# Audiodatei

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# Transkript

00:00:01 Annika Taubmann

Okay, very warm welcome to Professor Doctor Thorsten Piske and Doctor Anja Steinlen. Currently you both work at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg and you are experts for bilingual programmes in primary schools. So, let's begin with our first question. What motivated you to specialise in the teaching of English and bilingual programmes to young children?

00:00:29 Anja Steinlen

Thorsten, would you like to start?

00:00:32 Thorsten Piske

Okay, I can do this of course. We were both involved in, you know, research project examining bilingual programmes when we're still rather young researchers, and so we started to take a look at the effectiveness of these programmes compared them to regular programmes. And then we were actually asked after a while, you know, by schools, for example, to kind of give them advice as to how to implement these programmes. And while doing so I personally notice that sometimes the parents or the teachers ask questions, you know, that had actually not been examined yet, so for example, they wanted to know, well they said, you know, my child already speaks Turkish, for example as the family language, and then my child learn German. And now you know the child will learn a third language, English for example. And if the child is exposed to English as a third language in the bilingual programme, will the child be overwhelmed somehow. And you know, I looked at the research carried out in Germany, and, you know, at an international level, and I thought, well, there are no studies, you know that were conducted to answer these questions. So, I thought, oh, there is a research gap. And so, you know, by talking to teachers and by talking to parents, you can really identify research gaps regarding language teaching. And this is what really motivated me, because I mean all these questions that parents and teachers asked a completely justified because they're worried about their children's wellbeing and their academic development. And I think if we make suggestions regarding certain teaching approaches, we have to find out whether these approaches really work and for whom they work, and this really motivated me a lot.

00:02:42 Anja Steinlen

And I think one of the things that I really like about our research is that it combines so many different aspects. So, we talk a lot to teachers. We talk a lot to parents; we talk to politicians. Yes, we sometimes work in our own little room and do our research. But basically, it's so much communication going on with so many different people and most importantly to see children in a bilingual classroom to see what they can do, how much fun they have. Okay, not all the time, okay, it's just like us. It's not 100% of the time, but basically when you see their enthusiasm and how much fun they have used in the language and how naturally they do it, I think this is a great reward for us. And also, to see because well, teachers in bilingual programmes are particularly motivated and we do a lot of teacher training for these people. And it's also so wonderful how much we learn from them, and I think the close link between research on the one hand and practical teaching application on the other is just such a wonderful field. It applies to the regular English context as well, I know, but you know, I like this close relationship that we have with teachers, parents and children.

00:04:06 Annika Taubmann

Okay, alright thank you very much for your answer.

Here in Bavaria English is normally introduced in the third grade, and it's not graded in primary school education but bilingual programmes in primary schools start already from grade one. Would you therefore grade the children's achievement in English, and if so, starting from which grade would you mark the children's achievements in English?

00:04:32 Thorsten Piske

Anja and I decided you know, to answer, well, half of the questions, so I'll start with this one. Well, English is not graded. It's not graded in the bilingual programmes either, the language skills and I think there are good reasons for doing so. Well, first of all, you know bilingual programmes CLIL are very much about communication. I mean, remember the slides that Anja showed about, you know, how to use the language, you know, procedural skills, concepts, etc. And of course, if you want to talk about a certain topic from the maths curriculum of science curriculum, you want to communicate. If the children get the feeling that their language skills are graded, they might feel much more inhibited, and in order to emphasise this point, I would like to tell you little anecdote. I used to work in Baden Württemberg for a few years and until recently in Baden Württemberg English lesson started in grade one, and I supervised internships in primary schools and I talked to the teachers an in Baden Württemberg grades were given from grade three onwards. The pupils did not get any grades for their achievements in English in grades one and two, but in grade three and the teachers told me that many of the pupils who are very active in the English lessons in grade one and two got their first grades in grade three, they were not happy about the grades and basically stop talking, but CLIL is really based on communication, so you have to make sure that the students will be motivated all the time. This is why, I would not give any grades for the achievements in English.

00:06:33 Annika Taubmann

Okay, yeah these are very interesting point.

Teachers at primary schools today are confronted with a very diverse group of learners. From your point of view, how can teachers of bilingual programmes ensure they cater for the different needs of learners?

00:06:52 Anja Steinlen

This is my turn now. I take this question. Well, research has identified, or several studies have identified several groups of children that are called at risk children. Children who are different than other groups and there are different groups at risk groups. One of them relates to children with a multilingual background. Another risk with, for example, refers to children with learning and writing difficulties. A third group may pertain to children with a lower IQ, and there are many more. So, any kind of students who are at risk of poor academic performance. These groups are very important and it is very important that we first identify these groups that we make sure that we know how much they can achieve in a bilingual programme and that we know how to help them. And let me just have two examples. So, Thorsten already talked about multilingual children who are also called children with migrant background or children with migration background in Germany. What we know from our research is when you compare these children with children from a non-migrant, that is German background, we see that they do not differ. What is important, however, is that we control for variables such as cognitive abilities and social economic background. When we do so, the language spoken at home does not matter. This is in German. The term migration background is really problematic when we deal with language, because when we talk about the migration background, we actually have what we call a confound. That is, we have a combination of different factors working together. That is language background, social economic status, where does the family come from, how long is the family there? So, we have so many factors that are involved and what is really of interest for our research is indeed the language that is spoken at home and this is why in our research we always controlled for factors such as the children's cognitive background and the children's social economic background in order to answer the question, does a multilingual background really matter? And this also applies for English as a regular programme where we also do not find differences between monolingual German children and multilingual children who attend these programmes. So, this is the first. The 2nd we first, for example to students with reading and writing problems, so the typical what we call dyslexic children. Of course, for those at, parents are usually worried about these children entering a bilingual school because they say the children might be overwhelmed. It's too much for them because of course additional reading and writing activities may be too challenging for these children. But it's not usually depends from school to school, but most schools nowadays are very open, taking in all kinds of children for such programmes. There are some who make exceptions, so some schools only take pre-select children on the basis of their cognitive or communicative and/or communicative skills. But we do have dyslexic children in bilingual programmes and we had a look at them, a closer look at them to see how they fare in contrast to dyslexic children in normal in regular programmes. And what we found is, the data is yet unpublished, but what we found is that these children interestingly, so when we match a dyslexic child in a bilingual programme with similar dyslexic child in the regular programme, we find that this dyslexic child in the bilingual programme basically fare much better regarding their English language proficiency than a comparable child in a regular programme. So, in terms of English proficiency, these children particularly benefit, and this also not only applies to speaking and listening, you know to oral skills, but interestingly enough also to reading and writing skills in English. And we would all agree English is very difficult, it’s a very difficult language to spell and to read with a deep orthographic structure, writing system so it is even more interesting to see how well these children do in a bilingual programme as compared to a regular programme, but that does not mean that they don't have difficulties, so of course they don't fare as well as comparable children that were not dyslexic. So, what do the teachers do in order to cater for such children? Or to basically cater for all children? These are some of the strategies that maybe I can come back at a later point, but most importantly is that teachers use a lot of contextualization. That is, they use their body, that is, they use their face, they use real life objects in order to ensure that all students actually understand what the situation is all about. Our colleague Petra Burmeister that the silent movie method. So basically, at first students, especially in grades one and two students should be able to follow and to understand all the content without even having the language, because the teaching is so visually, it's so vivid and the children are helped a lot. The second, of course, is language scaffolding. That goes without saying, this is also very important. The teachers built a lot of redundancy into their lessons, but the children are supported in so many different ways because the subjects themselves like math and science and physical education and art, they give so many possibilities to differentiate for these children. That makes it easier even for children with learning issues to participate in these bilingual lessons. Doesn't say that's not challenging for them, but it works, so we are very much in favour of bilingual programmes being all also able to accommodating learner groups who usually do not fair that favourable because when you return them to regular programmes, sometimes parents decide to do so because they find that the child is not happy. What we find is that these children do not work any better or achieve any higher academic goals than they would in regular programmes and in bilingual programmes they in addition get the gift of higher foreign language proficiency.

00:14:29 Annika Taubmann

Okay, alright that was very interesting.

00:14:30 Anja Steinlen

Long answer.

00:14:32 Annika Taubmann

But very interesting thank you.

In a globalised world, the development of basic language skills is closely related to the development of inter- and transcultural competences. In your opinion, how can the development of cultural awareness be fostered in bilingual programmes in primary education?

00:14:54 Thorsten Piske

Yeah, this one is for me then. Bilingual programmes actually offer many opportunities for intercultural learning. Earlier on it was mentioned by someone that of course if you are a teacher in bilingual programme, you have to invest a lot of time in really, yeah, creating your lessons and one of the reasons for this is that there are not many published materials for teachers working in bilingual programmes. So, what we usually do, or what teachers usually do, is very often they use materials that were for example published in England or the United States. And this is of course great because then you work with materials that were already produced in an English speaking country. So, you already get this kind of English perspective or anglophone perspective in the materials. So, for example in maths you could also show how to count with fingers in Germany or in an English speaking country. In science lessons you could discuss how people, let's say in English speaking countries, in certain English speaking countries or in Germany, look at issues such as sustainability for example, in physical education lessons you could focus on typical types of sports like rugby, hockey, American football, etc. and in art lessons you could talk about painters from English speaking countries. But I think the biggest advantage really is you often use materials that were actually written by people from English speaking countries, by native speakers, and this already brings this English perspective or anglophone perspectives into your classrooms. So, I think you've got great opportunities here to really support intercultural learning.

00:17:03 Annika Taubmann

Okay, thank you and these are also very great ideas.

Your area of research are bilingual programmes in primary schools and I completed an internship at the Killian-Grundschule in Scheßlitz where there were bilingual classes from grade one onwards. And starting from grade three the children also had regular English lessons. In your opinion, should bilingual classes also be taught English lessons in their first two grades?

00:17:39 Anja Steinlen

The answer is a definite yes. It would be great because, as Torsten already mentioned before, these English lessons can be used to clarify some language problems or to practise some other stuff such as theatre applies and so on and so forth. But it is probably highly unlikely that English lessons will additionally take place in grade one and two for regular programmes and bilingual programmes, this is at the moment not in vogue in fact, like Nordrhein-Westfalen and Baden Württemberg, they used to start with English in grade one and now they're starting at grade three, so this is probably something that will not happen in the long run unfortunately.

00:18:25 Annika Taubmann

Okay. And do you think that in the future the teaching of English will primarily be taking place in bilingual programmes? What are the reasons for or against such a development?

00:18:38 Thorsten Piske

Yeah, this is a very good question. You might think that we are strong supporters of bilingual education, right? I think, you know, well, you always have to take a look at the schools first of all. Many teachers for example, you know, you always have to take a look at the whole staff. You know the staff room is set, you've got teachers who are involved in bilingual programmes and then there are teachers who did not study English or French for example. And who wouldn't be able to teach in a bilingual programme and these teachers very often are afraid of the introduction of bilingual programmes because they think that their lessons will not be valued that much anymore. Okay, this is one thing that you have to make sure if the school wants to introduce or intends to introduce a bilingual programme, we have to make sure that all the teachers are convinced, that all the parents are convinced and that the schools receive enough support from the school administrators. Okay, if some teachers say oh, why do we need this bilingual programme? I will not be involved. Then you will have many critical discussions. Okay, this is one thing that we always have to bear in mind. The second point is that you know the results of research that of studies that have focused on the effectiveness of bilingual programmes are not that well known. So many teachers, many parents, many school administrators are still worried about, you know, bilingual pupils subject knowledge, their German skills, etc. So, what we have to make sure that, you know, people really get to know the results of that all the different studies. And then I would say always ask the school what do you want to achieve if you want to introduce a bilingual programme and what can you do? Have you got the teachers who are well qualified to teach your bilingual programme? I mean Anja showed you very different types of bilingual programmes from these bilingual modules, this is something that can easily be integrated, okay, I mean it's very easy for math teachers also studied English to say okay, I select a few topics and teach them in English. Okay, this is very easy, but there is one problem, very often students tell you, you know, if a teacher follows this kind of modular approach they say I don't really understand why this topic is taught in English, and this topic is taught in German. Teachers often think that certain topic should be taught in English because they're not that difficult and other topics are too difficult. They should be taught in German. If you ask the pupils, they do not agree with this. They say, well, it's all the same to me. Okay, so this modular approach also has disadvantages. It seems to work quite well, you know, if you have qualified teachers to say, okay, let's start with one subject that is taught exclusively in English, for example, except for the technical terms. This is something that also many schools can achieve. It's much more difficult to implement one of these, you know, like BILI 50 or BILI 70 programmes, because then you need many well qualified teachers. And then of course, all the teachers really have to identify with this programme. So, I would say bilingual teaching is great. We also know that it works well as Anja just explained for many different groups of students. But always listen to the teachers, listen to the parents and ask them, okay, what is it that you can really put into practise at your school? Okay, do not try to enforce a bilingual programme on a school because this is something that we have often experienced when we were talking to people involved in educational policies or you know when we were talking to parents or teachers. If you try to enforce such a programme on the school, people will react in a rather defensive way.

00:23:10 Annika Taubmann

Okay, thank you for sharing your opinion with us.

We are going to be future teachers of English in primary schools. What tips and tricks can you give us from your field of study?

00:23:22 Anja Steinlen

Well, there are lots of them and I was thinking of sharing my screen with you to, you know, because I have a list, but basically I think the first thing is bilingual teaching is not magic. So, the best thing to do is go and visit the school and see how they're doing it. Then I think that gives you great impetus as to how it's been done that it's not magic and that you can all do it. Yes, it takes some additional time. Yes, it takes additional thinking because you have to think about so many different aspects, but it's definitely worth doing because it broadens your pupil’s horizon and your own as well. Associated with that are various instructional techniques that are usually or that we usually cite is being very important for bilingual teaching they apply to foreign to regular English programmes as well such as for example, but probably even more to bilingual programmes I already mentioned the extensive use of body language. What helps the students a lot is when the instructional routines are predictable. It's always important as I did in the beginning to activate your students background knowledge to use lots of real-life objects, visuals, manipulatives, so anything that helps or that supports your students understanding of what the lesson is all about. So, not only language, this support of the action, really action, in German we have this nice word das Tun. This is really so important to accompany any kind of language with action and vice versa whenever you do something, you need to use language a lot. But you also need to draw your students out to actually use the language to produce it as much as possible. And when you teach subjects, then you have so many more possibilities to use group work or to engage your students in different activities, and this is quite important. So the communicative aspect of CLIL is really essential. Basically I could go on, but I leave it here because we only have limited time and there may even be some questions from the audience. So, thank you very much for your questions.

00:25:49 Annika Taubmann

Thank you very much for these helpful advises. And many thanks for taking the time to answer our questions and it was a very great honour to have you here as our guests. Thank you.

00:26:01 Thorsten Piske

Thank you very much. Thank you.