



Federal Office  
for Migration  
and Refugees



**Research Centre**  
Migration, Integration and Asylum

# ***The role of integration courses in language acquisition of refugees***

***Insights based on administrative data linked to longitudinal survey data***

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GeFam2 Workshop on the Integration of Refugee Families in Host Countries: Research Advances, Policy Improvements, and Data Challenges

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# Background

- In Germany, the *integration course* is the main federal integration measure
- Integration courses ...
  - consists of language course (600-1,000 units) and „Orientierungskurs“ (100 units)
  - split up in special types of courses
  - are currently being evaluated by the research center of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)
- Previous studies already give evidence for beneficial effects of integration courses on language skills
- Further insights can result from linking survey data to administrative data on integration courses
- The IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees includes the possibility to link the data to the “Integrationsgeschäftsdatei” (InGe)

# Linking the IAB-BAMF-SOEP-Survey to InGe-Data

## **The IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees**

- Panel survey of refugees who applied for asylum in Germany between 2013 and June 2019
- Annual interviews
- More than 8000 respondents, more than 5000 with two or more interviews

## **Integrationsgeschäftsdatei (InGe)**

- Database for managing the integration courses
- Filled by diverse actors
- Includes information on participations, courses and test results

## **Linking the data**

- 2217 IAB-BAMF-SOEP respondents could be linked to records in InGe and gave their consent
- 1175 of them attended a standard integration course
- 760 attended an integration course with alphabetisation

# Linking the IAB-BAMF-SOEP-Survey to InGe-Data

## Description of the sample

	Whole sample	Respondents with two or more interviews	Respondents interviewed before and after the course
<b>Integration course participants (records in InGe)</b>	<b>2217</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>1398</b>
- standard integration course	1175	1149	718
- integration course with alphabetisation	760	739	604
- other types	282	129	76
<b>Comparison group:</b> survey respondents who reported to not have participated in any integration course	<b>4131</b>	<b>1480</b>	<b>308</b>
- other language course	1055	585	216
- other language course, illiterates	388	170	92
- no language course	2281	524	-
- no language course, illiterates	507	201	-

# Variables

**Language skills:** mean value of self-reported skills in writing, reading and speaking German (5-point scales)

**Integration course:** the course is considered completed when final part of language-training has ended (according to InGe)

**Other language course:** respondent has reported to have participated in a German language course, but not in an integration course

## ***Subgroup-variables:***

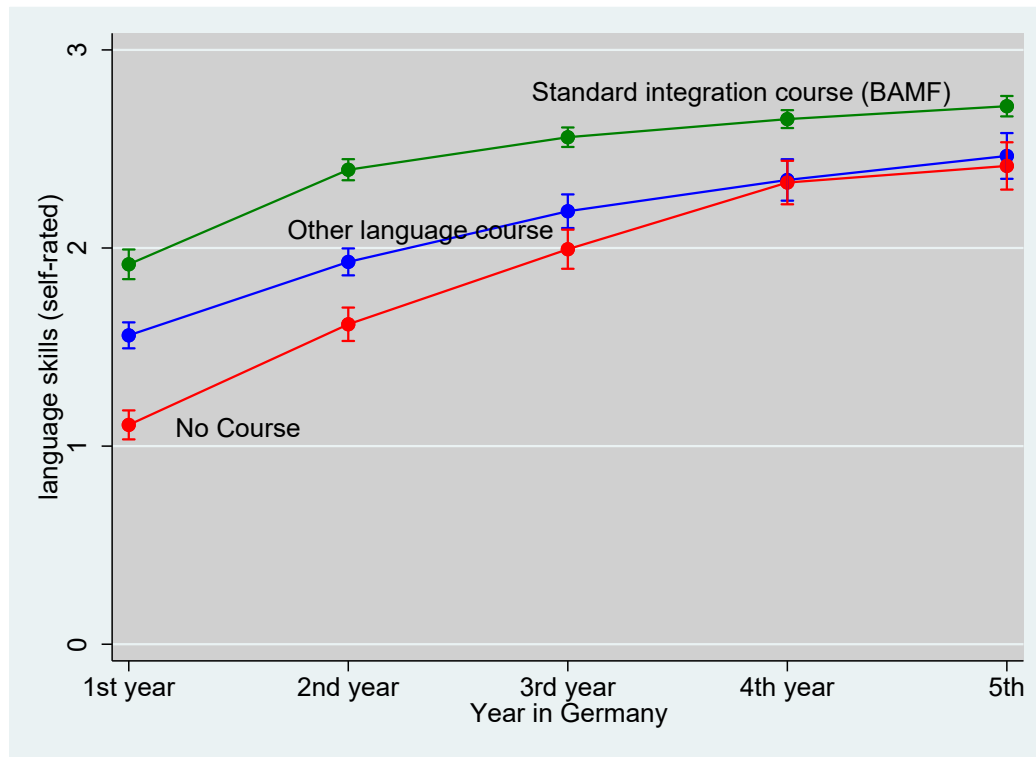
- Illiterates: ability of writing and reading in the native language is very poor or non-existent (according to the first survey interview)
- Test results (InGe): registered results of language tests that took place within a year since the integration course ended

## ***Control variables (FE-regression):***

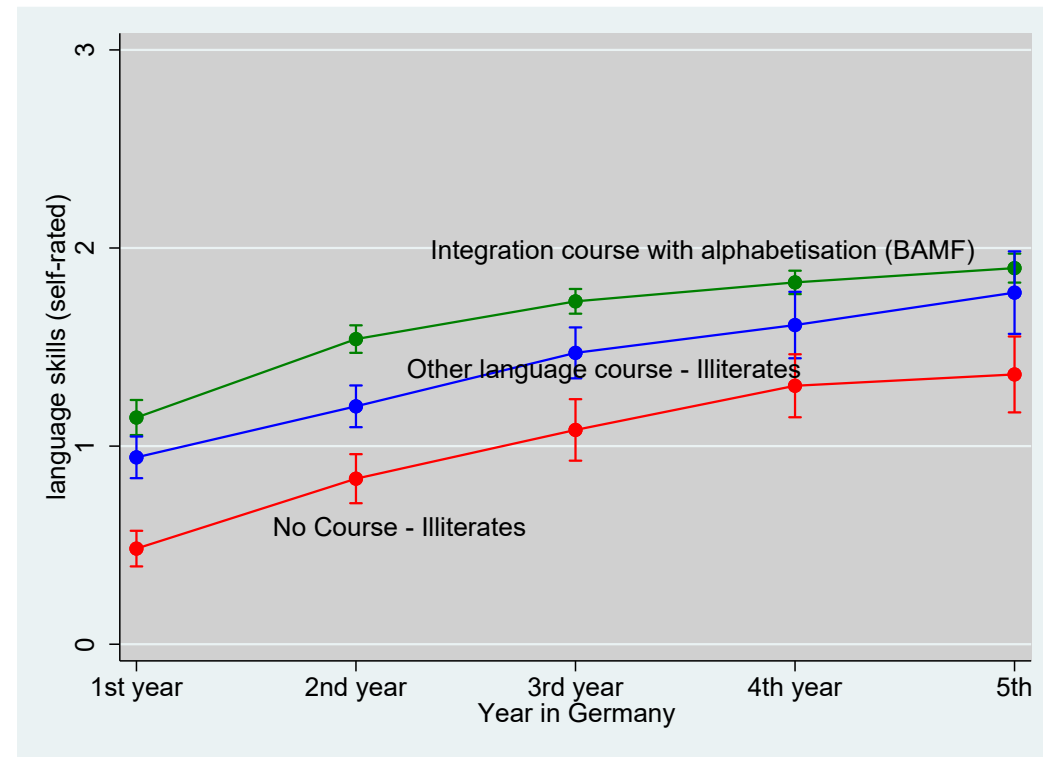
- Duration of living in Germany: dummy variables for 1 year, 2 years, 3 years, 4 years, 5 years and 6+ years
- Family situation:
  - dummy variables: a) single, b) lone parent, c) with partner and children under 4 years, d) with partner and older children, e) with partner, no children, f) other with children, g) other without children
  - *separate effects for women and men*
- Living in a collective accommodation
- Health: self-rated health, 5-point scale

# Descriptive results: progression of language skills among participants of integration courses and non-participants

Participants of standard integration courses compared to other non-illiterate refugees



Participants of integration courses with alphabetisation compared to other illiterate refugees



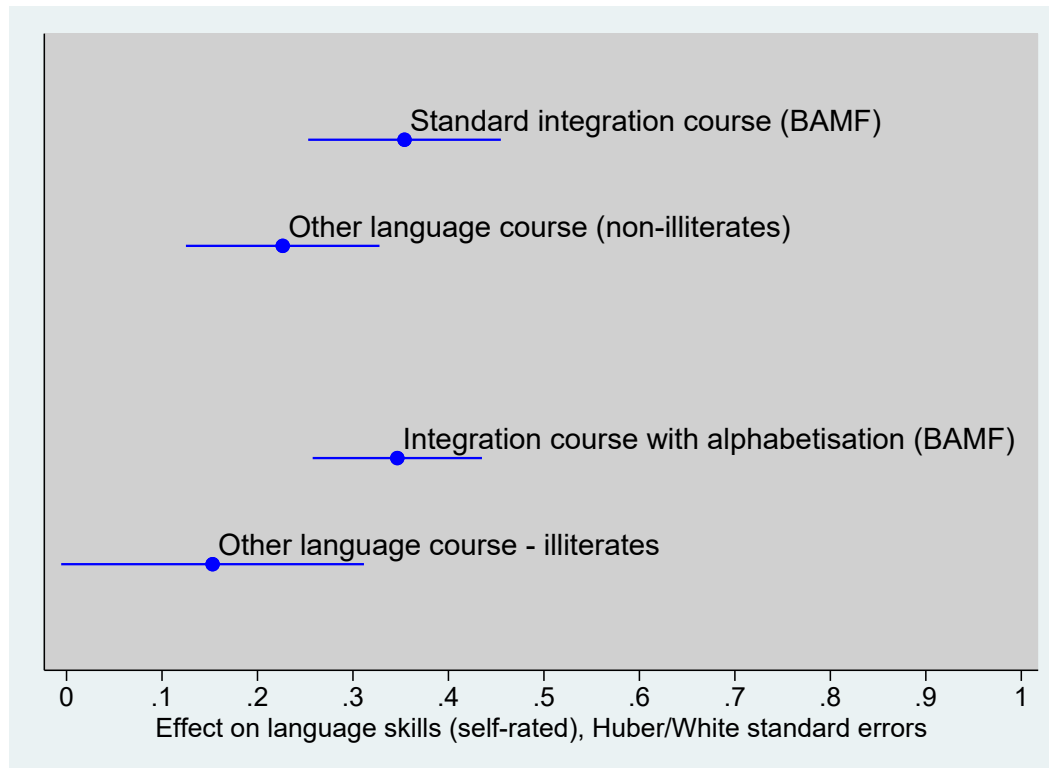
# Fixed-Effects Regression

## Basic model:

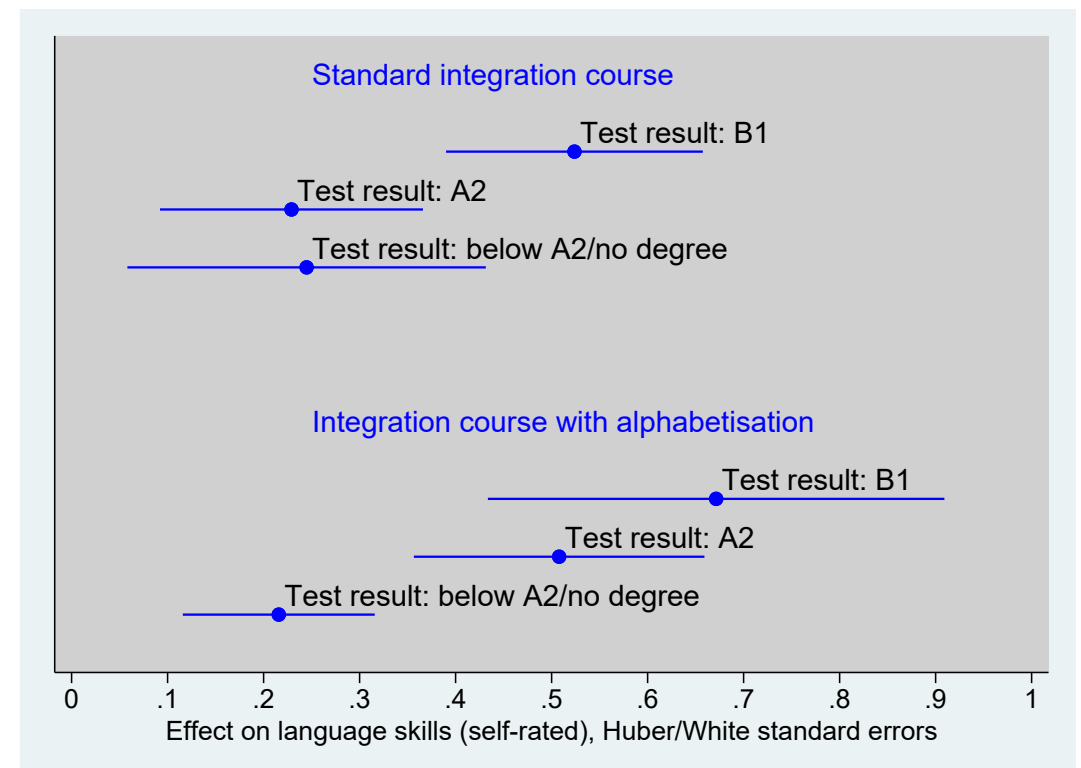
Integration course finished	.36	***	Collective accommodation	-.13	**
Other language course finished	.22	***	Health (self-rated, 5-point scale)	.02	*
Duration of living in Germany			During course (integration course)	.33	***
1st year	Ref.		During course (other course)	.21	***
2nd year	.41	***			
3rd year	.59	***	Observations	12 125	
4th year	.71	***	Persons	3 497	
5th year	.77	***			
6th year	.87	***			
later	.93	***			
Family situation					
Women:					
single	Ref.				
lone parent	-.22	**			
with partner & children under 4 years	-.22	**			
with partner & older children	-.11				
with partner, no children	-.10				
other with children	-.18				
other without children	-.12				
Men:					
single	Ref.				
lone parent	-.07				
with partner & children under 4 years	-.02				
with partner & older children	-.02				
with partner, no children	-.02				
other with children	.15				
other without children	-.07				

# Within-estimators for the impact on language skills of participation

## Comparing different types of courses



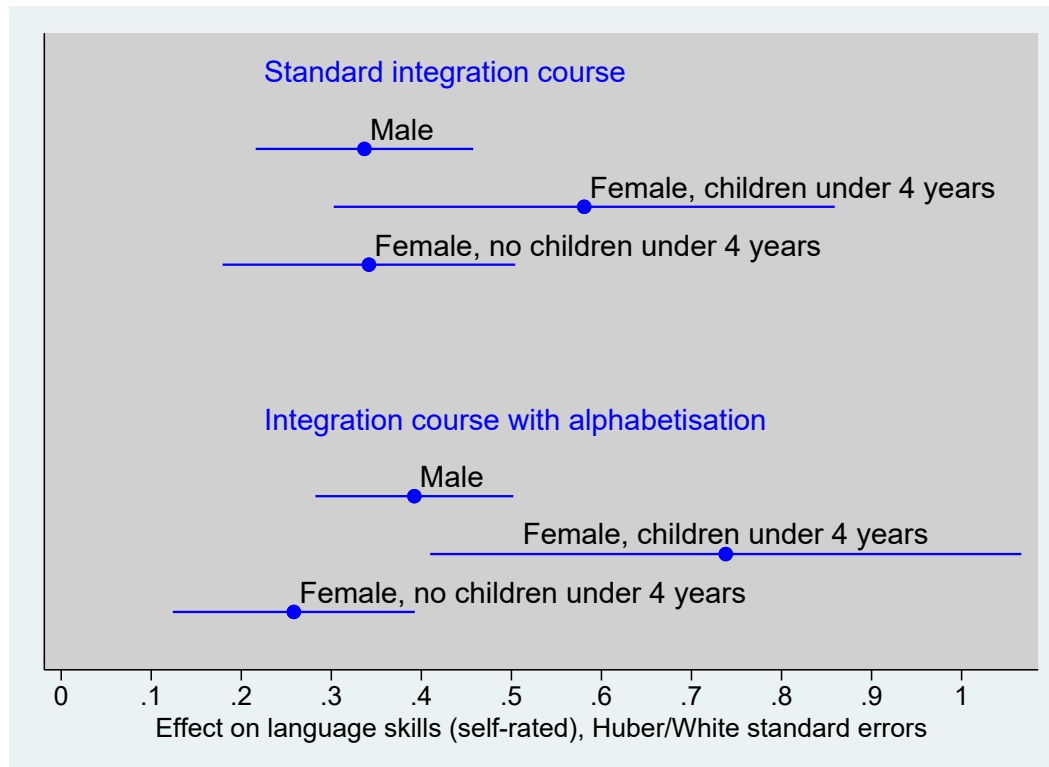
## Comparing participants with different test results



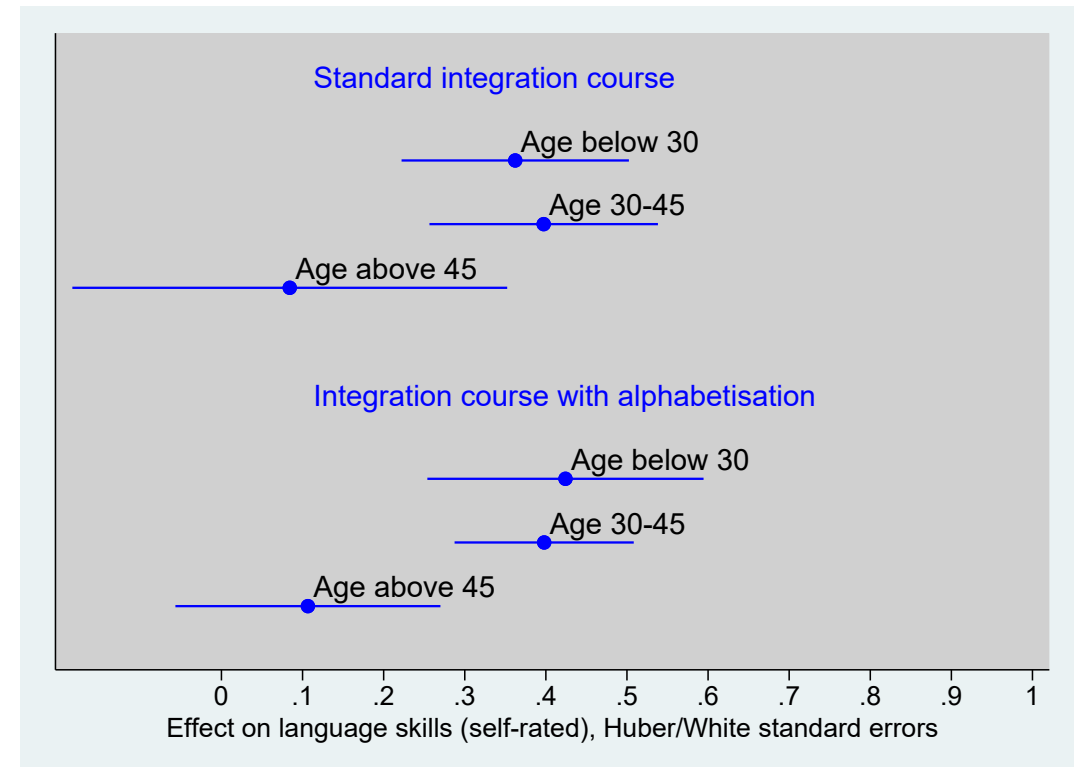


# Within-estimators for the impact on language skills of participation

## Gender-differences



## Differences by age



# Further results

The impact of integration course participation is

- ... particularly strong for refugees with little contact to German
- ... slightly stronger for obliged than for voluntary participants
- ... comparatively strong among participants with high educational qualifications

# Conclusion

Linking the IAB-SOEP-BAMF Survey to administrative data (InGe)

... helps evaluating the German integration course system

... offers the possibility to calculate within-estimators for the impact of integration courses on language acquisition

... enables to distinguish between different types of courses and between participants with different test results

... can highlight strengths and weaknesses of the German integration course system:

- good learning outcomes for women with young children, but more of them need to be enabled to participate
- measures are needed to improve the learning success of older participants

# Contact

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