

## Language Biography and L2 German: A Survey in Switzerland

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Second language acquisition of adults is a very complex field of research in which many factors have to be taken into account. One area that has not yet been thoroughly investigated is how much influence an individual's life situation exerts on that person's L2 and whether certain circumstances in life may promote or inhibit transfer from L1. Some insights concerning these questions are presented within the framework of a case study.

The issue of whether the language biography of multilinguals (the combination of language acquisition and duration of stay in L2 surroundings) exerts an influence on their L2 performance was addressed through semi-structured interviews with nine subjects and the corresponding transcripts. The transliterated interviews provide empirical data about the language biography and about the speakers' performance in L2 German. Although the main focus of the study is on transfer from L1 (Spanish, English or French) to L2 standard German, it also examines the influence of Swiss German dialect surroundings on L2 standard German. In addition to the interviews conducted orally, results from a translation experiment are reported. This experiment focuses on identifying whether the structural differences between the examined L1s and L2 (S-V-O vs S-O-V) and/or the dialect surroundings have an influence on the realization of negative transfer.

### Literature

Flury, Dominik, 2006, Interferenzen zwischen L1 und L2 Deutsch. Eine empirische Untersuchung in der Schweiz, unpublished undergraduate dissertation, Zurich University of Applied Sciences.

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