01: Conceptual Learning and Language Learning in a Bilingual Primary School

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In Germany bilingual education, also referred to as Content-and-Language-Integrated-Learning, has developed from an exclusive option for linguistically gifted learners in selective grammar schools to a mainstream programme that addresses children and young people of all ability levels in all types of schools. Most notably, the number of bilingual primary schools has risen considerably. In addition to changes in numbers, new objectives and new approaches (e.g. dual literacy, translanguaging) have emerged. After a long period during which the emphasis had been placed on the gains in foreign language competence achieved through CLIL, researchers and practitioners have now started to focus more attention on content, especially conceptual learning in two languages (e.g. Diehr 2012; Schwab et al. 2014; Mehisto 2013). Against the backdrop of these trends a modified model of the bilingual mental lexicon, the Integrated Dynamic Model (IDM), has been developed to accommodate the complex relations between conceptual learning and operating in two languages in bilingual instruction (Diehr forthcoming). The poster introduces the IDM that also contributes to the theoretical basis of an empirical study on teaching subjects of general knowledge (German Sachunterricht) bilingually. Botz’ BiSY (Bilingualer Sachunterricht – Young Learners) study is carried out in a primary school where teaching units on ‘Knights and castles’, ‘Medieval towns’, ‘Electricity and the electric circuit’ are conducted monolingually in English and bilingually in English and German. The poster carries information about the research questions, the study’s design and insights from a pilot study in a year 4.


