Summary: As in many countries, socially disadvantaged learners achieve substantially lower than their classmates in German mathematics classrooms. For the German language context, still little is known about the degree and the mechanisms how multilingualism, SES, immigrant status, language proficiency and other background variables impact the (under-)achievement in mathematics. For specifying the most relevant factors, the presented study explored the data of 1495 high stakes tests. By analysis of variance, academic language proficiency in the language of assessment turned out to be more relevant than other background factors. First explanations for these results can be given by linguistic item analysis and clinical interviews that show typical language demands.

Classification: C50 C60

Keywords: family background; socially disadvantaged learners; multilingualism; underachievement; socio-economic status; immigrant states; language proficiency