They also allow time and space for the participants to speak about what they think is important (Rapley, 2007, p. 25). This enables unknown aspects to emerge and to become part of the data. This study is part of a very small field, therefore it is even more important to gather all possible information given by those involved.

Qualitative interviewing is more flexible than quantitative and focuses on the interviewees' point of view (Bryman, 2012, p. 470). In this study an interview guide was used that consisted of different topics which were then put into interview questions (cf. Appendix C). During the interview new questions were added, when the participants came up with a new topic. Other questions were not asked, as they became redundant during the interview, e.g. when the participant was not involved in an issue. The interview guides underwent some changes during

the data collection process, but those were minor ones like changing the order of questions and adding or changing questions. The topics remained the same during the entire data collection process. The interviewees were not always asked the exactly same questions, but the interviews are nevertheless comparable since the differences are small. Furthermore this study does not claim to be standardized in quantitative terms.

The interviews started usually with a broad general question and went into more details later when asking about specific aspects. Almost all questions were open-ended questions that were aiming at letting the participants talk. I did not use pre-formulated questions, but just keywords in order to encourage a more natural talking situation by formulating the questions spontaneously during the conversation using filling words and more colloquial language. All in all an interview is a very artificial situation, as interviewer and interviewee often do not know one another, talk about a specific topic in an asymmetric way, where one asks the questions and the other answers. Meanwhile this whole situation is recorded. These facts impact the data and have to be acknowledged as limitations of the interview method.

The interviews with the administrative staff and the principals took place in their offices. Even though they told the secretaries before, they did not want to be disturbed, almost all interviews were interrupted at least once by phone calls or people coming in. The interviews with teachers took place either in an empty classroom or the teachers' room. One teacher asked to do the interview at an institution for teacher training, where she had an appointment that day. This interview was interrupted several times including the need to change rooms. The student's interviews in district A were done in the empty library with no interruptions at all, while the students in district B were interviewed in their regular classroom.

All interviews were individual interviews except the one with the students in district B. Originally I had planned to conduct individual interviews with those students too and that was the agreement with the teacher, but once the situation was there, the teacher left the room with the other students. To interview the four students individually did not seem wise since all of them were in the same room and it would have taken too much time. Therefore I spontaneously decided to interview them as a group. All students were interviewed after their classroom had been observed. This can be seen as an advantage as the students did not have to speak to a total stranger but with someone they had at least seen once before. The interview situations were not ideal. They were to some extent negatively impacted by the surroundings. Schools are busy places, but to do the interviews at school was less demanding for the participants

than doing them at home since it would take less of their time and increase their motivation to take part.

### Observations

Qualitative observation belongs to the ethnographic methods, which usually seek to explore the nature of the phenomenon under examination, work with uncoded data, often with a small number of cases and focuses on the interpretation of meanings and functions of human actions during data analysis (Atkinson/Hammersley, 1994, p. 248). These key characteristics are in line with the characteristics of the case study design and the major ideas of grounded theory, which will be discussed later.

The idea to conduct observations in this study was to see the actual work in the school and not only to rely on the interviewees' descriptions, so to get an insight and overall impression of what is going on in these classrooms. Pianta and Hamre (2009, p. 110) state that "[q]ualitative approaches to observation provide rich, descriptive information about teachers' practices and students' experiences in classrooms using ethnographic approaches". Furthermore it gave the opportunity to see at least two groups of stakeholders (teachers and students) interacting with each other. Additionally, situations that were described during the interviewees' such as the students' use of language, could be observed in the actual situation. This enabled triangulation of data to come even closer to thick descriptions.

Like any method observations have their advantages and disadvantages. The arguments speaking in favor of the method have already been mentioned, still the limitations have to be discussed, too. The idea of an unstructured observation is to observe everything that is going on and later to focus on a more specific aspect (Gomm, 2004, p. 235). That was also how the observations in this study were conducted. First I took notes about everything going on in the classroom and later focused on topics such as use of language, student interaction, teaching methods etc. In that context one has to keep in mind, that any observer's attention is selective, so I could technically not observe *everything* that was going on in a classroom. Furthermore perception is constructive, so I might have observed, what I wanted to observe based on theoretical ideas, general knowledge and former experience. Memory is reconstructive, which means memories get re-organized later (ibid., p. 236).

To overcome these limitations I also took notes on surroundings such as the composition of the classroom in order to have a clearer picture in mind when reflecting on the lessons later. The notes were converted into observation protocols in a text format right after the observa-

tion took place in order to avoid a re-organization of memories. Using the interview data can also support the interpretations made about these observation that can then be traced back to two different sources.

The data collection took place from 29<sup>th</sup> September 2014 until 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014. All in all I interviewed fifteen participants and observed six lessons in three different classrooms.

## **5.6 Data Analysis**

In order to analyze the data it had to be transformed in written texts first. Inductive transcription which means that everything the interviewees said including laughing, slips of the tongue, coughing and big gestures was converted into text. The notes taken during the observations were also written down as an observation protocol. The inductive approach was chosen in order not to overlook material that does not seem relevant on first sight but is probably relevant at a later stage of the analysis.

Data collection and analysis were to some extent informed by grounded theory, even though the study does not claim to have followed all the steps of grounded theory. It rather applied some important aspects of this approach to the research process such as open coding and constant comparison. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 23) “[a] grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents.” This means the researcher goes into the data collection process without theoretical pre-conceptions or at least as few as possible, but rather works with the data itself to generate ideas (Dey, 2007, p. 80). To have no theoretical pre-conceptions does not mean that other literature should not be used to inform a study. It rather refers to the term theoretical sensitivity described by Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 41) as “awareness of the subtleties of meaning of data”. Theoretical sensitivity can be developed through working with literature, but also through professional or personal experience. Dealing with literature in a sensitive way means not to carry unrecognized assumptions that hinder new aspects or topics to emerge during the research process.

Bryman (2012, p. 571) describes the beginning of a research process using grounded theory as starting with a broad research question, then form a theoretical sample, collect and code data. He further mentions that these steps should not be seen as linear but rather as a constant going back and forth. This study also began with different research questions than the ones presented above. They were adapted and modified after the first open coding.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) distinguish between open, axial and selective coding. Open coding means to conceptualize the raw data by asking very general questions. This first step was

done in this study as well to get an overview about the topic itself and to identify its dimensions. I then left the path of grounded theory and went on with a thematic or content analysis.

Bryman (2012, p. 579) describes the thematic analysis as a non-identifiable approach, it is not clearly defined but rather an approach that is used in different types of analysis. But he also presents a framework developed by the National Centre for Social Research in the UK (ibid., p. 580). This framework resembles the analysis process of this study since it mainly organizes themes and subthemes in a systematic way. This is a useful way to get an overview about the main topics, which can then be analyzed more detailed, while other topics may appear as irrelevant and redundant.

The main topics were identified by reading all transcripts and observation protocols carefully several times. Those topics that came up in many interviews and were mentioned by different groups of stakeholders were collected as keywords. These keywords were then organized in groups if possible. The different levels of abstraction that appeared were applied as main topics, subtopics and cross-cutting topics. Each main topic consists of several subtopics. The cross-cutting topics touch upon almost all main topics to some extent. This basic structure was used to narrow down and reformulate the research questions. This is an example for the constant going back and forth in grounded theory, but also in qualitative research in general.

The topics are structured in a way that they can be presented systematically. To make the analysis trustworthy and valid all interpretations are going to be supported by quoting or proper referencing from the transcripts or observation protocols. Situations or facts described by the interviewees can be backed up by the observations I conducted, but also by analyzing adequate documents such as guidelines or laws the interviewees referred to.

## **5.7 Ethical Issues**

Ethical considerations have to be part of the entire research process (Miller/Bell, 2002, p. 53), but are mainly referred to in the context of field work. According to Ryen (2007, p. 219ff.), the main ethical issues in context with qualitative research are codes and consent, confidentiality and trust. The National Committees for Research Ethics in Norway (2006) published guidelines for research ethics, that include among other issues like the ones Ryen sees as crucial and which apply to this study, too.

One basic issue is the respect for individuals (ibid., p. 11), which basically means not to harm the participants in any way. The participants have to know that they are participating in a project and they have to do it on a voluntary basis (ibid., p. 12f.). In this study all participants

were informed about the content of the study either by e-mail or orally or in a written form and asked for consent. The adult participants signed a consent form before the interview started. To interview students under the age of sixteen the parents or legal guardians were asked for consent to follow both German and Norwegian law on research ethics (cf. Appendix B). According to the guidelines set by the Ministry of Education in Berlin the signed consent forms had to remain in the school. In the beginning I could not guarantee that all parents understood the consent form as immigrant parents were asked, but all information was given in German and English. Additionally, all contact details were given and the teachers asked the students to explain the situation to their parents. After conducting the interviews it became apparent that all participating students had parents or legal guardians, who had been in Germany for several years and often spoke better German than the students themselves. The participants did not receive the interview guide before the interview, but they knew the general topic of the study.

Another very common issue is confidentiality (ibid., p. 18). It should not be possible to trace back the data to the participants and not even to single schools. In order to enable that, the districts were made anonymous, too, otherwise it would have been possible to uncover one of the schools that has a very unique profile. The interviews were recorded and the audio files stored encrypted on an external hard drive, so that only I had access to the data. The files on the recording device were deleted right after the interviews had taken place. In the written transcripts all names of persons, districts and schools were made anonymous. The observations have been conducted with permission of the teacher who was present. I only took written notes, but did not record anything. Furthermore it was not allowed to write down the real names of the students and teachers participating. Moreover I was asked not to talk about the observed lessons with anyone who participated. These were conditions set by the responsible person in the Ministry of Education who gave consent to conduct the study when I assured to follow the guidelines (cf. Appendix A). Besides this the ethical guidelines set by the NSD (Norwegian Social Science Data Service) were automatically followed, too. NSD had given its consent to the study before the data were collected. To follow these guidelines does not provide favorable research conditions in terms of ecological validity. This problem is discussed in chapter 5.8.

The participants were not exposed to any harm. There were difficult questions about the students' background that were necessary for the study, but could have been harmful for students with bad experiences, e.g. refugees. I limited these questions to a minimum and did not go

further into details. So the information that a student left his country because of threats was enough information, I did not ask what kind of threats these were or how he experienced them. The focus was on the students' perceptions of the everyday school life and these questions were less emotionally charged.

In qualitative research the participants' opinions and experiences are in the center. Therefore the researcher has to respect those, even though they might differ from the researcher's opinion or are probably not in line with what society sees as acceptable. This objectivity is especially important during data analysis and interpretation. To ensure this at a high level, extreme quotes are cited properly and also all other statements can be traced back through references.

An issue that occurred in this study was the language barriers. The students who took part in the study did not speak German fluently. All students were asked whether they wanted to do the interview in German or English, all decided to speak German. They understood the questions in almost all cases and could give proper answers that I often repeated in order to make sure that I understood them correctly. Nevertheless, one could argue that the students would have expressed themselves differently in their mother tongue. The study focused on the content of the interviewees' answers, so it is adequate to use them, even though they are in some cases not very elaborated. However, this language barrier has to be seen as a limitation of this study. Interpretation of these data has to be done very carefully, as wrong grammar or sentence structure can easily lead to misunderstandings. That is the reason why I took notes after each interview about my general impression of the interviewees, their opinions, their behavior and everything else that seemed important in order to analyze the interviews later. These memos in combination with inductive transcription including laughing, breaks and big gestures of all interviews are measures I took to ensure a high level of objectivity and correct interpretation.

## **5.8 Quality Issues**

Quality issues are always a more difficult and controversial topic in qualitative than in quantitative research as qualitative studies are usually not standardized, cannot be measured and are difficult to repeat.

The main issues are reliability and validity. Reliability is the consistency of measures of a concept (Bryman, 2012, p. 169), but in this study like in most other qualitative studies measurements were not used. The problem is similar with validity, which means the question whether a measure of a concept really measures that concept.

That is why the research community came up with alternative ways to understand and ensure reliability and validity also in qualitative research projects. Some of them will be discussed in light of this study in the following paragraphs. In this context one should keep in mind that not all aspects of validity are relevant or important in all studies (Kleven, 2008, p. 231).

External reliability refers to the idea to replicate a study (Bryman, 2012, p. 390). This is almost impossible to apply as those contexts cannot be created again. Most of the students who were interviewed have already been transferred to mainstream classrooms. It would simply not be possible to put them back together in a classroom and let them work on the same grammar task and a new group of students would neither replicate the behavior of the former one.

According to Brock-Utne (1996, p. 617) ecological validity can be seen as part of external reliability and describes the extent to what findings from one context can be generalized to another. She argues that this is often difficult to ensure especially in case studies on schools since all institutions have hierarchy of credibility. Studies revealing problems can be threatening for the participants. In order to ensure ecological validity anyway the research has to collect all possible data on the schools and all participants (*ibid.*, p. 618). In the case of this study this is only possible to some extent due to the guidelines by the Ministry of Education in Berlin and the NSD. Specific sources cannot be used since it would be possible to identify the schools. Furthermore I was asked not to collect any sensitive data about students such as age or country of origin. Although I tried to gather all information accessible, one has to see the low ecological validity of this study as limitation.

The idea of internal reliability is that several observers would observe similar situations that they could agree on (*ibid.*). This might to a certain extent be applicable for the observations, but probably not for the interviews as the interview situation is influenced by so many different factors, among them personal characteristics. The participants would have talked in a different way with a person who might be e.g. older, male, a teacher or a parent.

External validity refers to generalization of findings which is controversial in qualitative research especially when a very small sample is chosen. This issue has been discussed above, so case studies can come up with theoretical or analytical generalizations and also generalize across populations, but only those that are very similar to the chosen cases (Gerring, 2007, p. 65; Kleven, 2008, p. 229). Kleven (*ibid.*) refers to analytical generalizations as non-statistical generalizations, which are “judgment-based generalization[s] based on rational arguments.”

Internal validity can be seen as strength of qualitative research as it means that the researchers' observations are in line with the theoretical ideas they develop. As the theoretical ideas in this study emerge directly from the data itself, one can argue that internal validity is ensured. This is supported by the fact that data triangulation is used, which provides the reader with different sources of data for the same phenomenon. Concrete this means that the topics that emerged during the interviews helped to structure my observations, since I could focus on certain phenomena the interviewees described and evaluate it from my point of view in addition to the participant's view. Another way was to use my observations in order to initiate a conversation about a certain topic in the interviews in order to get the participant's perception on this issue.

Even though the issue of reliability in qualitative research remains an unsolved problem, validity is discussed to a major extent. Furthermore the detailed report about how research questions emerged, how data was collected, in which situations it was collected, how the analysis was conducted is another way to increase trustworthiness in the results (Bryman, 2012, p. 392). It can be summarized that quality issues in this study were acknowledged and applied as adequately as possible.

## **6 Presentation of Findings**

In this chapter the findings of the first data analysis are presented. The findings from the interviews are triangulated with the observations made in the classrooms. Supportive literature and legal texts are used to give the overall picture, especially in chapter 6.1, which provides detailed background information on the socio-legal situation of newly arrived immigrant youth in Berlin.

The chapter is structured in three subchapters each presenting one research question. In each subchapter the findings are presented for both districts in a comparative manner to underline differences and similarities.

### **6.1 Organization of Education for Newly Arrived Immigrant Students in Berlin**

This chapter refers to the more technical aspects of the topic and serves as basis for the deeper analytical research questions 2 and 3. The social and legal factors influencing the education of newly arrived students in general will be described and discussed. From these general conditions the German language classes themselves, their goals and their organization in Berlin, but mainly in district A and B are under examination.

#### **6.1.1 Social Situation**

The analysis of the social situation of newly arrived immigrant students is guided by Fraser's framework on redistribution and recognition, that identifies different form of injustices we can apply to the student's situation. The following analysis is partly based on a term paper I wrote on a closely connected topic (Richter, 2014, p. 11ff.) and has been adapted to this thesis' topic.

The economic situation of newly arrived immigrant students depends on their legal status. Asylum seeking persons and persons with temporary suspension from deportation receive financial support according to the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act (Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz [AsylbLG]). This includes food, accommodation, heating, clothes, health care and pocket money (BAMF, 2013). The amount of money is in line with the minimum of social benefits that people with residence permit would receive since this defines the minimum of appropriate living conditions (Bundesverfassungsgericht, 2012). Students and their families from EU member states basically have the right to live in Germany, but after three month they need a residence permit, which can be restricted if the family depends on social benefits to an inade-

quate extent (European Union, 2004, Art. 14). Immigrants from outside the EU need a visa that is based on several criteria, such as employment (AufenthG, chapter 2, part 1).

Asylum seekers are not allowed to work in the first year of their stay and after that only when no German or EU-citizen is interested in or available for this job (Pro Asyl b). This makes the difficult access to the labor market almost impossible for asylum seekers. They are in this case even more disadvantaged than people with a migration background who have a residence permit. Considering Fraser's framework one could argue that asylum seekers are marginalized as they are denied to provide for their own needs. On the other hand one could argue that they are ensured a minimum standard of living through the AsylbLG. EU citizens can according to the freedom of movement for workers work or try to find a job in Germany. This does not apply to Croatian citizens, since their freedom of movement for workers is restricted at least until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015 (BMF). Croatian citizens can work in Germany, but they need a work permission similar to employees from countries outside the EU. Apart from legal constraints immigrants are disadvantaged and underrepresented on the labor market (Lehmann et al.; 2009, p. 44; Hönekopp, 2007).

Cultural injustice is apparent as well. Newly arrived immigrant students come to Germany usually without any knowledge of German. The older they are the more complex is the language used in school, which makes it very difficult for the students to participate. They cannot follow the lessons and have problems to communicate with classmates and teachers. That makes the start in a new school life very demanding for the affected children. Many parents often do not have access to German courses or integration courses as these are only offered to persons with residence permit (Behrensen/Westpfahl, 2009, p. 46).

Depending on where these children come from and how old they are they already have school experience in their country of origin, which may completely differ from school culture in Germany. It is possible that the students are not familiar with certain teaching methods, with the assessment system or the way how teachers and students interact. Every year there are also school-aged children and teenagers coming to Berlin who have never been to school and have to adapt to a completely unfamiliar system (Bezirksamt Neukölln von Berlin, 2013, p. 12). Additional support would be necessary in order to enable these children to participate successfully in school, but often the schools do not have the required capacities to provide this support.

Measures like the “Education Package” (*Bildungspaket*) which was introduced in 2011 to provide equal opportunities for all students could support many students in German language classes. It mainly aims at families who depend on social benefits. It is available for students whose family receives financial support according to the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act (SenBJW, 2014). The application process is complex and bureaucratic and the information is not available in all common immigrant languages. Furthermore every service must be applied for separately. This is not only difficult for the families who had just arrived, it also means a lot of work for the authority responsible and is time consuming.

These kinds of challenges outweigh the lack of representation that is usually not given either. It is a very rare case that a newly arrived immigrant student is taught by a teacher who has a migration experience or speaks the student’s mother tongue, since only about 5% of the teachers in Berlin have a migration background (Middeldorf, 2014). That makes it more difficult for the students to see the teacher as a role model for their own life.

The uncertainty about the stay in Germany that especially immigrant students from non-EU-countries and teenage refugees with a temporary suspension of deportation are aware of impacts their aspirations concerning education. They do not know whether they can stay in Germany, or whether they can begin an apprenticeship after graduating from school, which makes education seem to be use- and meaningless (Behrensen/Westpfahl, 2009, p. 47). To motivate these students and keep them participating in school would mean to give them a clear perspective for their future, but that is made difficult through bureaucratic asylum and visa regulations.

The extent of social exclusion because of cultural injustice is apparent when analyzing the social and educational situation of newly arrived immigrant students in Berlin. Especially the language hinders them to fully participate. This is accompanied by a lack of cultural skills and a lack of representation in the host society. The situation of immigrant students in Berlin gives a clear picture of social exclusion in a hybrid form influenced by both economic and cultural injustice and several other factors.

### **6.1.2 Legal Situation**

There are several legal factors pertaining to education of recently arrived immigrant youth. First of all the legal status of a student determines the educational situation to some extent. In the current situation this is especially important for immigrants from Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, who constitute a major group among immigrants coming to

Berlin. Ghana, Senegal and the three mentioned countries were declared safe states in 2014, which means that asylum-applications from those countries go through a shortened procedure. The length of the stay of the applicants, who will most likely be sent back, can be reduced (BMI, 2014). In 2014 Germany received almost 30.000 applications from the mentioned Western Balkan countries (BAMF, 2015, p. 7). Less than 1% got accepted entitled “for asylum” (Pro Asyl a).

The member interviewed from the school supervising authority in district B expressed her sympathy with students from those countries who will probably be deported, but also made clear that she cannot do anything about it. Some families submitted a clemency plea, but the decisions were still pending. It also became clear that the authority did not know how the state is going to deal with the situation once this decision has been made. The school supervising authority in district A also mentioned this issue. She too, expected students to leave, which on the one hand means new school places for other students. On the other hand it affects the educational planning to a major extent as it is almost impossible to plan the education of newly arrived students, if decision like that apply to many of them.

The school law as well as regulations on primary and secondary schooling contain sections on how to deal with newly arrived immigrant students who do not speak German. These articles are summarized and presented here.

According to the school law all children and teenagers who live in Berlin are required to go through ten years of compulsory schooling (SenBJW, 2010a, part IV, §41). That includes children who are in the asylum procedure or whose deportation has been suspended temporarily. Students without residence permit are not subject to compulsory schooling, but they have the right to attend school (SenBJW, 2012b, p. 3; SenBJW, 2010a, part I, §2; LpB, 2010, article 20). Schools do not need to inform the authorities about students without residence permit (“sans papiers”). The right to education is acknowledged to be more important (SenBJW, 2012b, p. 3).

The term “recently arrived immigrant students” refers to children and teenagers from inside or outside the EU whose parents are employed in Germany or are looking for a job in Germany and to children and teenagers with different kinds of residential status such as refugees or asylum-seeking persons (ibid.).

§4 of the school law (SenBJW, 2004, part I) states that students, irrespective of their individual learning capabilities, should be led to the best possible graduation certificate. Equal oppor-

tunities should be created for all students. Students who do not speak German as their mother tongue have to be given the opportunity to learn German in order to be able to be taught in German together with the regular students. §15 (ibid., part II) deals with the actual teaching and learning for students without German language skills. First of all, the paragraph states that all students should be taught together. This gets restricted in the second part of the paragraph where it says that students whose German is not good enough to follow the lessons should be taught in special learning groups (German language classes) that prepare them for the mainstream classroom. The school is responsible for testing the students' language proficiency and based on that it can decide what class would be proper for the student to attend. Apart from this offers in the students' mother tongues should also be made available.

The regulation on primary schooling (*Grundschulverordnung*) also contains the mentioned aspects in its section on special support for students whose language of origin is not German. It moreover clarifies that the students' German language abilities are not graded during their first two years of attending a school in Berlin (GsVO, 2005, §17).

The regulation on secondary schooling (*Sekundarstufe I-Verordnung*) adds aspects concerning older students (secondary level). Here it is not the school but the school supervising authority that decides whether the student goes to a mainstream class or a German language class. The time a student spends in a German language class is stated in the yearly report but not counted as regular attendance. Students with limited German language skills can be exempted from learning a second foreign language. Instead of an exam in a second foreign language they have to pass an exam in their mother tongue which then replaces the second foreign language (Sek I-VO, 2005, §17).

The school law and the regulations on primary and secondary schooling are the basic legal texts concerning the education of students without German language skills. They are very general and do not tell specifically how German language classes are supposed to work. The Ministry of Education in Berlin has published guidelines (SenBJW, 2012b) for those classes, which are summarized and presented here.

The guidelines (ibid.) clarify that 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students do not attend German language classes but are integrated in the mainstream classrooms of the flexible starting phase (see chapter 4.3). Students from grade 3 onwards can be taught either in mainstream classrooms or German language classes. Illiterate students should receive adequate support.

Whether a student is entitled to attend a German language class is a difficult issue for teenage students. The compulsory schooling in Berlin does not end at a certain age, but after ten years of attending school. Usually students' compulsory schooling ends at the age of fifteen or sixteen. For newly arrived immigrants at that age the school supervising authority has to decide whether these students should attend a mainstream classroom, a German language class or no secondary school at all depending on the individual educational background and performance level. As a rule students who want to take part in secondary schooling should be able to finish grade 10 by the age of twenty, or be able to finish grade 7 to 10 within a maximum of six years (ibid., p. 5).

Students can only get accepted at schools that have available school places. Teenagers who do not receive a school place, can take part in integration courses offered for migrants with residence permit. This offer is not available for EU-citizens, asylum-seeking people and people whose deportation is suspended temporarily (ibid., p. 9).

The process to get a newly arrived student into school is similar in all districts and negotiated between the district's school authority, the school supervising authority, the youth health service and the school (ibid. p. 10ff.).

These are the official facts stated in laws, regulations and guidelines. In practice a major gap between aspirations and reality became visible to me when entering the field. Some of these issues mentioned by the participants of this study are presented.

In December 2014 there were 3600 students learning in 317 German language classrooms at 166 schools in Berlin (SenBJW, 2015b). The numbers of students without German language skills in mainstream classrooms is not available. Nevertheless, the rising numbers of students in German language classes (cf. Fig 3) show that it became standard to maintain the education of recently arrived immigrant youth in separate classrooms. In a newsletter for the new school year 2014/2015 Sandra Scheeres, the Minister of Education in Berlin, states that more and more students without German language skills come to Berlin and that German language classes have been established for them (SenBJW, 2014). According to the guidelines students who know enough German to follow the lessons with support measures, have school experience and are able to read and write their mother tongue are supposed to attend a mainstream class. Those who do not fulfill these criteria are assigned a German language class (SenBJW, 2012b, p. 14). Even though schooling in mainstream and in special classes are presented as equivalent in law and regulations it seems to be rather the rule than an exception that students

without German language skills are taught in German language classes (Vogt, 2015; Keilani/Vogt, 2013; Donath et al., 2014, p. 5).

### Schüler und Lerngruppen ohne Deutschkenntnisse

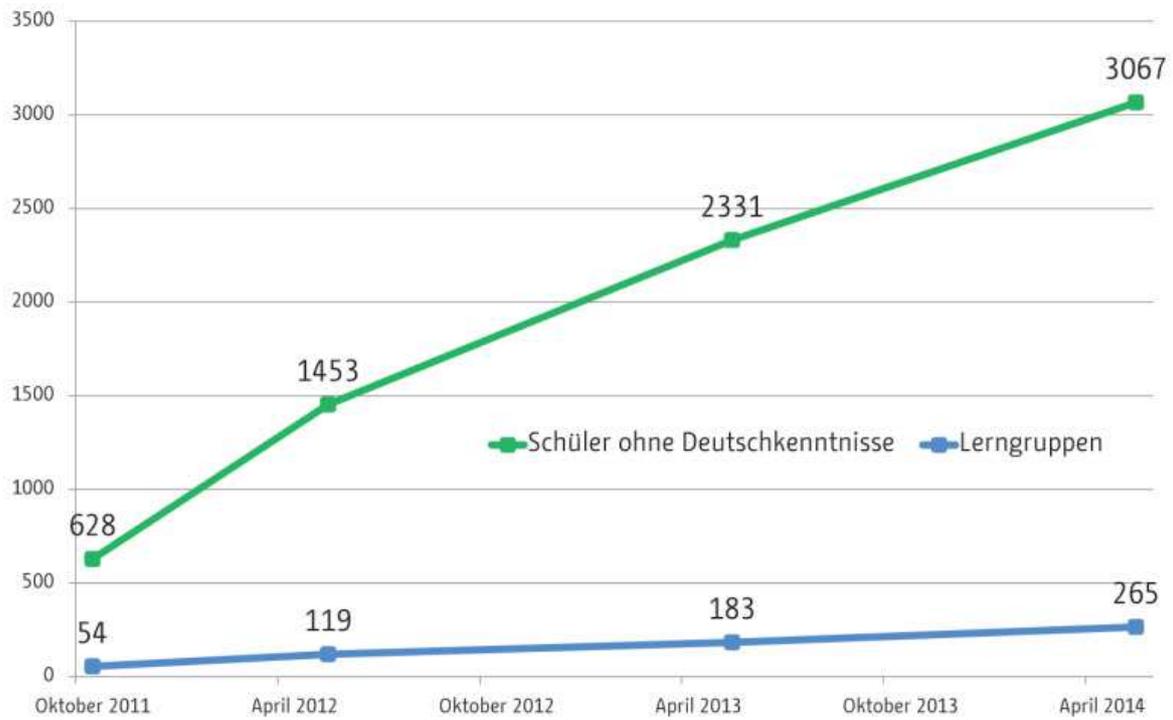


Figure 3: Students and Learning Groups without German language skills (SenBJW, 2014)<sup>11</sup>

In the end of January 2015 newspapers reported that in Berlin-Lichtenberg 60 students living in a refugee home could not go to school (Vogt, 2015) since there are no places available at any of the surrounding schools. Here neither the compulsory schooling nor the right to education is fulfilled. In fact it is not always easy for newly arrived immigrant students to get a school place. One of the interviewed students also reported that he had been living in a home for refugees for three months before he could attend a school. A teacher in district A mentioned similar cases connected to the opening of a new refugee residence in the district.

According to the guidelines educational offers in the students' mother tongue should be available. In neither of the schools under examination this offer existed. Teachers and principal in school B mentioned that the school's staff is quite international so that some languages are covered. This might help in discussions with the parents, but it is not used to educate the stu-

<sup>11</sup> The green line shows the rising number of students without German language skills in Berlin, the blue line represents the amount of German language classes.

dents in their mother tongue. As *Europaschule*<sup>12</sup> school B offers mother tongue lessons in one European language, but that is due to their school profile and not because of newly arrived immigrant students, nevertheless, it is helpful in this context. At the same time one of the teachers asks for alphabetization in the students' mother tongue: "They have to learn to read and write in their mother tongue first and then they can learn another language" (teacher 1 in school B). The discussion whether children or teenagers coming to another country should learn their mother tongue first or learn the language of the host country has been going on for a long time in the academic world (cf. Esser, 2006; Dixon et al., 2012; García/Sylvan, 2011; Hopf, 2007). Nevertheless, it does not seem to be a discussion that is led in the context of German language classes. In the interviews it was rather mentioned as a side issue.

Illiterate students or those who are literate in a different script would most probably need more time than a year in order to acquire enough German to attend a regular lesson. It seems very ambitious and even unrealistic to expect that they can finish grade 7 to 10 within six years. Kunz (2008, p. 192) also critiques the very narrow focus on language learning which does not take psycho-social factors into consideration.

### **6.1.3 Goals of German Language Classes**

The goals of German language classes are described in the guidelines (SenBJW, 2012b) published by the Ministry of Education in Berlin and are confirmed in the regulation on secondary schooling (Sek I-VO, 2005, §17 (4)). Here it is written that these classes serve the only purpose for the students to acquire German as soon as possible with the aim to enable the transfer into a mainstream classroom where German is the language of instruction (ibid.).

Most participants agreed to these goals in general, whereas some saw them as too limited. A member of the school supervising authority clarified the two goals from her perspective: "[...] language is one issue, so that they can learn and write German fast, speak and read [...], the second important priority is in fact that the students get into contact with students whose language of origin is German, that they have a network, that they have friends" (school supervising authority, district A). She linked the success of German language classes to integration at the classroom level.

One of the teachers agreed to a fast transfer to a mainstream classroom, because that is what his students wanted: "They want to learn German fast, they want to move forward, they want

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<sup>12</sup> Berlin has 30 so called "Europe Schools" (*Europaschule*) which offer bilingual teaching and learning in 9 languages. These schools are public schools and each of them offers lessons in German and one European language (SenBJW, 2012a).

to attend a mainstream school“ (teacher 2, school A). Besides he clarifies that the lessons are about more than just learning German as the students also have to be able to follow lessons in other subjects later on. In fact both schools teach a variety of other subjects than German, even though the main focus is still on learning the language.

The guidelines and the regulation on secondary schooling give quite basic ideas on what the goals of German language classes are, but they do not make clear how they should be achieved. Both schools offer several subjects and do not only focus on German as determined by the Ministry. Most participants agreed that the students should attend a regular school as soon as possible, but they have very different ideas about how long that period of time should be. Most mentioned in line with the Ministry’s guidelines that the students should not stay in German language classes longer than a year (SenBJW, 2012b, p. 14f.). In both schools several students have been attending a German language class for more than a year.

#### **6.1.4 Organization Within the Districts**

In the following sections the organization of German language classes in general is presented in order to give background information on each district before going into a more detailed analysis of the situation of newly arrived immigrant students.

##### District A

In district A all teenage students without German language skills usually attended school A. This changed, however, during the data collection process: two new German language classes were established at another school in the same district. Nevertheless, one can say, that the education of newly arrived immigrant students in district A mainly takes place in that particular school.

According to the teachers<sup>13</sup> the school had nine German language classrooms, in which about 110 students in the age between twelve and seventeen learn together. A teacher estimated that 40-50% of them are refugees or asylum applicants. Even though these classes belong to a regular secondary school, they were situated in a separate building about one kilometer away from the regular school. The classes were organized according to the students’ language skills and not their age: there was one class for students who are illiterate and have never been to

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<sup>13</sup> The headmaster and the school supervising authority said there are only eight classes. In the interviews with the teachers it became apparent that the school officially should have eight classes, but in practice has nine. The school supervising authority disapproved this fact, but did not change it. Therefore I think, the school supervising authority stucked with the official number eight, while the school actually has nine classrooms. All these information are from autumn 2014.

school before, two for literate students without German language skills, two classes for students with German skills at level A2<sup>14</sup>, two classes for level A2-B1 and two classes for unaccompanied minors who usually attend the school only for a short period of time. The clearing office for unaccompanied minors in Berlin is located in district A, that is why all of them live in that district for the time of the clearing procedure. When the students enter school A their German language skills are tested by the teachers. Based on the results they are assigned to a class.

There was almost no contact to the students in the mainstream classrooms. This was due to the separate location that makes it difficult to have lessons for language students and mainstream students together. The only time these groups met was at the school's annual sport competition.

The school has been hosting German language classes for at least twenty years, but not on such a large scale as now. It should also be mentioned that in 2010 a merging process of two schools started that led to the today existing school. That means that German language classes were a new phenomenon for half of the staff and the students. Not all teachers and students have had a long experience with these classes.

The eleven teachers teaching in those classes only worked in German language classes and did not teach regular students. Most of them were either trained in teaching German as a foreign or second language or are foreign language teachers.

Students who learn fast can switch to a higher German language class easily. The teachers decide whether a student has learnt enough German to attend a mainstream class.

District A works with the DSD (German Language Diploma; *Deutsches Sprachdiplom*), a language exam formerly used in language schools abroad, but now also introduced within Germany. It is not used nationwide, but only in certain schools in seven federal states (KMK, 2015). The German language class students at school A are supposed to pass the exam at level B1 in order to transfer to a mainstream class. Sometimes it does not work, because the exam is only offered twice a year, but students may be ready earlier. If they pass the test they get an official internationally accepted diploma certifying their German language skills (ibid.).

In the future this organizational model described above might change. The member of the school supervising authority made it clear that a separate location like n school A is not ap-

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<sup>14</sup> According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2014)

preciated. She saw the current situation as a temporary solution that was necessary to handle the rising numbers of newly arriving immigrants. The plan is to decentralize the German language classes. The beginning has already been made with two new language classes that opened at another school.

### District B

In district B newly arrived immigrant students attend different schools and school types that are spread all over the district. There are sixteen German language classes at eleven different secondary schools<sup>15</sup>, so school B is just one among many. Newly arrived students get an appointment with a member of the school supervising authority first. She then decides which student attends which school. She uses different criteria to find the most suitable class for every student in order to ensure a successful educational pathway:

“And then I have a look, where would they fit in well? Where do they live? Where are students in a similar age? Sometimes there are very young, 13-year-old students, I don’t want to put them in a group with mainly 16 or 17-year old students. If the children are shy, I try to find a group with someone who speaks the mother tongue. So I have different criteria I put together and very often it works.”  
(school supervising authority, district B)

School B had officially one German language class, but in fact there were two groups that were often taught separately. As *Europaschule* school B offers lessons in one European language. Half of the newly arrived immigrant students speak this language as their mother tongue and therefore take part in these lessons in the mainstream classrooms. The rest of the time they are part of the German language class. The students in that class were in the age from twelve to seventeen, some have been there for more than two years, others have arrived only a few months ago. In contrast to the students in school A they were almost all European.

One teacher is the main responsible teacher for this class, two other teachers are teaching them from time to time, but mainly teach in mainstream classes. The students take part in the mainstream gym classes, furthermore they go on excursions together with the mainstream students, take part in competitions and school fairs. So there is more contact with the mainstream students than in school A. It is easier to establish and maintain the contact as the classroom is located within the main building of the school and not separated.

School B does not work with the DSD. Their class teacher decides when the students are ready to transfer to mainstream classrooms.

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<sup>15</sup> Based on Information received in autumn 2014

The school supervising authority confirmed that they want to stick with the organizational model they work with right now. There are no major changes planned in contrast to in district A.

## **6.2 Achieving the Goals of German Language Classes**

The goals of German language classes were identified as fast German language acquisition and fast transition to a mainstream classroom. This section analyzes how both schools in the very districts work in order to achieve these goals within their organizational model for German language classes. The focus is on the participants' experiences and perceptions, therefore literature and theories are only rarely used in this section.

### **6.2.1 Fast German Language Acquisition**

Fast language acquisition is the major goal of German language classes. To learn German is seen as the central fundament to attend a regular school in Berlin by all stakeholders, but also in order to manage the everyday life. Teachers from both schools stated that the students want to learn German as fast as possible and want to attend a mainstream class as soon as possible. One teacher whom I asked to make a comparison between the regular students he taught before and the students he is teaching now explained: "Those students who come here, they know, they just need that language in everyday life. Without this language they don't cope with any school, with any university, with any professional training. And that's a totally different kind of motivation" (teacher 2, school A). The interviews with students confirm that: "You can't, without language you can't do anything" (student 3, school A). This quote from a student puts the students' opinions in a nutshell.

The schools organize the German lessons differently as was described before. This section goes into more detail about what is happening inside the classroom according to those involved and the observations I made.

#### District A

The organization in level groups in school A is similar to the general structure of a language school. The difference is that students studying there are not only prepared to communicate in German but to attend a German school, which means they have to learn academic German to some extent. Furthermore they also study other subjects, such as math, English, PE and art.

One of the teachers connected the school's success to the teaching in level groups and stressed that it is impossible to teach students with various language levels in one group, es-

pecially when the goal is to prepare students for regular school within one year. She added that she has more time and can give more attention to the students, when they are all at a similar level (teacher 1, school A). Her colleague added that the students can be taught in a way they need it at that moment at their level (teacher 2, school B).

Despite the external differentiation into level groups the students are still a very heterogeneous group, even though they have a similar level of German language skills. The age difference was not seen as a major problem by the teachers. They rather focused on the different kinds of previous knowledge, previous educational experiences, language background and learning pace. The teachers cope with that heterogeneity mainly by internal differentiation. In both lessons that were observed, all students worked on the same topic with the same tasks. But it became obvious that the teachers have different expectations in regard to how their students solve them. The answers of some students, who already spoke very well, were corrected quite detailed concerning grammar, word order or vocabulary. Other students, who had more difficulties, made more mistakes but were less corrected. The internal differentiation is not very obvious, but works rather indirectly. Similar observations were made for written tasks.

Apart from the actual teaching the teachers' qualifications were mentioned in the interviews as important to ensure quality lessons. The teachers explained that they see a qualification in German as second or foreign language or experience as teacher for a foreign language as necessary in order to be an adequate teacher for those students.

The limited contact to regular students was seen as a disadvantage by both teachers, but they did not view it as a major problem. One of them stressed that it is not enough that the students use the same school yard. In her opinion integration has to be organized e.g. by joint activities (teacher 1, school A). The other teacher claimed that the lack of exchange with German speaking students was compensated by high quality lessons. Furthermore the contact to German speaking students would come automatically in the mainstream classrooms. It seems that these teachers did not see the exchange between German language class students and mainstream class students as support to language acquisition or at least as not as important as German lessons.

On the other hand they stressed that extracurricular activities are important arenas to practice German. The teachers reported that some of the students speak German outside of school on a regular basis, mainly the accompanied minors who have German speaking legal guardians

and are often accommodated together with German speaking teenagers. Other students have German speaking family members.

The interviewed students also put a lot of emphasis on the teachers' role. The students interviewed from that class were a European girl, whose family had moved to Berlin because of job, an African girl, whose father works for the embassy of their home country and a boy from the Middle East, who came as refugee without his family.<sup>16</sup> They had all gone to school in their native countries for several years and expected to transfer to a mainstream classroom within the next six month. They agreed, that they like school A more than the one they went to in their home countries.

One girl described a close relationship to the teachers: "And then the teachers are great, like our family. Family, they are very good" (student 1, school A). She referred mainly to teaching methods. She liked that her teachers made jokes sometimes, that they had a better technique to teach, e.g. by using games, which helped her to remember and to learn new things. The other girl described how surprised she was in the beginning not to experience corporal punishment when students were late or had not done their homework. She liked that she could make mistakes and ask questions without being afraid (student 2, school A). Apart from getting up early they all seemed to like to go to school. Both the teachers and the good atmosphere in the class might contribute to that and also enhance language acquisition. That friends and a good relationship to the teachers play an important role in enhancing adequate behavior and academic achievement can be found in the literature (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009; Hek, 2005; Jang/Jiménez, 2011; Palfreyman, 2006).

In agreement to what the teachers stated it varies, whether the students speak a lot of German outside of school. By interviewing the students themselves it became clear that the use of the German language is determined by many different factors. While one girl explained that many of her family members have been living in Berlin for a long time and speak German very well and better than their native language, the other girl does not use German anywhere else than at school. She does not have friends outside the classroom and at home she speaks her native language. The boy lives in a shared apartment with other teenagers from different countries, where they use German as their mutual language. Even though the first girl and the boy miss their relatives at home they see their future in Germany, whereas the second girl would prefer

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<sup>16</sup> It is necessary to mention that not all German language classes are that heterogeneous. Many of these classes were established in schools neighboring refugee residences. In these classes the students differ in terms of age and ethnic background, but they are all refugees living in a refugee residence which gives them an equal socio-legal status in the German society.

to go back. Using German as everyday language and feeling comfortable and home in Germany are interdependent factors and contribute to successful language learning according to Norton's identity approach (Norton Peirce, 1995).

All students told that they used English in the beginning in order to communicate. During the classroom observations it was visible that English still works as alternative language. In the breaks some of the students would speak in English to each other. During the lessons German was the dominant language, especially when groups of students from different countries had to work together. English, French and Spanish were also used by the teachers to clarify vocabulary. Most of the students in the group for illiterate students came from African countries and knew some English or French besides their native language(s). Their German skills were limited, so the teacher taught in German, explained vocabulary in German, but also translated it to English or French, when it seemed necessary.

All three students said that they have to learn more German. Two expressed that they know they already learnt a lot, but they still feel it is not enough yet. They described everyday situations, in which they experienced that their German is still not perfect, e.g. do not understand people talking in fast German to each other on the bus. They also state that their limited German skills make it difficult for them to learn other subjects, mainly the natural sciences due to a lack of vocabulary: "And biology, because I don't know that many words, about the body and [...]. Yes, and that will be a little bit difficult. But afterwards I want to study medicine and I have to learn it" (student 1, school A). This makes clear that they see their future plans endangered because of lack of good German skills and it moreover shows that language and career are intertwined to a large extent, which puts a lot of pressure on the teenagers (Gesemann, 2008, p. 35; Woellert et al., 2009, p. 7).

The school supervising authority is not involved in the actual school life, and takes a different perspective on the whole issue. She promoted the contact between the German language class students and the mainstream class students. According to her joint excursions or just spending time together in the schoolyard would make the students feeling more comfortable and they would practice their German. In the current situation this is not possible because of the separate locations, that is why the authorities want to change the organizational system in the district (school supervising authority, district A).

There are a lot of different factors influencing German language acquisition and they are valued differently by those involved. To sum up, one can argue that teachers play a major role.

Furthermore practice is important and whether a student speaks German often depends on other individual aspects: language background, feeling comfortable in Germany, having friends, opportunities to speak German in everyday life etc. Not all of them can be covered by the school, but the school can promote them and moreover form a fundament and contribute to a good environment to learn German and prepare the students for a mainstream school.

### District B

School B only has one German language class and it is integrated in the school, thus the situation is different from the one in district A and influences German language acquisition in different ways.

The principal saw integration as the most important basic aspect in order to learn German. Therefore the German language class students have gym classes together with a mainstream class and can take part in other mainstream subjects such as *Wirtschaft, Arbeit, Technik* (home economics, work theory, ergonomics), where students often work practically in different workshops, early (principal, school B). This differed a lot from school A not only in practical terms but also in terms of what goal of German language classes is valued most. In school B it was seen as important that contacts to regular students increase in order to improve everyday German language skills.

The teachers had very different views and opinions about the students and their situation. Whereas one of the teachers also described the students as very ambitious, the other thought that a lot of students and their families had a negative attitude towards school. One told that the students speak German outside of the classroom with their friends, while the other said the students speak only very little German outside of school. These varying opinions make it difficult to summarize the teachers' opinions, but on the other hand they show how different the same situation can be perceived by different people. This might also be due to the fact that one teacher is only teaching in the German language class, whereas the other only teaches that class from time to time.

Nevertheless, they mentioned the same issues and these are also comparable to the issues that came up in school A, so it is possible to identify factors that contribute or hinder fast German language acquisition.

Similar to school A, the question how to deal with a heterogeneous group of students was mentioned as important. This issue is even more difficult in school B as they have all students in one class regardless of their level of German language skills. Both teachers explained that

they use internal differentiation and group work as mean to give every student the attention he or she needs. They go from group to group and work with individual students rather than with the entire class. That I could also notice during the lessons I observed. This means a lot of preparation since the teachers need to bring material for two or three different levels and in addition the lessons are very demanding for the teachers: “In this group, when I have several groups parallel, I am always somewhere, so I’m really 90 minutes 100% in action. So these lessons are even more exhausting than others. But yes, I tried to solve it by preparing different tasks“ (teacher 2, school B). This teacher also stated that she does not feel qualified for this kind of work as it contains cross-year teaching and learning which is not part of the teacher training for *Gymnasium*teachers like her.

The optimal attributes for a teacher teaching in a German language class were viewed differently by the participants. One mentioned similar prerequisites like the teachers in school A such as a qualification in German as second or foreign language or experience as teacher in foreign languages. Furthermore she added that teachers should decide voluntarily to teach in a German language class and not being forced to do it. Moreover she would recommend persons who had lived abroad themselves and/or had tried to learn a new language and therefore actually experienced the situation the students are in right now by themselves (teacher 2, school B). The other teacher mentioned completely different attributes: humor, patience, being politically open-minded and disciplined. The teacher mainly responsible for the German language class is not a native German himself. Despite the fact that the principal and his colleague viewed teachers with a migration background as useful, he did not mention it in any way. This shows how many factors can be taken into consideration when researching the role of teachers in this specific context.

The student group which was interviewed was not as heterogeneous as the one in school A, but it reflected the composition of their class very well. The two male and two female (twin sisters) students were all European and came to Germany with their families because of the difficult economic situations in their home countries hoping to have better job and education opportunities here. Their experiences were similar to the students in school A.

The boys also stated that they liked the school in Berlin more than the one they went to before, whereas the girls would rather go back to their home country. Despite of what their class teacher said, the students told that they speak a lot of German outside of school with friends in a youth club, even with their siblings or just with people they meet in everyday life. Still they were not satisfied with their language skills yet and this made them concerned. In their view

they should be fluent in German by now, but did not study hard enough. On the other hand their ambitions are high: “I want to learn more, because I see, that I can speak German and I can ask questions [...], but I want to learn more and I want to learn the language better. I don’t want to have problems with my language and not speak it well, I want to be perfect“ (student 1, school B).

They all were soon to be transferred to a mainstream classroom and had to pass the school year there, otherwise they could not continue their general education, but had to switch to vocational training. This is due to their age and the length of stay in a German language class. They had actually fulfilled their compulsory schooling. In order to continue their education they have to show that they are likely to graduate within the next two years. That put a lot of pressure on them regarding their future but it also questioned the efforts they made in the past to learn the language: “Because I’m afraid not to pass the final exam. I’m here and I don’t pass the final exam, that’s, I’ve been here for so many years, but I haven’t passed the final exam, what do I do now? That makes me a little afraid“ (student 2, school B). Parallels to the students’ experiences in school A become visible.

The students’ answers were in general mainly directed to themselves rather than to the school, which shows again how responsible they feel about their own learning. It also points at the fact that language learning does not only take place in school. They stated, that one has to practice a lot to learn German, to speak it in everyday life. But they also saw language courses with a native German speaker as teacher as useful.

To sum up one can say that despite the different organizational models the issues mentioned by the participants are similar to those in district A. Teachers have an important role, that applies to their personality, but also their teaching methods. The students’ experiences and perceptions are strikingly similar. The main difference between both schools is the frequency and the quality of exchange between German language class students and their peers in the mainstream classrooms. The influence of this exchange is valued very differently by the stakeholders involved. It can be seen as one key issue in this thesis that will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

### **6.2.2 Fast Transition**

Fast transition is the second main goal of German language classes. According to the guidelines for the integration of newly arrived children and teenagers the students should not re-

main more than one year in the German language classes (SenBJW, 2012b, p. 14f.). Whether a student can transfer to a mainstream school depends on his or her German language skills.

Most stakeholders saw a fast transition as important goal for their students. In the following section it is described how the two schools work in order to achieve that goal and how it is perceived by the stakeholders either directly or indirectly involved.

### District A

In school A there are different transfers made before the students actually transfer to a mainstream classroom due to the organization of German language classes in level groups. The students who do not have any German skills in the beginning start in one group to learn basic skills and can transfer to the next group as soon as they have gained enough skills. The decision whether they are good enough is not made by a test, but the teachers' "gut feeling" (teacher 2, school A). When students are in a group with language proficiency at level B1 they can take the exam for the DSD.

If the students pass the exam and receive the DSD the teachers recommend the students to other schools. School A cooperates with four neighboring schools (different school types) that often accept the German language class students. The cooperation with different school types gives the opportunity to find a school matching the students' abilities, needs and aspirations. The final decision which school a student is going to attend is made by the parents or legal guardians. The teachers usually accompany the students to their admission consultation with the school, but as soon as the students attend a new school the German language class teachers are not involved anymore. The teachers expressed disapproval with the current transition procedure since students sometimes have to wait several weeks before they actually get a school place at a regular school. School A usually cannot accept the students from its German language classes in its own mainstream classes, because there are too many students. Due to the school reform that started in 2010 there are specified class sizes the schools should not exceed, which means they often cannot accept new students.

The principal also stated that some students attend the mainstream classrooms on a trial basis, but this information was not mentioned by any of the teachers, when we talked about the students' transition to mainstream classrooms.

The principal explained that the students usually remain in the German language classes for at least one year, often it is a year and a half or even two years, before they can attend a regular class. This was confirmed by the teachers who also stated, that the students usually need a

year or a little more to gain the required German language skills, depending on their previous education experience:

“If a student attended a school age-appropriately and if that school worked, so there was no war, but they could go to school regularly, the school system is reasonably ok. The child is willing to learn, has an age-appropriate cognitive development and the child enters school at the beginning of the school year, which is better than during the school year. Then, we can make it within one year, that they are prepared to attend a mainstream classroom.” (teacher 1, school A)

It is necessary to mention here that these factors contributing to fast language acquisition and fast transfer are often not given for the students. A teacher stated that it is not only the language skills that decide about a successful educational pathway, but also social factors. She saw the task to give advice to students and parents about which school they should choose as one of the most difficult. The DSD as objective measurement serves as good basis for arguments in conversations with the parents.

The students expressed concern regarding the time they spent in a German language class. They agreed that they have been in that special class for too long and should rather attend a regular school as soon as possible in order to catch up: “Because I’m already 16 and I have to learn and maybe find a job“ (student 2, school A). Another student would also rather attend a regular class as soon as possible: “I have to go on, not only learning German, because I’m already good in German. And then I want to continue studying“ (student 3, school A). This feeling of “only learning German” and “not going to a normal school” seem to be factors the students value negatively, even though they actually like their school.

They looked forward to attending a regular classroom soon on the one hand, but were also worried about entering a new class. They expected the lessons to be more difficult and knew they will have to work hard in order to achieve good results. One girl thought that the school in Europe is more difficult than in her African home country and expected to have difficulties at the regular school. A small example showed that she probably was right: “Yes, because here they have chemistry, biology, but in my home country, when you’re in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, you decide which subject you want. I never learnt chemistry“ (student 2, school A).

From a more distant perspective the school supervising authority also agreed that fast transition is important and should be framed in an integrative process. She saw the DSD as useful and objective tool to decide about the students’ transfer and acknowledged that some students might need more time: “There will be some, who won’t achieve the diploma, we have to presume that. [...] the illiterate students just need more time“ (school supervising authority, dis-

trict A). She explained that school A cannot accept all students in their mainstream classes, that is why the teachers in that case have to contact other schools. If they are not successful, they inform the school supervising authority who then contacts schools in other districts. She experienced the schools in general as cooperative and willing to accept new students.

### District B

The students in school B can usually attend a mainstream classroom at the same school as soon as they have gained enough German language skills. Often they first take part in a few lessons in the regular class or for a certain period of time, before a teachers' conference makes the final decision, whether the student knows enough German to attend a mainstream class. During that time the former and the new teacher are in constant contact to make sure to offer adequate support for that student to achieve good results both academically and socially. A teacher reported that it only happened twice in his career of 34 years, that students were sent back to attend the German language class longer (teacher 1, school B).

In district B the school's principal agreed with the Ministry's guidelines and stressed that they try to integrate the students into mainstream classrooms at the same school as early as possible. She described the transfer as uncomplicated. Usually there would be one or two students who take care of the new student.

One of the teachers criticized the term "as soon as possible". In his opinion this term is very unclear since an illiterate student will need more time than other students, so it rather depends on what is possible in a certain period of time. He also mentioned the bureaucratic instructions that put students and teachers under pressure:

"I have two boys here [...], they're doing their 11<sup>th</sup> year of school attendance. If they, I will put them in mainstream classes for the second half of the school year and then we'll see whether it works in school. Otherwise, if they can't make it, then there is a project for those teenagers [...] and there they can also complete their studies. But the experience is, who can't make it here, can't make it in a project either [...]." (teacher 1, school B)

This example shows that the limited time students at a certain age get can have a severe impact on their educational pathway. Furthermore it reveals that the students do not exaggerate when they are worried but have a realistic idea of their current situation.

The second teacher also agreed that some if not most students need more time than a year to learn German properly. In her experience most students can get along in everyday life with the German skills gained during the first year, but these are not enough to follow lessons in academic subjects. Besides she endorsed the way the students' transition is conducted at

school B. In her experience the students often already know, which class they will go to as soon they have learnt enough German, which makes the transition easier and less stressful for the students. Furthermore it gives them a future perspective (teacher 2, school B).

The students' opinion towards their prospective transfer varied a lot. Two of them were afraid as before mentioned that they cannot pass the final exams. Moreover all students expected the lessons to be more difficult: "It's different, because you have to pay attention, to concentrate, not joking around, talking to each other, that's important" (student 4, school B). Two students also looked forward to attending a mainstream classroom and were not afraid, but saw the whole situation as "normal" (student 3, school B).

The member of the school supervising authority who was interviewed viewed the transition as the biggest problem and most important issue for the future. She described an example that shows the extent of the problem: there was a student of Arabic origin, who learnt German very fast and transferred to a mainstream class at a *Gymnasium*. There he experienced severe difficulties in most subjects. In his home country he had attended a Quran school that did e.g. not teach natural sciences. He got frustrated and is now supposed to start a form of vocational training that includes the completion of his studies. But he is an unaccompanied minor and already seventeen years old, which makes it difficult for him to be seen as entitled for schooling in the regular education system (school supervising authority, district B). This example shows the complexity of the situation and how the different stakeholders are involved but also get restricted by legal issues. It resembles the situation described by student 3 in district A who had never learnt chemistry. This situation appears often and is difficult to deal with.

In district B most schools try to integrate the German language class students into their own mainstream classrooms, but it is not always possible. But even if the transfer works smoothly and the students can attend regular classes on a trial basis, the interviewee mentioned, that it is still very hard for these teenagers (school supervising authority, district B).

On the bureaucratic side she explained that the students in German language classes are not part of the school place planning for the next years. This is due to the fact that the district on the one hand does not expect a dramatic rise of the number of students coming to district B and on the other hand that one cannot plan with newly arrived students as their number is highly unpredictable. She did not see that as problematic as there are enough school places in German language classes available at secondary schools.

Another fact she criticized is the fact that officially the school authority and the school supervising authority decide to which school a student transfers. In her opinion the schools, mainly the teachers, should decide when a student is ready for mainstream schooling and should recommend a school. In fact this is what actually seems to happen on the ground according to the interviewees in both schools under examination.

To sum up most interviewees agreed that the transition to a regular classroom is important and should take place as early as possible. Despite this agreement across districts and stakeholders, the transition phases differ a lot and seem to have several advantages and disadvantages at the same time. In both districts interviewees expressed that this phase has to be improved in order to support the students in their education. This is difficult as several examples showed how restrictions through regulations and other legal texts can constrain the situation of each individual student.

### **6.3 Factors Contributing to or Interfering with Educational Goals**

This chapter aims at identifying the factors that contribute to or interfere with achieving the goals of German language classes, but also with an optimal education for newly arrived immigrant students in general. Furthermore different approaches on how to use these factors in order to improve the current situation are presented.

#### **6.3.1 Organization-Related Factors in District A**

In the previous sections two different models to achieve fast German language acquisition and fast transition to mainstream classrooms in two schools were presented. This section focuses on the challenges and benefits of each system and compares them to each other. This is made by analyzing the interviews in regards to statements the interviewees gave about the respective organizational model they work in and about the counter model in the other district. The goal is to identify factors which contribute to and prevent fast German language acquisition and fast transition and how these can be strengthened or weakened, respectively.

##### Benefits of the Organizational Model in District A

In district A one could see the interesting situation of stakeholders being directly involved in the school (principal, teacher, students) and endorsing the organizational model they work and learn in and the school supervising authority on the other side, who wants to change the way German language classes are organized within the district. The different opinions and perspectives of all stakeholders are presented.

The principal of school A saw the benefits of the centralized education model in district A mainly in the close relationship between the teachers and the students and also among the teachers. He mentioned the staff that has worked together for several years and became a close team, which has a lot of experience with this special group of students and gained important “know-how” (principal, school A). The teachers in district A confirmed this opinion and stated the same benefitting factors. Furthermore they mentioned the good quality of the lessons taught by qualified and sensitized teachers: “Yes, and the staff only works in those classes and is, of course, already sensitized for the problems [...] our students have and can actually work quite focused“ (teacher 2, school A). According to them they can address the students’ needs better due to the division in level groups and support the students optimally.

One teacher of school B also agreed that there should be teachers only responsible for these students (teacher 2, school B). In this context she actually referred to the class teacher at school B, but she stated the same reasons like the interviewed stakeholders in district A.

The division into level groups allows high flexibility as the students can transfer from class to class in case they are faster or slower than their classmates (principal/teachers, school A). The interviewees in district B were in general less positive about the organizational model in district A. In regard to the division into level groups one teacher mentioned that she would actually prefer to have two German language classes at the school, but not in order to separate the students into level groups, but rather to reduce the class size. Later the same person expressed that she views a division into two to three level groups as ideal. Another teacher admitted that it is difficult to teach a very heterogeneous class, but he would still prefer not to teach all non-German speaking students in one school (teacher 1, school B).

The responsible person in the school supervising authority of district B was in favor of having different level groups, but not to the same extent as school A has them. She still preferred the decentralized system. So there are benefits seen also by stakeholders in district B, but they are in most cases not expressed directly, but as rather general statements.

The students in district A liked their class and felt comfortable learning at that school. They described that they appreciated to be taught together with other foreign students in the beginning: “My first day of school was, I was afraid, I was very nervous [...], then I went to my class and the other people were very nice and they all were foreigners“ (student 1, school A). Another student also thought that it is good to learn German in the beginning together with other students who are not good in German either (student 3, school A).

### Challenges of the Organizational Model in District A

Apart from these positive aspects of the centrally organized system, the stakeholders also stated challenges.

The principal of school A was worried about the planned changes in the district. He knew that two new classes were about to open at a neighboring school. He described the situation there as chaotic and challenging if not an excessive demand for those involved. For him it proved that decentralization is not the solution for the problematic situation of newly arrived immigrant students.

The interviewees in district B were more skeptical about the current organizational model in district A than about the planned decentralization. Teachers and principal in district B both expressed the concern that separate schooling like in district A could lead to stigmatization: “because then there is [a] school, that is stigmatized like ‘that’s where all the children go, who can’t speak German’. And they’d stay too much among themselves“ (principal, school B). Both members of the two school supervising authorities shared this concern. The one in district B made her skepticism clear: “That would be counterproductive, because integration is not possible then due to the lack of a group they could integrate into.”

She also mentioned that it is more difficult to transfer the students to mainstream classrooms at the same school if there is only one school in the district hosting German language classes. This concern is shared by the principal of school A.

One of the teachers in school B expected ethnic conflicts would be brought into the classroom if there are too many newly arrived immigrant teenagers at one school:

“[...] I think a ghettoization is dangerous. [...] I can imagine, let’s say, the conflicts between the two countries Serbia and Albania. The teenagers from those countries and there are 100 Serbian and 200 Albanian students at the same school, that’s difficult to control. But if they’re in different classes at different schools with other nationalities, it’s easier to control. [...] There is, I don’t know, I only see it as disadvantage to have them at only one school [...]” (teacher 1, school B).

Even though this example might be exaggerated since school A only hosts around 100 students, who are from a lot of different nationalities, it shows which aspects that are not school-based can and should also be considered in this context. Interestingly this concern about isolation was not mentioned by any of the interviewees in district A.

The teachers in school A mentioned the lack of exchange with students from regular classes as one concern. Even though the students belonged to school A, they did not feel this connec-

tion in their daily routine. The students said that they have heard of school A, but have either never been there or do not know any other student there (student 2 and 3, school A). The students were in general less concerned about the administrative aspects, but rather expressed their subjective experiences. When talking about her prospective transfer one student said: “Yes, because I have to learn something“ (student 3, school A). It seemed like the students felt they did not learn enough at that school. They often mentioned that this school is “only language” (student 2, school A).

Another issue the teachers saw was the fact that despite the division into level groups the classes are still very heterogeneous in terms of age. They did not see that as a major problem, but they described the situation as “not ideal” (teacher 2, school A). The main concern for school A in general seems to be the disagreement between the stakeholders at the school level and those at the district-level. Due to the satisfaction with the current organization system, the teachers and the principal are skeptical towards the planned changes. Since nothing was decided yet at the time of data collection, the teachers complained about planning uncertainty. They did not know whether they would stay in the same building with the same classes and this hindered their development of pedagogical concepts for the future.

These examples taken from the interviews show that the stakeholders in district A are more positive about the organization model they work in, whereas those from district B are more skeptical. As main benefits of this model we can name the close relationship among the teachers and between teachers and students, an experienced staff, lessons adapted to the students’ skills, and the well-being of the students. More problematic was the lack of exchange with regular students, the transition to other schools rather than the same, the students’ impression that they do not learn enough and the risk of isolation and ghettoization.

### **6.3.2 Approaches to Improvement in District A**

The next step was to find a way how to strengthen these positive aspects and weaken those that are barriers. The stakeholders themselves came up with several ideas and aspirations on how to improve the situation in their schools, districts and the city in general. These ideas are presented systematically in the following paragraphs.

#### Organization within the District

The principal in school A was worried about the plans to decentralize the system of German language classes in district A. He mentioned several times that it is not clear whether the situation is improved by these changes. He was concerned that the experience and know-how the

staff has acquired during the last years will not be used and will not benefit the new students in the way they do now. He suggested – in the case of a decentralized system – to have close connections between all schools in the district that host German language classes and make the staff's experience and knowledge accessible for all schools involved. This aspect was also stressed by the teachers I interviewed.

Their ideas went even further. One of the teachers I interviewed would prefer to have at least four to six German language classes at each school in order to be able to distinguish between different language levels. She thought that most schools offering these classes should be secondary schools, she did not view it as useful to have those classes at a *Gymnasium*, as probably only 5% of the students would transfer to a *Gymnasium* later on. It should rather be an integrated secondary school including upper secondary schooling. Those schools should be closely connected (teacher 1, school A). This resembles the principal's idea, but is in clear contrast to what the school supervising authority has in mind. The school supervising authority in district A mainly wanted to strengthen the early integration of newly arrived immigrant students and therefore restructure the organization to a more decentralized system.

The students only mentioned a few organizational aspects they would improve and rather focused on factors they are directly involved in such as longer breaks between the lessons and more holidays. One student expressed, that she would have preferred to attend an even more intense German language course that only focuses on German and maybe mathematics. Then she would have learnt German even faster and could have attended a mainstream classroom earlier (student 2, school A). This is in complete contrast to the idea of integration that is basic for the German language classes, but it shows how the students evaluate their own situation and their own educational pathway.

These different ideas and approaches show that the organization of German language classes remains a very controversial issue.

#### German Language Classes as Regular Part of the School

One teacher stated that the newly arrived immigrant students should be considered as regular members of the school and included in activities such as excursions, open day and other projects. She suggested using the advanced English language skills of many newly arrived immigrant students for language projects together with regular students (teacher 1, school A). The member of the school supervising authority in district A also wanted the German language class students to be integrated into all school activities and establish a system in which

every newly arrived immigrant student gets assigned a mainstream student who will support them during the first weeks.

The principal of school A focused on the welcoming culture of the school. He suggested to view the newly arrived immigrant students similar as the regular students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade who transfer from primary schools to secondary schools: They get a class teacher, the contact to their parents is established, an entire network is built in order to welcome those new students. Similar activities are possible for newly arrived immigrant students, too.

The member of the school supervising authority in district A wanted to secure the idea of inclusion in general in all schools and for everyone involved at the school and district level. This idea is quite vague but it is in line with the claim of many participants who aimed at creating a welcoming atmosphere at their schools.

### Transition

Another issue both teachers in school A mentioned is the transition phase that they would like to improve by introducing a step-by-step procedure. They would prefer that the students are assigned to a regular classroom as soon as they enter the school. Then they would already know which class they would go to after having acquired enough German language skills. Furthermore the students could take part in a few mainstream lessons like PE or art before the actual transition. One of the teachers added that he would like to see that the responsibility for the actual transition would rest more with the school authorities and less with the teachers. He was annoyed by the fact that he should have to struggle to find a school place for his students every time. He suggested reserving school places in regular classrooms for the newly arrived immigrant students. In that way they could transfer as soon as they are ready for it (teacher 2, school A).

He further mentioned the plan to create a so called “bridge course” to accompany the transition process better. This course would include additional German lessons after school by the German language class teachers for those students who already transferred to a mainstream class. At the time of data collection the teachers did not know whether they would get the permission and the financial support for such a course.

The member of the school supervising authority in district A was planning to establish a holiday school in order to offer a holiday program for newly arrived immigrant students that secures the skills they have already acquired.

### Long-Term Strategy

One of the teachers said his main concern was to have long-term planning security. During the previous years the German language classrooms at school A moved twice and are supposed to move again for the next school year. Due to the planned decentralization the school does not know how many classes it can keep or whether it gets new ones. The teacher explained that the teaching staff actually would like to develop a language learning program and other pedagogical programs to improve teaching and learning. But in order to do that successfully, they would need to have planning security (teacher 2, school A).

His colleague furthermore suggested training courses for both principals and the school supervising authority in order to improve the cooperation between the different stakeholders involved.

### Cooperation

The school supervising authority stressed to use the district's potential by strengthening the cooperation with institutions outside school such as sports clubs, music schools or cultural associations. Extracurricular activities could also be made accessible for all students through all-day schooling.

### **6.3.3 Organization-Related Factors in District B**

The decentralized organization of German language classes was also discussed in the interviews. In the following the challenges and benefits pointed out by the participants are identified.

#### Benefits of the Organizational Model in District B

The stakeholders in district B are like those in district A in general satisfied with the organizational model they work in. The principal supported the decentralized model and preferred to have German language classes at as many schools and also school types as possible. The school supervising authority in district A was planning to change the organizational model of district A to a more decentralized one similar to the one in district B. Therefore it is not surprising that the interviewee saw positive aspects in the organization model of district B, e.g. the idea to include different school types in order to send students to a suitable school. Her colleague from district B also supported the decentralized system and saw it as an advantage that different school types offer German language classes. She has more choice then to send a new student to a suitable school, e.g. students with good previous education and foreign lan-

guage skills who are likely to go to a *Gymnasium* can already attend the German language class at a *Gymnasium*.

The principal of school B explained that there is regular exchange between those involved in the education of newly arrived immigrant students in the district facilitated by the responsible member of the school supervising authority, whom she described as very committed in this context. In general she viewed the German language class at her school as “well organized” (principal, school B) and told about students who already transferred to a mainstream classroom and seem to graduate successfully soon. She furthermore described how the students from the German language class are involved in the daily school routine including art projects, school fairs, but also extracurricular activities. This was supported by one of the teachers who said that she liked the fact that the students really are a part of the school and can remain at the same school even though they transfer to another class. Furthermore she described the situation of separate classes within the same school as helpful:

“I like it, that there are those German language classes and I also like it that they’re connected to another school. Then you have both: they receive special attention, because they’re in a special situation, but at the same time they have a bit of normality, because they attend a normal school and not any ‘extra school’” (teacher 2, school B)

The teachers furthermore stated that they succeeded in avoiding stigmatization, isolation and ghettoization in that way. The school supervising authority in district A also sees the close connection to a school as important “thus integration into the school can work better and faster” (school supervising authority, district A).

According to the principal school B provides a feeling of being welcome for the new students. This is to some extent due to the fact that many of the teachers have a migration background, too:

“[...] but they are welcome here and that’s, I think that, that matters a lot. [...] I think, because of many teachers, who themselves, I say it in quotation marks, were foreigners or are foreigners, we have a different attitude. [...] I’d say it’s of course also a little, that’s what creates the school culture.” (principal, school B)

In this context one of the teachers added that she viewed it as very useful to have one teacher who is mainly responsible for those students. On the one hand it is easier for the students since they need orientation and a contact person working as “class dad or class mom” (teacher 2, school B) in the beginning. On the other hand it makes the coordination between teachers less stressful. Most of the lessons are German lesson and if different teachers teach the same subject the planning can be very difficult.

Confronted with the idea of having different levels this teacher answered that she would prefer to have another German language class at the school in order to distinguish between levels. Her colleague in contrast said that he could also differentiate between different levels within his class. They both agreed that it is important that different subjects are taught in order to increase the students' general knowledge and enable them to catch up in the mainstream classroom.

The school supervising authority added practical aspects. She admitted that the decentralized structure exists due to a lack of rooms, which means that those schools host German language classes which have free rooms. But she stated that this has positive aspects:

“This has the advantage that the schools are in different locations. Then when I have to allocate students I can consider: where are they living? Then they don't have a travel time of one hour. So, the decentralized structure is, even though it's for pragmatic reasons, quite favorable.” (school supervising authority, district B)

The stakeholders in district A are, as expected, less positive about the decentralized structure. One has to keep in mind that they are in disagreement with the school supervising authority in district A and therefore defend their organizational model. That could probably mean that they would not want to admit positive aspects in a different system in order to strengthen their stance.

One could argue that the mentioned lack of exchange with regular students could speak in favor of the organization model in district B, but none of the stakeholders in district A connected these two aspects. Only one of the students in district A stated that a decentralized system could be as good as the centralized: “Both are good. So when it's a class, you can better learn German with the other students in other classes, but if it's like that, it's ok as well“ (student 3, school A).

### Challenges of the Organizational Model in District B

Apart from the benefits the organizational model in district B offers, challenges are mentioned as well. As expected many of the factors mentioned positively in context with the organizational model in district A are seen as negative in district B. Furthermore it is also predictable that the stakeholders in district B are less critical about the system they work in than those in district A.

Both teachers in district B said that it is difficult to teach a very heterogeneous group of students, one of them would prefer to have level groups, while the other does not view that as

necessary. The responsible person at the school supervising authority in district B only mentioned the transition phase as problematic.

The teachers in district A reported that they know teachers from schools working like school B, who feel very isolated, which leads to a high turnover rate among the staff. They criticized that in a decentralized system the schools have to accept students from all language levels at any time of the school year, which makes it hard for students and teachers:

“And if you’re let’s say atomized in one of the districts with seven, eight, nine locations, then you’re probably at a location with only one group for illiterate students, and you’re probably at level A2 and then you have to attend the group for illiterate students anyway or there is not even a group for illiterate students and then there is a class with three, four, five different language levels. Then the students need, of course, much more time in order to progress.” (teacher 2, school A)

According to their experience schools like school B do not reach the required language level to attend a mainstream class within one year.

One teacher criticized exactly what the member of the school supervising authority admitted: that not pedagogical, but pragmatic reasons like available rooms decide about the educational pathway of newly arrived immigrant students (teacher 1, school A). Her colleague was more skeptical regarding the quality of teaching. He supposed in a decentralized system teachers would work in both German language and mainstream classes and might feel overstrained dealing with that special group of students (teacher 2, school A). School B is an example that shows that this is not necessarily the case, but the concern still has to be considered as one possible factor as it might apply to other schools in Berlin.

Another challenge was mentioned by the school supervising authority. In regards to the planned changes in district A the responsible staff is concerned whether there are enough qualified teachers, e.g. in order to teach illiterate students. This is a problem mentioned in the literature (Holling, 2007, p. 190f.) and can be seen as general concern in connection with a decentralized organization of German language classes.

To sum up we can name the following aspects as benefits of a decentralized organization of German language classes according to the interviewed stakeholders: close connection to a regular school makes integration easier, students do not have to transfer to another school, different school types offer suitable German language classes according to the students’ previous knowledge and education, the avoidance of isolation and stigmatization and pragmatic aspects such as travel time to school. Negative aspects stated were: very heterogeneous

groups are more difficult to teach, the students do not gain the required German language skills within one year, teachers might feel isolated and a lack of focus on pedagogical issues.

#### **6.3.4 Approaches to Improvement in District B**

The stakeholders in district B also stated different ideas how to overcome the obstacles and strengthening the contributing factors regarding the organization of German language classes in the district, that are presented in the following paragraphs.

##### Organization

One of the teachers in school B would prefer to have smaller and more homogeneous classes. Furthermore she evaluated one year as too short in order to learn German at the required level. She suggested having one year in order to learn the basics and a second year to learn the academic language in order to be able to understand lessons in all subjects.

The school supervising authority in district B only plans minor changes in the near future in district B: she wants to establish two German language classrooms at each hosting school, in order to offer two levels at each school. The classes should be accommodated at different school types according to the students' previous education and abilities. The students should remain at the same school when they transfer to a mainstream classroom in order not to uproot them again.

##### Transition

The interviewed students referred, similar to the students in school A, rather to small everyday aspects such as a later start of the lessons in the morning. One student said similar to a student in district A that she wants to have a calm start for new students who enter the class. They should not be in the center of attention immediately, but get the possibility to arrive trouble-free.

The school supervising authority in district B complained about how the transition is handled for students who move to or attend a school in another district. She demanded guidelines for these cases that are clearer than the ones currently existing.

##### Long-Term Strategy

She also expressed her general disagreement with the Ministry's guidelines and asked for more instructions regarding the curriculum as "it cannot only be about German" (school supervising authority, district B).

This chapter shows how complex the education of newly arrived immigrant students is. A lot of issues came up during the interviews, contributing and interfering factors could be identified.

### **6.3.5 Other Factors**

Apart from the factors that are closely related to the very organizational model, the stakeholders mentioned several other aspects influencing the education of newly arrived immigrant students. These have to be taken into consideration as well in order to improve the current situation.

#### Resources

All principals and teachers complained about a lack of resources. The teachers explained that there is often no adequate material available for newly arrived immigrant students, which might be due to the fact that it is a comparably small and still very heterogeneous group. But because the student numbers are steadily rising there is an increasing demand for quality teaching materials. Often materials that aim at students learning German as foreign language have a strong focus on communication. The teachers have to prepare the students for regular school lessons, which means they have to acquire basic academic language. The regular textbooks are often too difficult for students with small language skills, whereas textbooks for German as foreign language are not academic enough (teacher 2, school A). That means that the teachers have to create their own material, which is time-consuming. This gap has to be filled in order to provide newly arrived immigrant youth with adequate learning supplies.

Financial resources were mentioned as another major factor by the participants. It included financial support to employ more teachers, to offer more support for the students and to purchase materials or technical equipment such as whiteboards or computers necessary for the lessons. It also refers to bureaucratic constraints. The principal in district B mentioned that a lot of newly arrived immigrant students would actually be eligible for further financial support through the Education Package, which could make a huge difference. Students could take part in excursions and class trips more easily. They could also benefit from extracurricular activities provided by the school or external providers such as sports clubs that the stakeholders mentioned as important in order to speak German in everyday life. Often this procedure takes a long time and during that time the students do not receive financial support. In order to compensate that the school got access to a fund to cover costs for textbooks and material (principal, school B). Furthermore schools that have more than 50% students eligible for

measures from the Education Package receive additional financial support (SenBJW, 2013, p. 2), which applies to school B, but not school A<sup>17</sup>. Opportunities like this help to some extent, but are not sufficient.

Another issue is resources in terms of rooms. As seen before availability of rooms rather than pedagogy sometimes decides on the education of newly arrived immigrant students, which should be seen as very alarming.

### Teacher Training

Qualified and experienced teachers can be seen as a valuable resource, too (Booth/Ainscow, 2002, p. 82), which was available in both schools. Nevertheless, the participants expressed concern, whether enough qualified teachers will be available in the future, if the number of newly arrived immigrant students still increases. All stakeholders stressed that a qualification in German as second or foreign language or experience as foreign language teacher is necessary. The school supervising authority in district A furthermore argued that there are not enough teachers who can teach reading and writing to teenagers, who have never been to school and maybe never had contact with written language. Furthermore she noted that due to the war in Syria the number of traumatized students would rise in near future and that the current school system is not prepared to deal with that situation adequately. One teacher in school B had the idea to offer bilingual lessons for newly arrived immigrant students. In his opinion it would be very helpful mainly in the beginning to have mother tongue instruction as a means to build a bridge into the German education system and into the German language. Therefore qualified teachers who are proficient in both languages and have knowledge about teaching reading and writing a new alphabet would be necessary.

Seminars on how to teach heterogeneous groups have become part of most teacher training programs in Germany in the recent years, but most teachers currently in service have not gone through these courses. Additional training courses for teachers are now offered, but do often not cover the demand according to a teacher in district A. Offers of teacher training for both teachers in teacher training programs and teachers in service are necessary to address the needs of newly arrived immigrant students. Professionalization is necessary and has to start immediately in order to support the students as early and appropriately as possible.

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<sup>17</sup> The concrete numbers would disclose the schools and districts. I got the information from the reports of a school inspection that was conducted in schools in Berlin. All reports can be found in this database ([http://www.berlin.de/sen/bildung/schulverzeichnis\\_und\\_portraets/anwendung/](http://www.berlin.de/sen/bildung/schulverzeichnis_und_portraets/anwendung/))

## Attitude

Attitude was mentioned as crucial factors by many participants in different ways. The stakeholders described different kinds of situations, where attitude towards different groups and aspects becomes important. First of all there is the general attitude of the school towards newly arrived immigrant students. Both principals stressed the importance of creating a welcoming atmosphere, in which the students feel at home and safe. This means both staff and the regular students need to have a positive view towards newly arrived immigrant students. The principal in school B explained that they had to sensitize the regular students when it comes to the newcomers:

“We have students in the mainstream classrooms, many students from Arabic countries or from Lebanon and, who said in the beginning: ‘Who are those boys?’ So they looked down on them a bit. [...] Yes, because in the beginning we got a lot of children and teenagers from Bulgaria, Romania, Roma children and we had to sensitize the students, that those students are welcome at our school, too.”

A close and trustful relationship contributes to a good learning environment. Both schools offer this trustful atmosphere, but to a different extent. Whereas school A is located separately and therefore is a small school on its own hosting German language classes exclusively, school B has one teacher who is responsible for the German language class and teaches almost all subjects. So school A offers a more intimate atmosphere, but lacks the contact to regular students, which is given in school B. The students in both schools liked their class and seemed to feel comfortable at school. Even though the participants in district B were concerned that a school working like school A could become a stigmatized and isolated place, none of the participants in district A mentioned this concern.

The attitude of the families of the students was evaluated differently by teachers and principals. In both schools teachers expressed their impression that some families do not view schooling as important. Teachers furthermore reported that it is often difficult to get into contact with the parents not only due to language barriers but also because of their attitude towards schooling in Germany. One can presume the dynamics of a vicious circle here: the parents are not familiar with the German school system and do not know how to handle the situation, the teachers assume they are not interested, the parents do not receive the information and support they would need and this continues on and on. But there were positive examples in both schools, too. The principal in school B reported that the parents of the German language class students are very concerned about their children’s education and a teacher in school A told that he would offer a parent-teacher-conference, because so many parents are

interested. It is difficult to change attitudes, expectations and opinions, nevertheless, improvements in the communication between parents and school could probably help to overcome barriers in terms of language and information.

In school B different stakeholders reported to have difficulties with students who do not attend classes regularly. These problems also exist in district A, but were only mentioned when I directly asked about it and seemed to be less in focus. Both schools reported that they do not have a strategy how to deal with that situation apart from informing the authorities. School B has a social worker offering special trainings for students not attending school regularly. This program is open for all students and can be seen as contributing measure.

Another kind of attitude is the schools' willingness to host German language classes but also to integrate former German language class students into mainstream classrooms. According to the interviewees the willingness is there, it is rather bureaucratic barriers making it difficult. In district A the participants mentioned that the principals have to support the idea of hosting a German language class and communicate it with the staff in order to make it successful. Furthermore the political level has to work together with the schools. According to the school supervising authorities the schools work well in that context and implement the idea of hosting German language classes successfully.

The principals stressed that the German language classes are a normal part of the school, whereas the teachers stated that this is not the case. According to a teacher in school B most mainstream students do not even know about the German language classes and only those teachers teaching in the German language class view them as a regular part of the school. The integration of German language classes within the very school seems in need of improvement in order to create an open welcoming atmosphere, not only for newly arrived immigrant students, but for all involved at the school level.

### Extra-Curricular Activities

Most stakeholders mentioned the positive effects of extracurricular activities like sports clubs, but also mentioned difficulties in convincing the students to go there. Teachers at both schools told that they tried to motivate their students to take part in extracurricular activities, but the students often do not follow these suggestions up or if they follow them up, they give up quickly (teacher 2, school A; teacher 1, school B). Activities offered in the school could be a solution. In an all-day school routine the students would have the opportunity to take part in different activities, they would remain longer at school and use German outside of the lessons,

too. In this case it has to be ensured that German language class students can take part in the all-day schooling and are not hindered by bureaucratic obstacles.

### Cooperation with other Institutions

The beneficial effects of cooperation with different institutions such as the youth welfare service, independent service providers and the police were underlined by most stakeholders and seen as of similar importance as German classes in the daily school-routine. These institutions can give additional support to the students themselves, but also to the teachers e.g. by providing interpreters or the administration e.g. by giving advice on how to deal with potential deportations of students.

### Future Perspectives

In a broader context one teacher suggested a more uniform grading and report system for the German language classes, which would make the transfer any new school or class easier.

He explained that he sees the major problems at the societal level that impact the students' motivation. In his opinion the students have to see a realistic perspective for themselves, which means to see the opportunity to get a job or a vocational training opportunity and develop a positive attitude towards education in general. This broader perspective was mentioned by other stakeholders, too, who view the education of newly arrived immigrant students as a challenge for society as a whole.

It became apparent that the education of newly arrived immigrant students is a complex and also controversial issue. By talking to stakeholders in only two schools an impressive amount of factors that contribute or hinder optimal education could be identified. So far I have – apart from chapter 6.1 – focused on the raw data. I have presented the participants' views and the observations I made in both schools. In the next step the literature review and the theoretical ideas are going to support an even deeper analysis in order to come up with more abstract concepts and themes in order to answer the main question – how to improve the education for newly arrived immigrant students in Berlin – as exhaustively as possible.

## **7 Discussion**

This small case study on the education of newly arrived immigrant students in two districts in Berlin has mainly showed that education for newly arrived immigrant students is an extremely complex issue. It illustrated that different models to organize this education have their challenges and benefits, but one cannot easily say, that one of them is better or even the optimal model. An enormous number of factors influence language learning and many of them are found outside the formal education system.

In order to discuss these main findings systematically this chapter is separated into three parts. The first part focuses on paradoxes that emerged during data analysis and how these paradoxes made the issue of education for newly arrived immigrant students very complex. The second part discusses how the education system can use its influence in order to improve the educational situation of newly arrived immigrant students. The discussion is based on the findings presented in chapter 6. Furthermore it aims at finding out how other influential factors can be strengthened. The third part consists of the conclusions that can be drawn from this study and provides prospective research ideas.

### **7.1 Paradoxical Situation: Integration through Exclusion?**

During the data analysis many very paradoxical findings emerged that I will discuss here with support of the theories I have used. I see these paradoxes as one reason for the large complexity of the issue to provide newly arrived immigrant students with adequate education.

German language acquisition and fast transition to a mainstream classroom, which means integration into the regular education system, are the main goals of German language classes. In chapter 6.2 I presented in reference to research question 2 how the two schools under examination work in order to achieve these goals. In this chapter I will discuss these two goals at a more abstract level using the analytical framework as guiding tool.

Language and integration are seen as complementary, intertwined concepts that cannot be treated separately from each other. Nevertheless, these goals often seem to be valued differently. German language classrooms are separated classrooms in both schools and districts under examination, which means the schools foster integration by actually excluding the students from the mainstream classes. All stakeholders agreed that exchange with German speaking students is important and contributes to language learning, but the German language class system promotes the philosophy that the students first have to learn the language proper-

ly and then can be integrated. Language learning is seen as both a requirement for integration and a side effect of integration.

Within that paradoxical situation the students are confronted with processes of exclusion and inclusion taking place at the same time. The schools try to treat them as belonging to the normal part of the school, still they have separate classrooms, teachers, curricula and timetables.

The difficulties these paradoxical situations create are discussed in the light of the theories presented in chapter 2. The concepts language learning, integration/inclusion<sup>18</sup> and exclusion are embedded in the analytical framework and applied to the situation of newly arrived immigrant students in German language classes in Berlin.

### Inclusion and Exclusion

Inclusive schools are in the center of Booth's and Ainscow's index for inclusion. An inclusive school is supposed to be a school for all students despite any difficulties, deficits, talents they may have (Mitchell, 2009, p. 5). First of all it is necessary to clarify that the German school system in itself, including the Berlin school system, is not inclusive, but rather labels students and separates them into different education tracks. Newly arrived immigrant students do not have a place in the traditional German educational system, but have to be placed somewhere due to their right to education. If one considers the historical development regarding immigration and education, it is not surprising that the newly arrived immigrant students are put in separate classes. Integration has only become a political issue during the last decade and the education system has proved to be remarkably resistant to reforms aiming at removing the different tracks, thus the multi-track system still exists in all federal states.

Apart from these historical reasons one has to consider the pragmatism that led to the establishment of German language classes in a difficult situation. The number of students without German language skills rose dramatically and the policy-makers had to react. German language classes had existed before at a small scale and therefore provided an opportunity to place these students somewhere. The problem was provisionally solved. Since the number of incoming students increased even more, the provisional solution became a final solution and German language classes were established in all districts. Through the guidelines published

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<sup>18</sup> Despite using inclusion theories I rather use the term "integration" to describe the students' transfer to mainstream classrooms. This is due to the fact that the system of German language classes itself is segregating, which completely contradicts my understanding of inclusive education as meaning one school-type school for all (Mitchell, 2009, p. 5). The schools in this study can provide opportunities to integrate students into the regular education system, which means that a student, who has been segregated before, can become part of the mainstream classroom.

by the Ministry of Education in Berlin the German language class system became a formal part of the education system of Berlin.

Through a case study on district A and B I presented two different ways, on how the districts in Berlin deal with the task of educating newly arrived students. At a school-level we can apply the index for inclusion by Booth and Ainscow (2002) and see whether they employ inclusive approaches within a segregated system.

The first dimension of inclusion is inclusive values, which refers to a welcoming atmosphere for new students and staff, good relationships between all stakeholders and the agreement to avoid exclusion and barriers (Booth/Ainscow, 2002, p. 8). However, it is important to keep in mind that values can also be considered problematic if they are imposed on a marginalized group by a dominant group, and therefore are not inclusive (Fraser, 1997, p. 14). In the analysis I have put a lot of emphasis on attitudes, which are based on a value system.

One example from this study is that teachers in both schools stated that there are some students and parents who do not see school as a priority. That was mainly mentioned in connection with students from Southeast Europe, often Roma. There are studies stating that negative prejudices towards Roma people are widely spread in the German society and also in the education system (Strauß, 2011; Koch, 2011). The teachers in my study may have expressed perceptions prevalent in the German society today. This case shows how a value system unintentionally can contribute to the marginalization of a group. Similar observations have been made in ESL programs in other parts of the world. Valdés (1998, p. 5) describes teachers in her study who did not understand the living situation of the students and their families and therefore “suspected disinterest, apathy and even antagonism [...]”. As in this study Gitlin et al. (2003, p. 118) also present an analysis in which they argue that schools can work in a way that “efforts can be directed toward building on the inclusive practices and policies, such that they do more than legitimate the exclusionary nature of the unwelcoming practices.”

According to Fraser, in order to overcome this form of cultural injustice redistribution is necessary. This means a form of cultural or symbolic change. “It could involve the wholesale transformation of societal patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication in ways that would change *everybody’s* sense of self“ (Fraser, 1997, p. 15). This transformation at a societal level is not easily made, but it is probably necessary in order to create inclusive cultures. Several participants saw the education of newly arrived immigrant students in this

broader perspective and claimed that it is a societal challenge to educate and integrate these young people rather than just a task for the schools alone.

A way to foster transformations in society could be inclusive policies, the second dimension in the index for inclusion. Inclusive policies should aim at developing a school for all, which is not the case in Berlin as discussed above. It also refers to acceptance and access for all students, which is in some cases denied for students without residence permit or, due to legal regulations, also to students who are older than sixteen. In both districts the participants admitted difficulties to accept all students that want to and have to attend school.

Inclusive policies mean that inclusion becomes part of all activities at school, and also of educational planning. Mitchell reveals that this often happens at the policy or administrative level, but not in practice. The reasons are manifold. A lack of political will was mentioned in the literature (Behrensen/Westphal, 2009, p. 46), and also by the interviewees. They mainly complained about a lack of cooperation between all stakeholders involved and inadequate infrastructure in regards to resources. Resources are often linked to economic priorities which can impact education to a major extent. Fraser's framework helped to identify some of the students in the German language classes being marginalized by economic injustice. The remedy for this kind of injustice is redistribution which refers to "political-economic restructuring" (Fraser, 1997, p. 15). To some extent this is done by the welfare state that assures a minimum standard of living and additional support for educational matters and also through funds and other financial support for schools in poor areas. According to the stakeholders this support is not enough. They would need even more resources which enable them to employ more teachers or assistance staff to support the students.

Support for diversity, another criterion for inclusive policies in the index for inclusion, aims at the coordination of all necessary support. This support is given within the subsystem of German language classes, but not in the context of an inclusive school since all measures refer to the specific classes and not to the school as one unit. Booth and Ainscow (2002, p. 63) stress that support has to be available without segregating the students who depend on it, but rather in order to enable them to participate. Newly arrived immigrant students receive support in the form of language classes that are supposed to enable them to participate, but the support is applied in a segregating way since these students are taught separately.

The third dimension of inclusive practices in the index for inclusion refers to inclusive teaching methods and materials and a lesson planning that enables all students to participate. The

materials were a problematic issue as the interviews showed. The teachers I met were all qualified teachers who decided to teach in a German language class. They expressed concerns about other schools and districts, in which unqualified teachers have to teach German language classes due to a lack of staff. They were aware of the heterogeneity of their students, but in most cases they saw it as a challenge or even a problem rather than a resource. The literature shows that this perspective towards teaching in heterogeneous groups is very common among teachers in discussions about inclusive education (Gitlin et al., 2003, p. 100; Valdés, 1998, p. 8f.).

Most teachers distinguished between different kinds of heterogeneity. They considered teaching students of different ages less problematic than teaching students who have different levels of German skills or major differences in their previous educational experience, e.g. in a very different education system or in no education system at all. Only one teacher mentioned the linguistic resources her students have and suggested to use those in language projects together with the regular students.

The teachers had their students in mind when planning the lessons. This fact became apparent when they described how they prepare the lessons and how they deal with the differences in their class. Still, one could argue that the teachers in school A and also one in school B do not have this inclusive attitude the index for inclusion asks for. On the one hand they said they were fostering inclusion and the removal of barriers, on the other hand the teachers in school A both stressed that it is impossible to teach students at very different language levels. One teacher in school B said it would be better for the students to be taught in level groups. I received similar statements from the administrative staff I talked to. Again this has to be seen in the context and leads us back to the main dilemma this chapter began with: if the students are supposed to learn basic academic German within one year, they need a lot of German lessons that exclude them from the regular students and they shall have to neglect studying all other subjects. It is easier for the teachers to prepare lessons for only one level and according to the teachers in school A most students are ready for the mainstream classroom within a year. But it means even less exchange with students from the regular classrooms in that year as the example of school A showed.

### Language Learning and Integration

The fundamental role of German language skills was stressed by all stakeholders and is supported by the theories I have used in this study. According to Vygotsky (1978, p. 25) speaking a language helps the learner to master the surroundings, which creates relationships with the

environment. This statement supports the fact that language is both a requirement and a tool for integration. Teaching a student the language can be seen as assistance that is relevant for the learner and to serves his or her purposes (ibid., p. 118).

Norton also sees the importance for immigrants to learn the host country's language, but she questions the power dynamics underlying this expectation. She claims that the rules of a language are often socially and historically constructed and serve the interests of the dominant group: Berg (2011, p. 14) confirms this for Germany with retrospect to immigration policy in the previous decades:

“It was not until the 1990s that more and more people, public opinion leaders and politicians, became ready to recognize that there is and has been immigration to Germany. The new slogan was INTEGRATION. It was often confused with assimilation. The main saying was: we want to integrate the immigrants – and it was like an order: You have to assimilate!”

He further argues that the need of integration is nowadays widely acknowledged by the German population and also policy leaders, but it often refers exclusively to German language acquisition. He argues that “‘knowledge of German’ seems to be the new formula which solves all problems“ (ibid., p. 20f.). That explains why both students and all other participants underlined the importance of learning German. The literature shows that this strong focus on language is not a specific German issue, but can also be found in other countries such as the United States: “English is one of the ‘most powerful means of inclusion into or exclusion from further education, employment or social position’” (Penneycook in: Valdés, 1998, p. 15). Riggs and Due (2011, p. 287f.) critique this strong focus on language being the key for integration: “[T]he teaching of English in schools must be reoriented to be seen as a tool or resource that can help refugees and other migrants to meet *their* goals in an English-speaking country, rather than as a prerequisite for belonging in Australia.”

Norton argues that teachers should be aware of these power dynamics and discuss them with their students. To go further I argue that these power dynamics have to be discussed not only by those affected, but by all stakeholders including the regular students and teachers. Most participants acknowledged the difficult situation of newly arrived immigrant students and the pressure to learn German, but they did not mention problematic power dynamics in the context of schooling. That does not necessarily mean that they are not aware of them, but it apparently was not among their major thoughts or they might have been aware of the fact there was little they could do to counteract the power dynamics. During the classroom observation it became apparent that German is in focus of every lesson, but none of the schools pursues a

strict German-only-policy. The teachers used foreign languages in order to explain vocabulary and took it for granted that their students used their mother tongues during the breaks. Most research in this field sees a one-language-only culture as problematic as it “contributes to rigid language hierarchies where an immigrant student’s home language is viewed as a deficit rather than an asset [...]” (Gibson/Carrasco, 2009).

The teachers stated that they try to motivate their students to speak German outside the school by encouraging them to participate in extracurricular activities. Therefore one can argue that they tried to increase their students’ investment in language learning. Norton describes that the investment depends on several context factors, such as the opportunity to speak the target language, contact with target language speakers and feeling comfortable speaking the language.

All the students stated that they had friends in their class, but not all of them had friends outside of school. These students also stated that they did not speak German outside school. Furthermore they did not like to be in Germany and would rather return to their home countries. That did not necessarily mean that they viewed language learning as less important. Some of them had very high expectations of themselves regarding learning German, but in contrast to the other students they did not relate them to future prospects in terms of a professional career but rather saw them as an end in itself. Their investment was lower in terms of how often they actually spoke German. The investment in learning German was highest for those students who have German speaking friends or relatives, like to live in Germany and attend school B, which hosts the German language classes in the same building like the regular classes and provides regular contacts between German language class students and regular students.

These different developments can be attributed to the multilayered identity that Norton (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 14f.) described as being influenced by many different aspects and that change over time. The students experienced their stay in Germany very differently and therefore developed different attitudes and perceptions towards it.

Although language learning and integration were viewed as equally important goals of German language classes, the organizational model in district A favors language acquisition over integration, whereas model B puts more emphasis on integration. None of the organizational models presented has been properly planned. Instead they rather emerged due to the historic developments in the districts and have been further developed out of pragmatism in a difficult situation. The comparative aspect of this study has rather helped to grasp the complexity of

the issue and to identify challenges and benefits in each organizational model than to find out which one provides better education. As long as language learning and integration are valued equally important none of the models can be considered being the better one.

In order to achieve both language learning and integration simultaneously another strategy would be needed. Using the findings presented in the previous chapter major challenges and benefits have been singled out which are of interest in the work towards a new strategy to provide quality education for newly arrived immigrant youth. This study focusing on only two schools in two districts does not provide enough data to create a new education strategy, but it shows the different dimensions that have to be considered in future research.

## **7.2 Towards a New Education Strategy for Newly Arrived Immigrant Students**

In reference to research question 3 chapter 6.3 revealed several factors contributing to and interfering with the educational goals of German language classes. In this section these factors are discussed at a more abstract level supported by the literature.

The study has shown that the main differences between the organizational models had to do with contact to regular students and the amount of students. The high number of students has led to the division into level groups at school A. These students are taught in a separate building and have almost no contact with students from mainstream classes. School B has only one German language class which is much more heterogeneous than the classes in school A. The students attending school B have regular contact to students from mainstream classes.

The contact with German speaking students was seen as very important by all stakeholders. The literature also confirms that friendships and other supportive relationships in the school context help to feel accepted, to understand the new school and provide emotional support (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009, p. 741). A separate location like in school A is unfavorable in this context. Although the teachers there had ideas on how to improve the situation, the students did not meet in practice apart from a sports competition. The students in school A all stated that they do not know any of the students in mainstream classes. That was different in school B, where the only German language classroom was located in the school's main building right between the normal classrooms. Some of the students I interviewed said that they are not nervous about their prospective transfer because they have friends in the regular classes, while others reported not to know anyone outside their class. These students strengthen a concern expressed by the teachers in school A who stated that integration does not necessarily

happen, when the students share a building or the school yard but rather has to be planned for and created. Most stakeholders said they would prefer to integrate the German language class students into the mainstream classes before their actual transfer in those subjects that are not based on language. This could solve part of the problem, but it means more planning and engagement by those involved, since timetables would have to be adjusted, mainstream classroom teachers would have to be able to deal with students with only limited German skills and sensitizing measures would probably be necessary in order to avoid conflicts with the mainstream students.

This brings us to the point of creating a welcoming culture which several stakeholders mentioned as important. Most of them described this culture in quite abstract terms as an atmosphere where students feel at home and accepted. The principal in school B expressed the idea to treat the newly arrived immigrant students similar to the students starting secondary school in 7<sup>th</sup> grade by creating a network between students, parents and the class teacher. A similar network for newly arrived immigrant students could be a step towards a welcoming atmosphere. In school A it would be easier since they usually accept students in groups at a time, whereas school B takes in any student at any time. Students in both schools remembered themselves being very nervous or even afraid of their first schoolday in Berlin. Two of them stated that they think teachers and students should not ask new incoming students to present themselves in front of the classroom, but just let them sit in the classroom and give them time to get accustomed. That is also what they hope for in regards to their own transfer to mainstream classrooms.

Still one can argue that a welcoming atmosphere needs more than that. German language classes are called welcoming classes by many stakeholders and the media. “To welcome” means “to be pleased about and encourage or support something” (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2014). Even if the principals and staff are willing to provide these students with all necessary support and appreciate this task, there are still the regular students who need to be welcoming, too. In both schools, the interviewees said, that most of the regular students only know that German language classes exist at their school. The fact that they probably know it, does not mean they appreciate it. Koustelini (2012, p. 176) argues that students from the dominant society should be encouraged to learn an additional language and its cultural context in order to understand their new peers’ situation. Riggs and Due (2011, p. 287) see teachers as important in order to encourage inclusive interactions between language learning students and regular students. A dialogue between the school’s staff and the students could be established

in order to sensitize the students for the issue and create a real welcoming atmosphere together. Regular contact between newly arrived immigrant and regular students appears once again to be important.

This brings us to the role of teachers in both German language and regular classes. In a system with separate classes for newly arrived immigrant students the teachers working in these classes have to be qualified in teaching German as a second or foreign language and in teaching heterogeneous groups, but moreover they have to understand the situation of their students and be aware of problems that might occur due to traumatization or subtle power relations among the students. Illiterate students would need additional support in learning to read and write. In the case of students who have never been to school this is even more important since they enter an education system for the first time, in a very complex system, in a new country and in a language they do not speak. It was suggested by one teacher to introduce more bilingual programs in order to make the beginning in a German school easier and in order to enable students to learn reading and writing in their mother tongue. The *Europaschulen* in Berlin are bilingual schools and could be used in order to ensure bilingual education at least for those students whose languages the schools are able to cover.

These qualifications do not leave the regular class teachers without responsibility. All students I interviewed saw German language skills as crucial for their life in Germany. They were, however, not entirely happy with their education since they felt they did not learn enough and they expected to run into difficulties in the mainstream classrooms. Gibson and Carrasco (2009, p. 254) observed a similar situation in Catalonia: “Although newcomer students may initially perceive their separate classes as welcoming and safe, they later experience the effects of a less challenging curriculum and low intercultural contact.” According to the literature many schools struggle with offering both adequate language classes and content-based lessons with German as the language of instruction (Valdés, 1998, p. 7; Gitlin et al.; 2003, p. 99). Gibbons (2003, p. 247) sees the main difficulty here in language being both “a target and a medium of education.” When the students transfer to mainstream classrooms they do not speak German fluently. Besides they have gone through an education focusing a lot on learning German and less on other subjects. Additionally they often do not know their new classmates, because they had almost no contact with regular students. Knowledge gaps, difficulties in following the lessons and social problems are more than likely to occur.

This shows again a situation which can be described as a paradox: the students want to acquire German very fast at a high level and then pursue their education in the regular system.

With these wishes they are in line with the Ministry's guidelines and the opinions of almost all adult participants. In order to acquire German that fast, they need a lot of German lessons, which in turn means to ignore the other subjects. One student suggested having an even more intense German course for six months in order to be able to attend the mainstream class earlier, whereas one teacher requested more time for these students in order to get to know the education system and learn the language well enough in a German language class for two years before entering a mainstream classroom. If the students would take their time and learn German over a longer period of time they will risk losing the opportunity to complete their studies since they would exceed the length of compulsory attendance. SLA Research has shown that learning a second language at a level, where the learner is able to equally participate in regular school lessons, takes several years (Kunz, 2008, p. 344f.). A long-term program that continues after the transfer to a mainstream class is necessary in order to support the language learning process.

That means all teachers in all school types have to be prepared for students who need additional support. This has implications for teacher training programs for both future teachers and also for those in service. Teaching reading and writing to teenagers, German as second or foreign language and teaching in heterogeneous groups have to be part of every teacher training program for future teachers and should be subjects for teachers in service training courses.

The issue of teachers who had a migration background was only touched upon by some stakeholders in district B who saw the diversity of their staff as helpful. Ethnicity was mentioned by Jang and Jiménez (2011, p. 143) as one aspect that can influence the student's use of learning strategies and contribute to unfavorable power relations. The fact that this factor plays a role in the context of German language classes, too, became apparent in the interviews with students. One girl told about the difficulties she faced when entering a classroom as the only person of color. She did not feel comfortable and confident among the group of only white students and with the white German speaking teacher. This situation only improved when another student of color became her classmate. A similar phenomenon was observed by Jang and Jiménez (*ibid.*) in an ESL classroom and led to their argument that ethnicity can have an impact on education and that teachers need to be aware of these underlying power dynamics. Connections can be also drawn to Fraser's framework since this situation can be seen as form of cultural disadvantage in terms of the lack of representation of other students of color.

The principal and the teachers in school B reported that their colleagues with a migration background play an important role by translating for parents and students, but also by diversifying the staff and contributing to a multicultural work environment.

Arguing from Fraser's perspective the employment of teachers with a migration background can be seen as form of recognition. They change the picture of a typical German teacher, which could be a part of the transformation of social patterns of representation which Fraser sees as a necessary way to overcome cultural injustice. Teachers with a migration background have already received attention by the academic world. Studies confirm the positive impacts of teachers with a migration background and see them as potential "change agents" in schools (Freie Universität Berlin, 2010). In 2011 the Ministry of Education in Berlin initiated the project "MigraMentor" which aimed at attracting more students with a migration background to become teachers and to support students with a migration background in teacher training programs. The long-term results can only be expected in a few years, but projects like this could be a step to diversify teaching staff in Berlin. The head of the mentioned study warns not to see teachers with a migration background as panacea, instead all stakeholders have to learn to deal with heterogeneity (Freie Universität Berlin, 2010).

Another aspect teachers with a migration background could probably handle better in certain cases is in the cooperation with parents. Both schools reported difficulties with establishing and maintaining contact with parents. In the study it became apparent that this is due to language and information deficits, but also prejudices and negative experiences. This shows once again that all stakeholders, despite their own background, have to be aware of power relations and cultural sensitive issues.

Cooperation is another keyword that was mentioned in various ways by different stakeholders. The principals stressed the importance of cooperation among the schools that host German language classes. In district A there was no other school to cooperate with, but because of the planned decentralization teachers and the principal stressed that cooperation will become important. The main benefits were seen in providing less experienced schools with information, support and know-how. In district B regular meetings for German language class teachers are organized in order for them to exchange their experiences. These were mentioned positively by the administration and the principal, but not by the teachers they are aiming at. One of them argued that a platform like this should be used in order to solve specific problems, instead of just talking about experiences.

Although there is cooperation, it is not as close and constructive as it could be. Every school hosting German language classes in Berlin has to develop its own curriculum for these classes. That leads to different grading systems and different offers of subjects and can be difficult when students change schools. There are official curricula for all other subjects in all school-types. Due to the different language skills the students in German language class have, it is complicated to create a curriculum that covers them all. But since students with special educational needs, an equally heterogeneous group, are also covered by curricula created for them, this should be done for students without or with limited German skills, too. Many students change schools during their stay in Germany, especially unaccompanied minors who are distributed across the city after they have gone through the clearing procedure. They would benefit from a clearer and more uniform system of German language classes. The same is true for teachers who have no previous experience with German language classes, since they would receive some kind of guideline they can adhere to.

There is a curriculum for German as a second language, but it was not used in any of the schools under examination. One teacher argues that this curriculum would not be enough to prepare students for attending mainstream classrooms within a short time. A curriculum for students in German language classes needs to cover more than just learning German. All teachers saw it as important to teach at least the main subjects (teachers in school A) if not all subjects (teachers in school B). One teacher in school B stated that the students need to widen their general knowledge, whereas his colleague was rather concerned that the students will not be able to catch up with the other subjects if they have only focused on studying German for one year or more. Both are reasons to offer more subjects than just German and to weaken the exclusive focus on German in the Ministry's guidelines. The students were also worried that they would not be able to catch up in the other subjects. At the same time they want to study German intensively to have, at least, a chance to catch up. A strategy that takes this enormous pressure out of their education would be necessary in order to enable them to pursue their education in a satisfactory manner.

Many stakeholders mentioned cooperation with other institutions as helpful. We can distinguish here between institutions offering leisure time activities such as sports clubs or music schools and those institutions helping schools to deal with problems such as the youth welfare office or the police. The cooperation with the latter two institutions seemed to be established and used, whereas the others are viewed as useful, but did not seem to be in place. The administrative staff and the principal in district B stated that they work together with several inde-

pendent service providers that are involved in different ways. Some support the students in their lessons, others provide interpreters for meeting with parents. The teachers stated that they give information about leisure time activity opportunities to students and parents, but that those are rarely used. This was confirmed by the students. Among the small group of seven students I interviewed only one said he goes to a youth club on a regular basis.

Both teachers and students stressed how important it is to practice German outside of school, but they have different ideas on how to do it. School is only one arena among others where newly arrived immigrant students learn German and make friends. Norton (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 27) stated that teachers should help students to find out which opportunities they have to speak the target language. To what extent this happens in the schools under study is not possible to derive from the data. But it shows that stakeholders at the school level have to consider the world outside the school, as well. It would maybe be easier to motivate the students for leisure time activities if they had contact with regular students who take part in these activities. The teachers assumed that the students would give up on regular activities easily because of the language problems they face. Friendships or good relationships with regular students taking part in activities could maybe help to overcome the language problems. In the way the German language class students at both schools are separated from their peers in mainstream classes, this is unlikely to happen. Another solution could be activities offered within an all-day schooling concept that ensures joint activities for all students.

Cooperation between different institutions can create a stable network supporting newly arrived immigrant students in their difficult situation. In order to provide such network all involved stakeholders have to work together, which implies regular and transparent communication, joint planning and an agreement about the targets they pursue.

In the interviews it became apparent that this is not always the case. The administrative staff I interviewed in both districts stressed good cooperation between the authority and the schools in the district in general. They have no difficulties finding school places for newly arrived immigrant students since the schools are usually willing to accept them. The stakeholders in school B confirmed this. In district A the situation was different since the school and the school supervising authority disagreed on how the German language classes should work in the future. Their disagreement once again highlights the problem that the existing organizational models of German language classes either favor intensive language learning or integration. The school supervising authority sees the education of newly arrived immigrant students as part of an inclusive school system. In an inclusive school system separate locations for stu-

dents without the necessary skills in the German language are not acceptable. The teachers who are supposed to follow the guidelines by the Ministry have the pressure to teach their students enough German within a short period of time. In this context of pressure they see separation as necessary to be able to focus on language learning and consider it as pre-requisition for an integration that comes later.

The different organizational models are not based on pedagogy, but rather on pragmatism: “In contrast, we find preparation classes mainly in places with a high immigration ratio, suggesting that their implementation does not occur because of pedagogy reasons, but rather to avoid an overload in the mainstream classes“ (Kunz, 2008, p. 191f.). School A had already had German language classes for several decades, thus this system was expanded in order to deal with the rising number of newly arrived immigrant students. District B did not have German language classes before, thus these classes were established at a school that had classrooms available. One could argue that despite these pragmatic decisions both organizational models tend to adhere to the goals of German language classes according to the Ministry’s guidelines. But in the end they both struggle to meet the expectations. The students in district A probably learn enough German within a year, but have maybe never been in contact with students from mainstream classrooms. The students in district B know students in mainstream classrooms, but need more time to learn enough German. School A tried to establish a “bridge course” to further support their students after their transfer, but at the time of data collection none of the schools provided any institutionalized support for their students after they had left the German language class. Although this thesis aims at finding solutions within the current existing system the German language class system in itself has to be questioned by pointing to the contradictory aspects it comprises.

Furthermore it is necessary to see the German language class system in its sociopolitical context: “Questions about appropriate or effective educational practices are necessarily embedded in larger questions concerning national identity and the responsibility of governments in educating immigrants“ (Valdés, 1998, p. 13). Many of the ideas mentioned refer to activities at the school level, but they also need support from outside.

Kunz (2008, p. 446) states:

„Professional teachers are a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for an optimal, language-, subject- and psycho-social advancement of incoming students since even qualified teachers have probably encountered their limits due to the problematic structural general conditions.“

Teachers play a major role in educating newly arrived immigrant students, that became apparent in this study. But in order to do their job, they need working conditions that enable them to focus on their tasks as teachers.

In order to make the students feel welcome, it is not enough if the school creates a welcoming atmosphere. Many asylum seeking teenagers experience a welcoming school on the one hand and an immigration policy that is not aimed at integration on the other hand. Students from the “safe” Balkan countries are at risk of being deported at anytime, while they study German intensively at school in order to integrate. Especially older teenagers sometimes face situations where their parents are asked to leave the country, while they are allowed to stay in order to pursue their education. Immigration and education policy are not in line with each other in these cases.

Not only the political level is challenged here. Studies by respected organizations prove that the amount of attacks against refugees and refugee residences has been rising since the number of refugees has increased (Bruns et al., 2014, p. 7ff.). The PEGIDA<sup>19</sup>-demonstrations in Dresden and other German cities have shown that the fear of foreigners overwhelming Germany is widely spread among the population. In a study the Friedrich-Ebert foundation conducted on right-wing extremist attitudes in Germany, the authors analyzed “group-focused enmity”: the negative attitude against certain groups of people such as Muslims, asylum-applicants, homosexuals or homeless people. They found out that 20% of the population show xenophobic tendencies, 44,3% have negative attitudes towards asylum-applicants and 17,5% are islamophobic (Zick/Klein, 2014, p. 73). Although this means that the majority of the German population has a positive or neutral attitude towards immigrants, the German society cannot be called a welcoming one.

Financial resources were seen as necessary in various ways, which means fiscal policy and education policy have to be in line with each other. The cross-cutting character of education policy became apparent throughout this study. A successful education policy for newly arrived immigrant students has to be based on an agreement to be seen in the education-, immi-

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<sup>19</sup> The organization PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Western World; *Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*) has organized weekly demonstrations in Dresden and other major cities since October 2014. The participation increased enormously in December 2014 and January 2015 and started a huge sociopolitical and media debate about immigration and social policy and xenophobic attitudes. A study (Vorländer, 2015, p. 11) on the demonstrating participants revealed that most people take part in these demonstrations to express their general dissatisfaction with politics. Only 25% mentioned islamophobia as a reason to demonstrate. 15% expressed reservations towards immigrants and asylum-applicants (ibid, p. 11ff.).

gration-, asylum-, social- and fiscal policy. This can be considered as a form of redistribution to overcome economic injustice. Furthermore the society has to be included and sensitized for this issue as a first step towards a transformation of social patterns which, according to Fraser (1997), is necessary to overcome cultural injustice.

### **7.3 Outlook**

What kind of recommendations for future education policy and educational planning can be derived from the conclusions that can be drawn from the study?

First of all, we have to distinguish between recommendations for the currently existing system and recommendations for a new education strategy for newly arrived immigrant students. Since I analyzed both the current system and questioned it by claiming that a new strategy would be necessary, recommendations for both scenarios have to be given. School is just one arena for change, therefore the sociopolitical context has to also be considered. Furthermore it has to be mentioned that the data set is limited and not comprehensive enough to come up with very concrete recommendations.

#### Recommendations at the school-level

- German language classes should not become the standard solution to educate newly arrived immigrant youth. Students and their parents or legal guardians should receive extensive information about the German school system. They should discuss the students' previous experiences and future aspirations with experienced teachers and administrative staff in order to come to a joint decision as to which path of education is most suitable for that particular student. In cases where the students request to attend mainstream classes individual support has to be ensured for any kind of educational need a student has (e.g. mother tongue speaking teachers, sensitiveness towards traumatization, lessons in reading and writing).
- Exchange with students from the mainstream classrooms should be organized on a regular basis. Therefore German language classes and mainstream classes should be located in the same building.
- Schools that host German language classes need a dialogue between all stakeholders (including the school supervising authority, principal, teachers, students, parents, social worker, other staff) on issues touching the German language classes such as the creation of a welcoming culture, xenophobia, multiculturalism, multilingualism, inclusion etc. in order to ensure a good learning and work atmosphere.

- Schools that host German language classes should be in regular contact with each other in order to exchange experiences and plan curricula and pedagogy concepts together and in agreement with the administration.
- Cooperation with providers of leisure time activities should be established and maintained. The same applies to institutions of the welfare state.
- Parents have to be informed about their children's education and included in decision-making processes.
- Newly arrived immigrant students should be assigned to a mainstream classroom in the beginning. As soon as possible they should participate in regular lessons in the mainstream class.

#### Recommendations at the sociopolitical level

- An open, transparent dialogue about immigration and inclusion with all members of society should be established.
- Teacher training programs have to be improved and expanded by covering issues such as teaching illiterate students and teaching in multicultural and multilingual classrooms. Programs for bilingual education should be discussed and developed. Programs supporting students with a migration background in teacher training programs should be continued and expanded.
- Education policy makers in all districts should cooperate with each other and the stakeholders at the school level in order to create a clear and uniform way to include newly arrived immigrant students into the regular education system. This way has to be a long-term program which supports the students until they are able to follow the lessons without any additional support.
- Bureaucratic constraints have to be reduced by simplified and shortened procedures. In this context immigration and asylum policies have to be reviewed in regard to fairness, consistency and adequacy.
- The time newly arrived immigrant teenagers need in order to learn a language should not be counted as school attendance for their compulsory schooling. This also applies to students already attending mainstream classrooms who are in need of additional support.
- Further research on this issue has to be enhanced and funded.

These recommendations are broad and general. They are not connected to a concrete reform idea and lack a fiscal or administrative concept. They rather reflect issues that emerged in my study on the context of education for newly arrived immigrant students and can be seen as a starting point for further research that would be necessary to inform a reform process for education policies that support students like those I interviewed or Suna whom I introduced in the first chapter.

Further research would have to cover all districts and several schools in each district in order to get on overall picture of the situation in Berlin. All relevant stakeholders have to be included. This applies especially to parents who were left out in this study, which has is a limitation here. Comparisons with other federal states could give a broader idea about different concepts that are pursued all over Germany. Quantitative data could be collected in order to have information on the class compositions in different schools and places, on the average length German language classrooms are attended, on barriers students experience and on needs students, parents or schools have. Mother tongue qualitative interviews with students could derive more information on how students experience their situation in different school types and classroom forms. Children at primary school age could be included since they are in most cases already integrated in the mainstream class system. Their experiences could have implications for the education of teenagers. This list could be easily extended by several other topics.

Valdés (1998, p. 13) argues that “[p]art of the difficulty is that most policymakers and members of the public have little information about what actually happens in school.” Apart from being a starting point for research on newly arrived immigrant students in Berlin this study aims at raising awareness of the difficult situation of these students. It is my hope that my study may lead to some more thinking by policy-making on the situation of newly arrived immigrant teenagers, for further research and eventually actions that will lead to an improved situation for the students concerned.



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# Appendix

## A) Permission by the Senate Administration for Education, Youth and Science

Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Jugend und Wissenschaft



Bernhard-Weiß-Str. 6  
10178 Berlin-Mitte

☒ + ☎ Alexanderplatz

Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Jugend und Wissenschaft ■ Bernhard-Weiß-Str. 6 ■ D-10178 Berlin

[www.berlin.de/sen/bwf](http://www.berlin.de/sen/bwf)

Frau  
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Datum: 12.09.2014

**Betr.:** Genehmigung einer Befragung von Schülerinnen und Schülern sowie Lehrkräften zum Thema „Schüler/-innen ohne Deutschkenntnisse“

Sehr geehrte Frau Richter,

auf Ihren o.g. Antrag genehmige ich die Befragung von Schülerinnen und Schülern sowie Lehrkräften zum Thema „Schüler/-innen ohne Deutschkenntnisse“ mit den von Ihnen eingereichten Interviewleitfäden an den beiden von Ihnen genannten Schulen.

Die Genehmigung wird erteilt unter der Voraussetzung, dass durch Art oder Inhalt der Erhebung in Rechte von Lehrkräften, Erziehungsberechtigten, Schülerinnen und Schülern oder anderen Personen nicht eingegriffen wird und die Namen der an der Erhebung Beteiligten nicht erfragt werden.

Die Teilnahme an Ihrer Untersuchung ist freiwillig. Die Erziehungsberechtigten der noch nicht 14-jährigen Schüler/-innen geben ihr Einverständnis schriftlich.

Der Zeitpunkt der Durchführung Ihrer Untersuchung erfolgt in Absprache mit der genannten Schule.

Die Ergebnisse Ihrer Befragungen dürfen nur im Rahmen Ihrer geplanten Masterarbeit an der Universität Oslo verwendet werden. Die Genehmigung ist mit der Auflage verbunden, dass Sie mir nach Abschluss der Untersuchung einen Ergebnisbericht übersenden.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen  
Im Auftrag

## **B) Letters of Consent**

Letters of consent were given to all participants of the study.

### **Letter of Consent for Adult Participants**

Berlin, date

#### Privacy Statement

The participation in the research project “Newly Arrived Immigrant Students in Berlin” is voluntary and can be withdrawn anytime without giving reasons.

The interviews will be recorded with digital dictation device. The data will be stored encrypted on an external hard drive until the research project is completed. Personal data about all participants will be anonymized. Only I myself will have access to the data.

The observations will not be recorded with a camera, but only by written notes of the observer.

The findings will be presented in the thesis in a way that it is impossible to trace them back to the school or the participant.

I ensure to delete all data after the completion of the research project (expected: June 2015). Therewith I follow the guidelines set by the Norwegian Social Science Data Service, that is responsible for the compliance of data protection measures in research projects at Norwegian institutions. The NSD is informed about the project. Furthermore I follow the guidelines by the Senate Administration for Education, Youth and Science.

Mechthild Richter

---

(Date, participant’s signature)

Datenschutzerklärung

Die Teilnahme an dem Forschungsprojekt „Schüler\_innen ohne Deutschkenntnisse in Berlin/Newly Arrived Immigrant Students in Berlin“ ist freiwillig und kann jederzeit ohne Angabe von Gründen widerrufen werden.

Die Interviews werden mit einem digitalen Diktiergerät aufgezeichnet. Die Daten werden verschlüsselt auf einer externen Festplatte aufbewahrt so lange das Forschungsprojekt nicht abgeschlossen ist. Die persönlichen Daten aller Teilnehmenden werden anonymisiert. Nur ich selbst werde Zugang zu diesen Daten haben.

Die Beobachtungen werden nicht mit der Kamera festgehalten, sondern nur anhand von schriftlichen Notizen der Beobachtenden.

Die Ergebnisse werden in der Masterarbeit so präsentiert, dass sie weder auf die einzelne Schule noch auf einzelne Personen zurückzuführen sind.

Ich verpflichte mich die Daten nach Abschluss des Projekts (voraussichtlich Juni 2015) vollständig zu vernichten. Damit folge ich den Richtlinien des Norwegian Social Science Data Service, der über das Projekt informiert und für die Einhaltung des Datenschutzes bei Forschungsprojekten an norwegischen Institutionen verantwortlich ist, ebenso wie den Vorgaben der Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Jugend und Wissenschaft.

Mechthild Richter

---

(Datum, Unterschrift des/der Teilnehmenden)

## Letter of Consent for School Supervising Authorities

Berlin, date

### Privacy Statement

The participation in the research project “Newly Arrived Immigrant Students in Berlin” is voluntary and can be withdrawn anytime without giving reasons.

The interviews will be recorded with digital dictation device. The data will be stored encrypted on an external hard drive until the research project is completed. Personal data about all participants will be anonymized. Only I myself will have access to the data.

I ensure to delete all data after the completion of the research project (expected: June 2015). Therewith I follow the guidelines set by the Norwegian Social Science Data Service, that is responsible for the compliance of data protection measures in research projects at Norwegian institutions. The NSD is informed about the project. Furthermore I follow the guidelines by the Senate Administration for Education, Youth and Science.

Mechthild Richter

---

(Date, participant’s signature)

Berlin, Datum

### Datenschutzerklärung

Die Teilnahme an dem Forschungsprojekt „Schüler\_innen ohne Deutschkenntnisse in Berlin/Newly Arrived Immigrant Students in Berlin“ ist freiwillig und kann jederzeit ohne Angabe von Gründen widerrufen werden.

Die Interviews werden mit einem digitalen Diktiergerät aufgezeichnet. Die Daten werden verschlüsselt auf einer externen Festplatte aufbewahrt so lange das Forschungsprojekt nicht abgeschlossen ist. Die persönlichen Daten aller Teilnehmenden werden anonymisiert. Nur ich selbst werde Zugang zu diesen Daten haben.

Ich verpflichte mich die Daten nach Abschluss des Projekts (voraussichtlich Juni 2015) vollständig zu vernichten. Damit folge ich den Richtlinien des Norwegian Social Science Data Service, der über das Projekt informiert und für die Einhaltung des Datenschutzes bei Forschungsprojekten an norwegischen Institutionen verantwortlich ist, ebenso wie den Vorgaben der Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Jugend und Wissenschaft.

Mechthild Richter

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(Datum, Unterschrift des/der Teilnehmenden)

## Letter of Consent for Parents/Legal Guardians

Berlin, date

### Information letter for parents/legal guardians

Dear parents/legal guardians,

my name is Mechthild Richter, I am a Master student at the University of Oslo and as part of my studies I would like to conduct a study at your child's school. The topic of the study is „Newly Arrived Immigrant Students in Berlin“. I will try to find out how the organization of German language classes influences the progress and development of those classes. Therefore I would like to conduct interviews with the principal, some teachers, your child and other students. Furthermore I will observe a few lessons. The results can inform policy-makers, principals and teachers in order to improve the situation of newly arrived immigrant students.

If your son/daughter wants to participate and I receive your permission, I will conduct an interview with him/her of 30-45 minutes and record it on audio-tape. The interview is about your child's school experiences in a German language class in Berlin.

All personal data is going to be made anonymous and stored encrypted. Only the researcher will have access to the data. All data is going to be deleted when the project is completed (expected completion: June 2015).

It is voluntary to participate in the project, and you can at any time choose to withdraw your consent at any time without stating any reason. If you have further questions or would like to see the interview guide you can contact me (tel.: 01522/6115323 or e-mail: [mechthildrichter@gmx.de](mailto:mechthildrichter@gmx.de)) or the school.

Sincerely,

Mechthild Richter

.....please sign this part and give it to the teacher.....

Herewith I give the permission that my son/my daughter\_\_\_\_\_ takes part in the research project “Newly Arrived Immigrant Students in Berlin” by Mechthild Richter. The participation is voluntarily and I can withdraw my consent any time.

\_\_\_\_\_

(date, signature of parents/legal guardian)

Berlin, Datum

Informationsbrief für Eltern/Erziehungsberechtigte

Liebe Eltern/Erziehungsberechtigte,

mein Name ist Mechthild Richter, ich bin Masterstudentin an der Universität Oslo und möchte für meine Masterarbeit eine Studie an der Schule Ihres Kindes durchführen zum Thema „Schüler\_innen ohne Deutschkenntnisse in Berlin“.

Ich möchte herausfinden, wie sich die unterschiedliche Organisation von „Lerngruppen für Neuzugänge ohne Deutschkenntnisse“ (so genannte „Willkommensklassen“ oder „Sprachlernklassen“) auf diese Klassen auswirkt. Dafür möchte ich Interviews mit der Schulleitung, Lehrkräften und Ihrem Kind sowie einigen Mitschüler\_innen durchführen, ebenso wie Unterrichtsbeobachtungen. Die Ergebnisse könnten an politische Entscheidungsträger\_innen, sowie Schulleitungen und Kollegien weitergegeben werden um die Situation für Schüler\_innen ohne Deutschkenntnisse zu verbessern.

Wenn ihr Kind teilnehmen möchte und Sie Ihre Zustimmung geben, würde ich mit ihm ein Interview von ca. 30-45 Minuten durchführen und eine Tonaufnahme davon machen. In dem Interview geht es um die Erfahrungen, die Ihr Kind in seiner Schule in Berlin macht. Alle persönlichen Daten werden anonymisiert und verschlüsselt aufbewahrt, sodass nur ich Zugang zu den Daten habe. Nach Abschluss der Studie (voraussichtlich Juni 2015) werden alle Daten vollständig gelöscht.

Die Teilnahme an der Studie ist freiwillig. Ich würde mich freuen, wenn Sie mir mit dem unteren Abschnitt die Erlaubnis geben Ihr Kind zu befragen. Bitte nehmen Sie auch zur Kenntnis, dass Sie die Teilnahme Ihres Kindes zu jeder Zeit der Studie widerrufen können. Wenn Sie Fragen haben oder den Interviewleitfaden einsehen wollen, können Sie mich unter Tel.: 015226115323 oder E-Mail: [mechthildrichter@gmx.de](mailto:mechthildrichter@gmx.de) erreichen oder die Schule kontaktieren.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Mechthild Richter

.....bitte abtrennen und an die Schule zurückgeben.....

Hiermit erlaube ich meinem Sohn/meiner Tochter\_\_\_\_\_die Teilnahme  
am Forschungsprojekt „Schüler\_innen ohne Deutschkenntnisse in Berlin“ von Mechthild  
Richter. Die Teilnahme erfolgt freiwillig und kann jederzeit widerrufen werden.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Datum, Unterschrift der Eltern/Erziehungsberechtigten)

## **C) Interview-Guides**

All interview guides used in this study are presented here in English and German.

### **Interview-Guide: Principals**

Thank you very much once again for taking your time to participate in the study. As I said before we will talk about the so called “Welcoming Classes”. Maybe you can just start to explain me the situation of the “Welcoming Classes” at your school from your experience.

#### Topic 1: Beginning

- When and how did the establishing of “Welcoming Classes” start?
- Why was this school chosen?
- How did the decision-making process take place?
- Who was part of the decision-making process?
- What was your first reaction?

#### Topic 2: Development

- What has changed since the “Welcoming Classes” have been established at your school?
- Are the “Welcoming Classes” part of the school program?
- Are they part of the school’s program on language development?

#### Topic 3: Goals

“These learning groups have the exclusionary aim to acquire the German language as academic language intensively and systematically and have the target to prepare the transfer to a mainstream class as soon as possible” (SenBJW, 2012b, p. 1)

- Do you agree with these targets?
- How does your school work in order to reach these goals?

#### Topic 4: Organization

- How are the „Welcoming Classes“ organized at your school?
- Are you satisfied with the current organization?
- Are you planning any changes?
- Which teachers are teaching in those classes?
- How are the teachers chosen?

- What subjects do the students learn?
- Is there contact between students in “Welcoming Classes” and students in mainstream classes? How does it look like?
- How is the transfer to mainstream classes organized?
- What do you think about the organization of “Welcoming Classes” in this district?
- Could you think of an alternative organizational model?

#### Topic 5: Outlook

- What do you see as challenges and benefits of the organization of “Welcoming Classes” at your school?
- What do you see as challenges and benefits of the organization of “Welcoming Classes” in this district?
- How could the current situation be improved from your point of view?
- Which requirements have to be given in order to improve the situation for newly arrived immigrant students in Berlin?

Thank you very much. I’m almost done with the questions I prepared. Is there anything you would like to add?

## **Interview-Leitfaden: Schulleitung**

Nochmals vielen Dank, dass Sie mitmachen. Es geht ja wie bereits gesagt, um die so genannten Willkommensklassen. Vielleicht können Sie mir einfach alles, was Ihnen dazu einfällt, aus Ihrer Sicht über diese Klassen an Ihrer Schule erzählen.

### Thema 1: Anfänge/Entscheidung

- Wie hat das mit den Willkommensklassen hier angefangen?
- Wieso wurde diese Schule ausgewählt?
- Wie ist der Entscheidungsprozess abgelaufen?
- Wer war an dem Entscheidungsprozess beteiligt?
- Was war Ihre erste Reaktion darauf?

### Thema 2: Entwicklung seit Einrichtung der Willkommensklassen

- Was hat sich verändert seit Einrichtung der „Willkommensklassen“?
- Sind die „Willkommensklassen“ Teil des Schulprogramms?
- Sind die „Willkommensklassen“ Teil des Sprachförderkonzepts Ihrer Schule

### Thema 3: Zielstellung

„Diese Lerngruppen dienen ausschließlich dem intensiven und systematischen Erwerb der deutschen Sprache als Unterrichtssprache und haben das Ziel, den Wechsel in eine Regelklasse zum schnellstmöglichen Zeitpunkt vorzubereiten“ (SenBJW, 2012b, S. 1)

- Was halten Sie davon?
- Wie wird Ihre Schule diesem Anspruch gerecht?

### Thema 4: Organisation

- Wie sind die „Willkommensklassen“ an Ihrer Schule organisiert?
- Sind Sie zufrieden mit der derzeitigen Organisation?
- Planen Sie Veränderungen in der Organisation?
- Welche Lehrkräfte unterrichten in diesen Klassen?
- Wie werden diese Lehrkräfte ausgewählt?
- Welche Fächer lernen die Schüler\_innen?
- Gibt es Kontakt zwischen den Schüler\_innen in „Willkommensklassen“ und denen in Regelklassen? Wie sieht dieser Kontakt aus?

- Was halten Sie von der Organisation der „Willkommensklassen“ auf Bezirksebene?
- Könnten Sie sich ein alternatives Organisationsmodell vorstellen? Wie würde es aussehen?

#### Thema 5: Einschätzung und Ausblick

- Was sehen Sie als die Vor- und Nachteile der Organisation von „Willkommensklassen“ an Ihrer Schule?
- Was sehen Sie als die Vor- und Nachteile der Organisation von „Willkommensklassen“ in diesem Bezirk?
- Wie könnte die derzeitige Situation aus Ihrer Sicht verbessert werden?
- Welche Bedingungen müssten gegeben sein um die Situation neu zugewanderter Kinder und Jugendlicher zu verbessern?

Vielen Dank. Ich bin mit den Fragen, die ich vorbereitet hatte langsam am Ende. Gibt es noch etwas, dass Sie ergänzen oder mir auf den Weg geben wollen?

## **Interview-Guide: Teachers**

Thank you very much once again for taking your time to participate in the study. As I said before we will talk about the so called “Welcoming Classes”. Maybe you can just start to explain me the situation of the “Welcoming Classes” at your school from your experience.

### Thema 1: Beginning

- How did you become a teacher for „Welcoming Classes“?
- How did your work in the “Welcoming Classes” develop?

### Thema 2: Development

- Could you maybe describe your typical working day in a „Welcoming Class“?
- Are there differences between working in a “Welcoming Class” or in a mainstream classroom? Can you explain these differences?
- How has your job changed since you started teaching in “Welcoming Classes”?

### Topic 3: Goals

“These learning groups have the exclusionary aim to acquire the German language as academic language intensively and systematically and have the target to prepare the transfer to a mainstream class as soon as possible” (SenBJW, 2012b, p. 1)

- What do you think about these targets?
- Do you have these targets in mind when you teach in “Welcoming Classes”?
- How does this school work in order to achieve these goals?
- How important is it for your students to learn German?
- Do your students speak German outside the school?
- Is there contact between the students in “Welcoming Classes” and those in mainstream classes? Is that contact contributing to language learning?
- How do you cope with the heterogeneity in your class?
- What criteria does an ideal teacher for “Welcoming Classes” fulfill?
- Is there cooperation with institutions outside the school? (youth welfare service, police)
- How does the work with the parents take place?

#### Topic 4: Outlook

- What are the challenges and benefits of the organization of “Welcoming Classes” at this school?
- What do you think about the organizational model at the district level?
- Other districts have more centralized/decentralized organizational models? Where do you see the challenges and benefits?
- How would you organize the education of newly arrived immigrant students if you were in the position to decide?

Thank you very much. I’m almost done with the questions I prepared. Is there anything you would like to add?

## **Interviewleitfaden: Lehrkräfte**

Nochmals vielen Dank, dass Sie mitmachen. Es geht ja wie bereits gesagt, um die so genannten Willkommensklassen. Vielleicht können Sie mir einfach alles, was Ihnen zu Ihrer Arbeit in diesen Klassen einfällt, erzählen.

### Thema 1: persönliche Anfänge

- Wie sind Sie zu den „Willkommensklassen“ gekommen?
- Wie hat es sich seitdem entwickelt?

### Thema 2: Entwicklung des Arbeitsalltags

- Beschreiben Sie doch mal einen normalen Arbeitstag in einer Willkommensklasse.
- Gibt es Unterschiede in der Arbeit mit „Willkommensklassen“ im Vergleich zu Regelklassen? Wie sehen diese Unterschiede aus?
- Wie hat sich Ihr Arbeitsalltag verändert seit Sie in „Willkommensklassen“ unterrichten?

### Thema 3: Zielstellung

„Diese Lerngruppen dienen ausschließlich dem intensiven und systematischen Erwerb der deutschen Sprache als Unterrichtssprache und haben das Ziel, den Wechsel in eine Regelklasse zum schnellstmöglichen Zeitpunkt vorzubereiten“ (SenBJW, 2012b, S. 1)

- Was halten Sie davon? Ist das auch Ihre persönliche Einstellung/die des Kollegiums?
- Wie wird die Schule diesem Anspruch gerecht?
- Wie wichtig ist für Ihre Schüler\_innen deutsch zu lernen?
- Sprechen Ihre Schüler\_innen außerhalb der Schule deutsch?
- Gibt es Kontakt zwischen den Schüler\_innen der „Willkommensklassen“ und denen in Regelklassen? Hilft dieser Kontakt beim Deutschlernen?
- Wie gehen Sie mit der Heterogenität in Ihrer Klasse um?
- Welche Kriterien erfüllt ein\_e „ideale\_r“ Lehrer\_in für „Willkommensklassen“?
- Gibt es Kooperationen mit außerschulischen Institutionen? (Jugendamt, Polizei)
- Wie läuft die Elternarbeit ab?

### Thema 4: Einschätzung&Ausblick

- Was sehen Sie als die Vor- und Nachteile der Organisation von „Willkommensklassen“ an Ihrer Schule?

- Was sehen Sie als die Vor- und Nachteile der Organisation von „Willkommensklassen“ in diesem Bezirk?
- Andere Bezirke verfolgen eine eher zentrale/dezentrale Organisation. Wo sehen Sie da die jeweiligen Vor- und Nachteile?
- Wie würden Sie die Beschulung neu zugewanderter Kinder und Jugendlicher gestalten, wenn Sie die Entscheidungsgewalt hätten?

Ok, vielen Dank. Die Zeit neigt sich dem Ende. Ich bin meine Fragen soweit erstmal losgeworden. Gibt es noch etwas, was Sie ergänzen oder mir mitgeben wollen?

## **Interview-Guide: Students**

Thank you very much for taking part. If you prefer speaking English, we could do that. I will ask you questions about your experiences at school, it is not difficult. If there is anything, you don't understand, don't hesitate to ask. I will not tell your teacher or your classmates what we talk about. I have never been to a German language class, thus I hope you can explain me some things. Maybe you can start with presenting yourself.

### Topic 1: Personal Background

- How long have you been to Germany? How long to Berlin?
- When did you start going to school in Berlin?
- Did you attend school in your home country? How many years?
- Did you speak any German when you came here? How was that?

### Topic 2: School in Berlin

- Do you remember your first day of school in Berlin? How was that? How did you feel?
- Do you like going to school here?
- Can you describe the differences between this school and your previous school?
- What do you like most about a normal schoolday?
- What are you good at in school? What is more difficult?

### Topic 3: Use of Language

- Tell me about your friends.
- Do you have friends in your class? In other classes? Outside of school?
- How did you meet them?
- What languages do you speak with each other?
- When do you usually speak German?
- What is difficult about learning German? What is easy?
- Are you satisfied with your proficiency in German?
- Many people say that immigrants have to learn German in order to integrate. What do you think about that?

#### Topic 4: Outlook

- What do you think about attending a regular class?
- What do you think will be different there?
- Imagine you're the principal and could decide about the school. Would you change anything? What would you do differently?

Ok, I'm almost done with my questions. Is there anything you want to add? Or something you forgot to say?

## **Interviewleitfaden: Schüler\_innen**

Schön, dass du mitmachst. Wenn es dir lieber ist, können wir auch englisch sprechen. Ich werde dir einige Fragen über deine Schulerfahrungen hier stellen, es ist nicht schwer. Wenn du etwas nicht verstehst, kannst du einfach nachfragen. Ich werde weder deinen Mitschüler\_innen, noch deinen Lehrer\_innen erzählen, worüber wir gesprochen haben. Ich war selbst nie in einer Sprachlernklasse und hoffe, dass du mir da einiges erklären kannst. Vielleicht kannst du erst einmal ein bisschen was über dich erzählen.

### Thema 1: Persönlicher Hintergrund

- Seit wann bist du in Deutschland? Seit wann in Berlin?
- Seit wann gehst du in Berlin zur Schule?
- Bist du in deinem Heimatland auch zur Schule gegangen? Wie viele Jahre?
- Konntest du ein bisschen deutsch als du herkamst? Wie war das für dich?

### Thema 2: Schule in Berlin

- Kannst du dich noch an deinen ersten Schultag in Berlin erinnern? Wie war das für dich? Wie ging es dir damit?
- Gehst du gerne zur Schule?
- Ist die Schule hier anders als die Schule, auf der du vorher warst? Was ist anders?
- Was magst du am liebsten an einem normalen Schultag?
- Was kannst du gut, was fällt dir schwer in der Schule?

### Thema 3: Umgang mit Sprache

- Erzähl mir doch mal von deinen Freunden?
- Hast du Freunde in deiner Klasse? In anderen Klassen? Außerhalb der Schule?
- Wie habt ihr euch kennengelernt?
- Welche Sprachen spricht ihr miteinander?
- Wann und wo sprichst du deutsch? Nur im Unterricht bzw. der Schule oder auch sonst?
- Was findest du einfach am Deutsch lernen, was ist schwierig?
- Wie zufrieden bist du mit deinem deutsch?

- Viele Menschen sagen, Immigrant/-innen müssen deutsch lernen um sich richtig integrieren zu können. Was sagst du dazu?

#### Thema 4: Ausblick

- Was denkst du über den Übergang in die Regelklasse?
- Was, denkst du, wird anders sein?
- Stell dir vor, du wärst die Schulleitung und könntest alles in der Schule entscheiden: Was würdest ändern an deiner Schule? Was würdest du anders machen?

Ich bin jetzt mit meinen Fragen fast fertig? Gibt es noch etwas, was du vergessen hast?  
Möchtest du noch etwas erzählen?

## **Interview-Guide: School supervising authority**

Thank you very much once again for taking your time to participate in the study. As I said before we will talk about the so called “Welcoming Classes”. Maybe you can just start to explain me the situation of the “Welcoming Classes” in your district from your perspective.

### Topic 1: Welcoming Classes in district A/B

- Since when does this district host “Welcoming Classes”?
- How are these classes organized in the district?
- Who is involved in planning concerning newly arrived immigrant students?
- Why does the district have the current organizational model of “Welcoming Classes”? What are the reasons for a more centralized/decentralized organization?
- What are the challenges and benefits of both centralized and decentralized organizational models?
- Why do the districts organize these classes differently?
- The numbers of newly arrived immigrant students are still rising. How does that impact educational planning? How do you cope with these difficulties?

### Topic 2: School development

- How does school development planning work in Berlin? How does it work in this district?
- Which role do the “Welcoming Classes” play in regard to school development planning?

### Topic 3: Cooperation

- How does the cooperation between the school supervising authority and the schools work? How do you evaluate this cooperation?
- Is there cooperation between the school supervising authority and other institutions such as the social welfare office? How does this cooperation look like? How do you evaluate it?
- Is there cooperation between the school supervising authorities of the different districts? How does this cooperation look like? How do you evaluate this cooperation?

#### Topic 4: Outlook

- What are current debates in the district in regard to the education of newly arrived immigrant students?
- What developments can be expected in this district or at the federal state level?
- What is your vision for the education of newly arrived immigrant students in the future?

Thank you very much. I'm almost done with the questions I prepared. Is there anything you would like to add?

## **Interviewleitfaden: Regionale Schulaufsicht**

Nochmals vielen Dank, dass Sie mitmachen. Es geht ja wie bereits gesagt, um die so genannten Willkommensklassen. Vielleicht können Sie mir einfach alles, was Ihnen dazu einfällt, aus Ihrer Sicht über diese Klassen an Ihrer Schule erzählen.

### Thema 1: Lerngruppen in Bezirk A/B

- Seit wann gibt es „Willkommensklassen“ in diesem Bezirk?
- Wie sind die „Willkommensklassen“ auf Bezirksebene organisiert?
- Wer ist an den Planungen, die neu zugewanderte Schüler\_innen betreffen, beteiligt?
- Weshalb organisiert der Bezirk die „Willkommensklassen“ auf diese Art und Weise? Welche Gründe haben zu dieser eher zentralisierten bzw. dezentralen Organisationsstruktur geführt?
- Was sehen Sie als Vor- bzw. Nachteile des jeweiligen Organisationsmodells an?
- Wie kommt es, dass die Organisation in jedem Bezirk anders verläuft?
- Die Zahl zuwandernder Schüler\_innen steigt weiterhin. Was heißt das für Ihre Planungen? Wie gehen Sie mit diesen Zahlen um? Welche Probleme treten auf?

### Thema 2: Schulentwicklungsplanung

- Wie funktioniert die Schulentwicklungsplanung auf Berliner Ebene? Wie funktioniert sie in diesem Bezirk?
- Welche Rolle spielen „Willkommensklassen“ in der Schulentwicklungsplanung des Bezirks?

### Thema 3: Kooperation

- Wie funktioniert die Zusammenarbeit der Schulaufsicht mit den Schulen? Wie bewerten Sie die Zusammenarbeit mit den Schulen?
- Gibt es Kooperationen zwischen der Schulaufsicht und anderen Institutionen, wie z.B. den Sozialämtern? Wie sieht diese Zusammenarbeit aus? Wie bewerten Sie diese Kooperation?
- Gibt es Zusammenarbeit zwischen den einzelnen regionalen Schulaufsichten der Bezirke? Wie sieht sie aus und wie bewerten Sie das?

#### Thema 4: Blick in die Zukunft

- Was sind aktuelle Diskussionen, die in Bezug auf „Willkommensklassen“ auf Bezirksebene geführt werden?
- Welche Entwicklungen sind zu erwarten auf Bezirks- bzw. Länderebene?
- Was sind Ihre eigenen Vorstellungen zur Bildung neu zugewanderter Schüler\_innen?

Vielen Dank. Ich bin mit den Fragen, die ich vorbereitet hatte langsam am Ende. Gibt es noch etwas, das Sie ergänzen oder mir auf den Weg geben wollen?

