

# Overcoming Language Barriers in Homecare Nursing

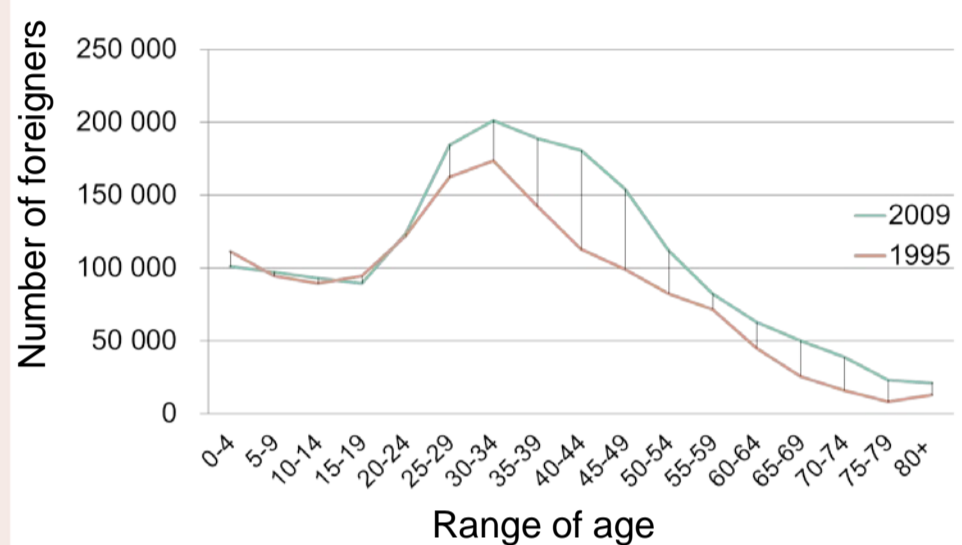
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## Overview

Language plays an essential role in the provision of home healthcare, since successful communication is a vital prerequisite to being able to provide the right kind of nursing care efficiently and effectively<sup>1</sup>. Limited knowledge of the community language can present serious barriers to obtaining appropriate healthcare services. How homecare nurses cope with the challenges of language barriers without compromising the quality of care is of interest to nursing scientists and linguists in this project at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences.



Number of foreigners in Switzerland according to age

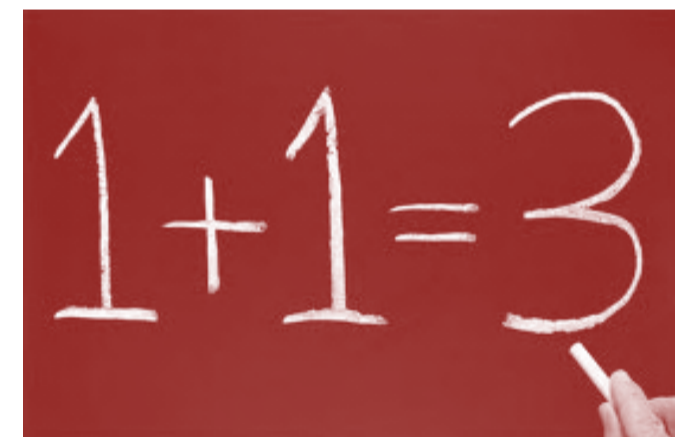
## Approaches and Results

- Data:** Audio recordings of interactions between nurses and patients, participant observations and expert interviews.
- Approach:** Data analysis combines the action-oriented perspective of nursing science with the linguistic focus on interaction.
- Method:** Grounded Theory according to Charmaz (2006)<sup>2</sup> and Conversation Analysis.

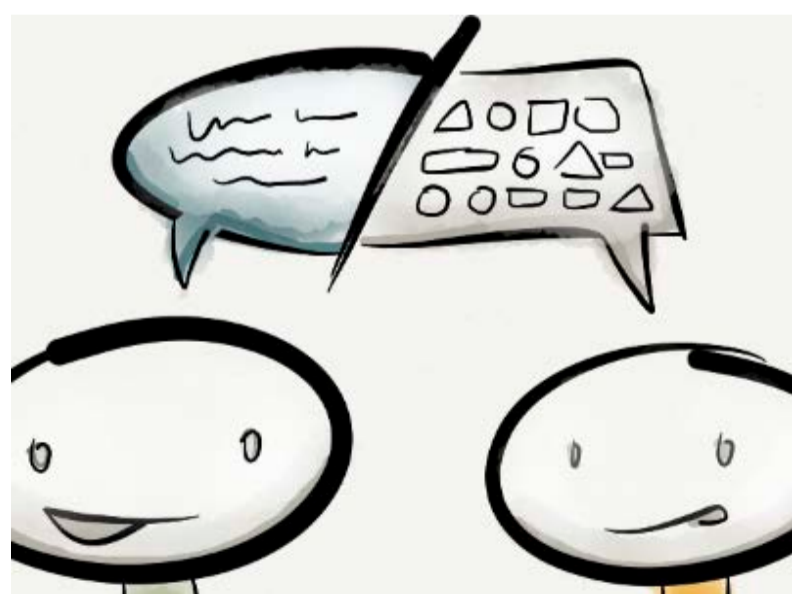
Results are expected to provide insights into how critical multilingual situations can be recognized and language barriers dealt with.

## Added Value of the Interdisciplinary Approach

- Language is a crucial component of nursing: interdisciplinarity reveals reciprocity of nursing processes and verbal interactions.
- Linguistics highlights the complexity of language barriers and provides close transcriptions and fine-grained analysis.
- Differences with respect to methods are exploited to develop a new perspective on a growing problem in the area of healthcare.
- Joint definitions of categories and concepts are developed.



Emergence in research projects



## Discussion

To describe the complex interplay of action and speech in healthcare a circular and dynamic analysis by nursing scientists and linguists is required. In order to integrate different perspectives, output needs to be mutually intelligible and sometimes mitigated (micro vs. macro)<sup>3</sup>. As a result, core concepts (e.g. linguistic barriers) are transformed for both disciplines. Interdisciplinarity thus involves constant reflection and progressively fosters systematic collaboration<sup>4</sup>.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Abt-Zegelin, A. (2006). Die Sprachen der Pflege: Interdisziplinäre Beiträge aus Pflegewissenschaft, Medizin, Linguistik und Philosophie. Hannover: Schlütersche.
- <sup>2</sup> Charmaz, K. (2006). Constructing Grounded Theory. London: Sage.
- <sup>3</sup> Menz, F. & Gruber, U. (2001). Einleitung. In: H. Gruber & F. Menz (Eds.). Interdisziplinarität in der Angewandten Sprachwissenschaft. Methodenmenü oder Methodensalat? Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, pp. VII-XIV.
- <sup>4</sup> Thompson Klein, J. (2010). A Taxonomy of Interdisciplinarity. In: Frodeman, R. et al. (Eds.). The Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity. Oxford: University Press, pp. 15-30.