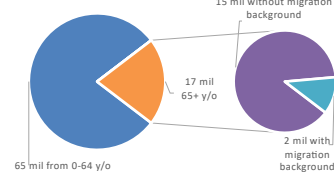


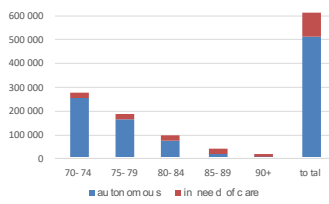


## Background

German Population (Dec. 2017)



Older migrants in Germany (Dec. 2017)



Source: German Federal Statistical Office (www.destatis.de); Own illustrations

~ 100.000 persons with migration background (L1 mostly not German) in need of care, clear upward trend

### Language situation in nursing homes and consequences for bilingual residents

- German is the main language of communication between caregiver and resident
- In some cases multilingual nursing staff speaks resident's language
- In other cases German-only policy

- In most cases, possibility to communicate in L1 is lost
- Need to communicate in L2, which is more vulnerable to attrition in older age, especially in case of dementia (cf. Ardila/Ramos 2008)
- Loss of familiar language leads to insecurity, reduced quality of life, decline in health, loss of speech and social isolation

No common strategy to interact with bilingual residents in nursing homes, but awareness growing

## UnVergessen [UnForgotten]

- Project founded in Winter 2016 at Ruhr-Universität Bochum
- Slavic speaking students visit bilingual Slavic speaking residents in their nursing homes
- Weekly meetings for 9 months, spending time together (playing, singing, reading, listening or going for walks)
- Duration of one run: 2 semesters, weekly seminar meetings, integrated into the curriculum
- Introduction to the research field, advice and support in difficult situations



Team 2017/18

Foto: Y. Behrens

Since its foundation, a total of 27 students and 22 bilingual residents in 9 nursing homes in and around Bochum have participated in the project.

### Benefits for students

- Insights into everyday life of nursing homes
- Becoming familiar with the linguistic habits, preferences and interests of an older bilingual
- Developing their own research in the field of old age, care, language, migration and health
- Enhancing social skills and recognizing the value of dealing with the older generation
- Feeling needed and being able to help

### Benefits for nursing homes and their residents:

- Bilingual residents get attention and regain lost familiarity by using their language (L1)
- Residents feel happier, calmer, and remember their appointed student and look forward to the meetings

Hence, the project UnVergessen responds to the linguistic and social isolation of bilingual residents in nursing homes.

## Linguistic data – the corpus

The linguistic data is being collected in the context of the project UnVergessen. In this year's run of the project (2018/19) the recordings are continued, so that the corpus grows constantly.

### 19 bilingual persons

All born in their Slavic homelands, different abilities in German (from native-like to basic receptive comprehension)

- 12 Russian-German bilinguals,
- 7 Polish-German bilinguals;
- 17 native-like in their Slavic language,
- 2 native-like in German;
- 14 suffering from dementia,
- 1 suffering from aphasia;
- Age: 70-99
- Permanently living in nursing homes

### ~ 37 hrs. of audio data

The language of the recordings varies from exclusively Russian/Polish or German to different kinds of language switching

Included are four different types of recordings:

- Communication between bilingual resident and mono- or bilingual nursing staff during morning nursing (~ 1,5 hrs.)
- Controlled linguistic data, including a picture-based narration and a semantic fluency task (~ 2,5 hrs.)
- Half-controlled narrations of the (linguistic) biography of the bilingual residents (~ 10 hrs.)
- Everyday communication between the bilingual resident and a familiar bilingual person (visiting student) (~ 23 hrs)

P1 Caregiver, speaking German, A. Resident, speaking Russian (2. Stage of dementia), during morning nursing

P1: (lacht) bist du müde?.. müde alexander?  
A: a?  
P1: müde? schlafen? guck ma ↑! schlafen ge: ↑hen?  
A: da chvati uže spat' [naver]  
P1: [o:h] a:ch alexander ich versteh  
dich leider nicht  
A: aj da  
P1: a: ↑ch ja. wir könn auch ohne worte reden ne?  
so, einmal hinstellen alexander  
A: tak

P1: (laughing) are you tired? .. tired alexander?  
A: a?  
P1: tired? sleeping? have a look . go to sleep?  
A: it is enough with sleep [proba  
P1: [o:h] ah, alexander i don't understand you unfortunately  
A: ah yes  
P1: oh well.. we can also talk without words right? and now stand up alexander  
A: so

P2 Caregiver, speaking German, K. Resident, speaking Polish (1. Stage of dementia), I: Student, speaking German and Polish

P2: Hallo Frau K. ich wollte fragen was Sie zu Mittag essen wollen. Hähnchenschnitte Hawaii mit Reis und Currysauce oder Szegediner Gulasch mit Sauerkraut und Püree?

K: to pierwsze (lacht)  
I: das erste.  
K: (lacht)

P2: Dankeschön.

K: nawet nie wiem co to jest ale ... trzeba spróbować.

I: ciężko się Pani mówi po niemiecku nie?

K: nie ... nie ja się uczyłam w szkole tam w Polsce uczyłam się niemieckiego ... Przez parę lat miałam z tym do czynienia także no są czasem sytuacje że czegoś nie rozumiem ale nie jest tak źle.

I: bo Pani jej teraz po polsku odpowiadała zauważyła Pani?

K: tak tak no bo ona też po polsku ehm mówi zawsze do mnie zwraca się po polsku.

I: a teraz jak mówiła po niemiecku chyba mówiła no nie?

K: Nieee po polsku powiedziała.

P2: Hello Ms. K. I wanted to ask what you want to have for lunch. Chicken slices Hawaii with rice and curry sauce or Szegediner goulash with sauerkraut and puree?

K: the first (laughing)

I: the first

K: (laughing)

P2: thank you.

K: I don't know what that is but ... I have to try it.

I: It is difficult for you to speak German isn't it?

K: no ... I learned at school there in Poland learned German ...for some years I had to do with it also but there are sometimes situations where I don't understand everything but that's not so bad.

I: because you just answered her in Polish have you noticed that?

K: yes yes but because she also ehm speaks Polish she always turns to me in Polish.

I: but she just spoke German or didn't she speak German?

K: nooo she spoke Polish.

## Research questions and further directions

Since the beginning of the project, several student theses have been completed. Further research, including a doctoral thesis, is in progress.

The research interests can be divided into the following categories:

Aspects concerning the care situation (cf. Plejert/Lindholm/Schrauf 2017, Ekman et al. 1994)

- Handling of the multilingual situation in nursing homes (language policy)
- Use of different strategies for dealing with multilingual residents
- Misconception of the cognitive state triggered by bilingualism

Sociolinguistic aspects

- Survey of the linguistic biography
- Speech attitudes and emotions that can be triggered and verbalized by speech (cf. Pavlenko 2007)
- Questions of the sense of belonging and identity

Linguistic aspects

- Survey of the language skills in both languages involved (sentence repetition task)
- Survey of lexical and grammatical skills (picture naming task)
- Survey of basic communication skills (such as narration, active conversation) (cf. De Santi et al. 1990)

Further directions

- Continuation of the project, recordings and student research
- Extension to monolingual German residents including respective recordings
- Contrastive analyses between mono- and bilingual residents

Das bin ich in meinen Sprachen.  
Ich heiße \_\_\_\_\_



Ich habe folgende Farben und Sprachen gemalt:

- für die Sprache russisch
- für die Sprache deutsch
- für die Sprache \_\_\_\_\_

Linguistic portrait of a Russian speaking resident, cf. Krumm 2010

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