

Field for Dissertations

Linguistic and communicative skills are key competencies in an individual's disposition to make use of the offerings institutions might provide. Thus, they play a special role among a person's capabilities, providing a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for using resources to acquire skills in domains specific to the particular goals the individual wants to achieve. Moreover, they play a key role in the individual's capacity to develop personal goals in the first place—goals in the sense of functioning within society (although reading skills are particularly relevant here, the [degree of] access to a second or foreign language may also play a decisive role).

Linguistic practices of adolescents in different interactive contexts in and outside of school: The competence to contextualize as a relevant capability

This thematic field of possible dissertations deals with the difference between the linguistic resources individuals use in mundane and in institutional interaction, aiming at the reconstruction of different degrees of matching between adolescents' linguistic experiences and practices and the schools' expectations and requirements.

From a linguistic point of view, a lack of compatibility between the school's expectations and the students' acquired and applied linguistic practices can be described at least on two levels: (1) the variance in the degree of availability of linguistic resources necessary for cognitive and communicative achievements in learning in all domains and development; (2) the mechanisms of social categorization of self and others, which operate via linguistic behaviour.

A concept of contextualizing competence should be developed in this context. Its role in combining the acquisition of educationally required linguistic competences and maintaining highly valued social identities should be investigated.

Qualitative data could be collected in Germany and/or in the student's home country, focussing on specific or contrastive analyses.