

Is there a basis and necessity for teaching English as a Lingua Franca in primary school?

Within the last few decades English has become the global language par excellence, with more non-native than native speakers. For this reason, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), defined as a contact language between speakers who do not share a first language (Mauranen 2018, 7), takes on special significance with regard to teaching and preparing future generations for global communication. Hence, it is relevant to prepare students and teachers for a world where ELF is one of the basic means of communication. Research on this topic has found that the most important prerequisite for teaching Lingua Franca English is an awareness of the phenomenon (Dewey and Patsko 2018). Most of the academic literature on ELF-informed teaching focuses on advanced classes (e.g. Kiczkowiak and Lowe 2019, Syrbe and Rose 2018). Due to the far-reaching impact ELF has on our way of speaking English, investigating to what extent there is also a basis for ELF-informed teaching in primary school calls for empirical attention.

This dissertation strives to shed light on this question. For doing this, interviews with German primary school teachers of English and parents have been conducted. The dissertation seeks to give account of those teachers' cognitions, namely their attitudes towards English and its diversifying nature, the opportunities and challenges they see with using an ELF-informed approach to teaching in primary school and ultimately whether they see ELF as a beneficial learning opportunity in lower grades as well. In order to investigate in which contexts children use and are expected to use the language in the future, parents of primary school children were also interviewed. On the basis of the gathered information, potential elements for a teacher training course will be developed.

Sources

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