

Abstract für die Postersektion:

Subject-specific discourse functions in bilingual education at primary school

According to EFL researchers the focus on subject content in bilingual education provides pupils with more demanding and abstract language that goes beyond the everyday level of communication. While studies show positive effects of bilingual teaching on pupils' communication skills in the foreign language (cf. e.g. Piske 2006), the development of their academic skills has received less attention in research so far. The latter does not only involve subject-specific technical usage of terminology but also basic discourse functions that are essential for fully comprehending and communicating subject-related content, such as the ability to describe and explain scientific phenomena in science lessons.

The relationship between the first language (L1) and the foreign language (L2) in bilingual settings has been subject to debate for quite some time. Based on the characteristics of the bilingual mental lexicon, Diehr (2016) argues that the use of two languages in bilingual teaching seems necessary in order to promote academic language in both the L1 and the L2. This raises the issue of code-switching that may not only occur in the case of communication problems but rather as a planned and systematic component of bilingual teaching and learning (cf. Frisch 2016). Beginning research focusing on the strategic use of both the L1 and the L2 indicates that the use of the L1 can, for instance, facilitate L2 interaction and comprehension (cf. Tavares 2015) and lead to a more appropriate usage of L1 subject-specific vocabulary (cf. Gablasova 2014, Diehr/Botz 2016). These first research results implicate that academic skills, such as using technical terms, are not translated automatically from the L2 into the L1 and thus need to be taught explicitly (cf. Botz/Frisch 2016).

Following this, the aim of this current PhD project is to explore subject-related discourse functions in bilingual science at primary school. The focus will be on children's ability to describe and explain scientific concepts in both their L1 German as well as in their L2 English. The conducted study may provide answers to the following research questions: 1. Which methods support the development of science-related discourse functions in the L1 and the L2? 2. To what extent can systematic code-switching foster the development of science-related discourse functions in the L1 and the L2? The results of the conducted study may also offer suggestions for "effective" bilingual teaching and learning and provide a framework for a systematic approach to the use of two languages in bilingual lessons. Based on the guidelines of *Educational design research* (cf. Prediger et al. 2012) a pilot study is planned for January/February 2017 and will be carried out in a bilingual year 3 class of a public primary school in North Rhine-Westphalia.

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