

Although the bilingual programme has been in practise at schools for more than 30 years, research started only in the late 1980s and has been conducted mainly by linguists rather than by geographers. This thesis presents basic research in the exploration and evaluation of the bilingual learning of geography from a geographical point of view. The studies investigate the importance, perception and assessment of the bilingual geography learning at grammar schools from the point of view of the pupils, using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The paper first gives an overview of theoretical considerations and approaches by formulating questions which are in the scientific interest of any research into the bilingual teaching of geography. In addition this chapter provides a view of the status quo in research. A detailed description of intercultural learning is presented because the bilingual programme, or at least the “German model”, is seen as a possibility to achieve a high degree of proficiency in the foreign language combined with the acquisition of an understanding of the foreign culture. The scientific questions of the studies result from these theoretical reflections.

The quantitative studies were based on a questionnaire. They put the main emphasis on a comparative view of bilingual and regular geography learning as experienced by “bilingual” and “non-bilingual” pupils. The qualitative studies support the results of the questionnaire through the description of subjective theories which are based on personal experience in everyday life. These subjective theories result from interviews. Because of the extensive procedure in the interpretation only selected special cases are presented in detail. The other cases are presented in a reduced form. Additionally all interviews are analysed with regard to special aspects of bilingual geography learning. Furthermore the thoughts of the participants on intercultural learning are depicted.

The final chapter points out essential conclusions of the studies, particularly recommendations for future research and methods.