

## **Linguistic Challenges in a Hungarian Multilingual – Multicultural Kindergarten**

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The presentation gives an account of a running doctoral research into multilingualism and multiculturalism in a local kindergarten where, since September 2008, the children of the families working at the NATO air base in Hungary have been going to. The setting is exceptional as NATO bases establish their own international schools elsewhere in the world. The town of Pápa, Hungary is, however, the first place where foreign children are trying to adapt to the local community. Thus, 23 foreign families' children from six different countries go to this unique multicultural kindergarten. Apart from Hungarian, mother tongues of the children are Swedish, Bulgarian, Norwegian, Dutch and, in the case of American families, English, Filipino and Spanish.

My research aims to find the answer to the main question, i.e. How can kindergarten teachers, children, parents and educational specialists form the common linguistic, cultural and pedagogical basis for satisfactory communication in this very complex setting? The research proceeds along different theories like “gift language – gift culture” or “language puzzle” theories which will also be revealed together with the key hypotheses.

Besides the description of the special background, the presentation introduces the different research methods employed. Adjusting to the rules of triangulation, interviews, observation and desktop research were devised as key methods. It will be reasoned why different types of interviews were necessary and according to which criteria the interviewees were selected. Observations were made during curricular and extracurricular activities of kindergarten groups where, besides the language pedagogical methods, actors' linguistic and social behaviour and the actual setting were examined with the help of combined observation techniques. The desktop research includes the analysis of official documents of the institution (e.g. the Hungarian–English bilingual educational programme of the kindergarten) as well as the several types of notes made by kindergarten teachers themselves (kindergarten diaries, written evaluations). All the methods will be discussed in some detail, regarding their importance in the research process. Moreover, some samples of research tools will be displayed, too.

The results will give the answer to linguistic, cultural and pedagogical questions like how theories relate to daily practice, to what extent the actors were prepared for the uncommon linguistic situation, or what children's language use depends on. It also touches the problem of non native Hungarian and English children who have to face the most serious challenges in the given setting.

Finally, conclusions will be drawn about the achievements of the multilingual-multicultural kindergarten in question, i.e. how the school community together with parents have managed to create favourable circumstances under which children will become gradually able to use another language besides their mother tongue and where cultural awareness is also developed due to systematic language educational methods and teachers' positive attitude. The novelty value of the research is the fact that, besides understanding and introducing the given linguistic community it endeavours to decipher new meanings, discover and reveal linguistic and pedagogical coherence that had been hidden till the establishment of this type of kindergarten in Hungary.