



An Exploration into the Possible Effects of  
the English Language as the Medium of  
Instruction in an International School in  
Germany on Native German Students' Reading  
Motivation in their Native Language

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## **Abstract**

International schools become more popular in many countries around the world which means that an increasing number of students grow up bilingually, speaking one language in school and another language at home. This study focusses on one group of students that this applies to; German national students who attend an international school in Germany. The aim of this research is to investigate whether being taught in a language other than their native language affects the students' reading motivation in their native language. The field research was carried out in a fourth-grade class in an international school in Germany, the research tools applied were interviews with students, their German teacher, and the school's librarian, a questionnaire that was sent out to the students' parents, and a reading comprehension task that was conducted with the German native students to test their reading comprehension in German. The results from the data analysis as well as the literature review show that in general, students are likely to prefer reading in the language that is easier for them to understand. Therefore, being taught in a language that is not the students' native language does not seem to affect their reading motivation in the native language. 42% of the students stated that they prefer reading in German over reading in English, while 29% stated that they equally enjoy reading in both languages. The findings from this study suggest that students' reading motivation depends on other factors, such as support by the parents, especially in the early childhood, and being in charge of their own reading.

## **Introduction**

The number of international schools all around the world is growing which means that more and more students receive an international education (Morrison, 2019). In most international schools, the medium of communication in almost all lessons is English while the national language of the location is usually taught as a separate subject (Milošević, 2019). This research will investigate the possible effects of English as the medium of instruction in an international school in Germany on native German students' reading motivation in their native language.

The separation of language of instruction in school and native language leads to many children in international schools growing up bilingually. According to Bialystok (2008; 2018), children who learn to read in two languages which have the same writing system, often show higher reading abilities, as well as higher cognitive abilities.

However, because in most international schools, students are educated almost exclusively in English, one could assume that the students' reading motivation in English is higher than in their native language. This research will explore the reading motivation in both languages of German national students who attend an international school in Germany, the children's views on both languages in their lives, and the influence of school and parents on the children's reading motivation.

## **Objectives**

This research aims to provide insight into whether an international education that is delivered in English, affects native German students' reading motivation in their native language, their perception of their native language German in general, compared to the English language, and what role the different languages play in the students' daily lives.

Furthermore, the research aims to investigate how students can be effectively encouraged to develop further their reading motivation in their native language in their free time, as well as in school, what type of encouragement they perceive as effective and what aspects influence their reading motivation.

## **Motivation**

In this research project, I want to investigate the students' reading motivation in their native language German because, as mentioned by Guthrie and Wigfield (2014), the reading motivation of children decreases across primary school. Therefore, I find it important to understand the different factors that influence a child's reading motivation, as well as how the reading motivation can affect the child's reading abilities. I decided to also investigate the role that parents play in this because I believe that parental involvement plays an important role in education and understanding its impact will help to establish a constructive, powerful cooperation between teachers and parents that supports the development of students' reading abilities and reading motivation.

I think that as a future international teacher, it is important to know and fully understand the conditions under which the students develop further their reading abilities and develop a reading

motivation in their native language, as well as to understand how they perceive the importance of each language in their daily lives.

I hope that conducting this research project on the possible effects of English as the medium of instruction and communication in school on native German students' reading motivation will help me gain insights into the children's views on reading in their native language and on how this can be effectively supported by the school and the parents.

## **Research Questions**

The main research question of this bachelor thesis is:

What is the possible impact of English as the medium of instruction in a German international school on German national students' reading motivation in their native language?

The sub-questions are:

1. To what extent are the students motivated to read in their native language?
2. What are the students' views on the role of the English and German language in their lives?
3. How do the parents and the school support native language reading?

## **Significance**

Bialystok (2008) states that the success of bilingual students in school depends on how proficient they are in the language of instruction, especially in reading. Therefore, students will most likely put a lot of effort in gaining proficiency in the language of instruction in school. In many international schools, this language is English. This means that many students must gain linguistic proficiency in a language that is not their native language in order to succeed in school.

Reading is an essential skill that every person needs in his or her everyday life, especially being able to read and comprehend texts in the national language of the country one lives in. As mentioned by Tassoni (2007), children with poor language skills, who have difficulties in reading and understanding texts, are likely to find reading boring and lose their motivation. However, as stated by Guthrie and Wigfield (2014), reading motivation has a great influence on - and is therefore crucial to - the development of a child's reading abilities, so reading motivation and reading abilities seem to be interrelated.

Over the past years, children's reading motivation has continuously decreased with fewer children reading for enjoyment and an increasing number of children who only read for academic purposes (Tassoni, 2007). This research will provide insight into how fourth grade students at an international school in Germany perceive their own reading motivation in the German language and the English language, as well as what factors influence their reading motivation. This information can be valuable for teachers and parents to increase the students' motivation for reading and the time they spend on reading for pleasure in their free time.

Although the outcomes of this research will only directly affect students who grow up speaking German as their native language and learning and speaking English in school, they can still be valuable in other contexts where students speak a language at home that is different to the language of instruction in school. The results may also help teachers and parents improve the ways in which children are encouraged to read and may therefore lead to the application of more suitable strategies.

## **Literature Review**

### Definition of Reading Motivation

According to Guthrie and Wigfield (2014), reading motivation describes “(...) the individual’s personal goals, values, and beliefs with regards to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading [which includes] motivational goals, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and social motivation” (p.405). This definition will be used throughout this research when talking about reading motivation.

### Definition of Intrinsic Reading Motivation

When referring to intrinsic motivation in this study, this means that students read for their own sake. A reason for intrinsic reading motivation can for instance be enjoyment or interest in a topic (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Research has found that in reading, intrinsic motivation has more long-term positive effects on the children’s reading abilities because “(...) students who discover reading as an effective tool to satisfy their curiosity on certain topics gain higher levels of performance growth” (Retelsdorf, Köller & Möller, 2011, p.555). This has also been reported by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) who mention that an intrinsic reading motivation in children is likely to lead to a long-term participation in reading and, that children with an intrinsic motivation read more widely than their peers, in addition to spending more time on reading in general. In addition to this, students with an intrinsic reading motivation often show a better reading comprehension because they put more effort in understanding the text (Taboada, Tonks, Wigfield & Guthrie, 2009; Retelsdorf et al., 2011). It is important to note that students with lower reading abilities can also use reading as a tool for learning about a topic that they are interested in and that this is not something that only children with high reading abilities do (Taboada et al., 2009).

### Definition of Extrinsic Reading Motivation

Reading out of an extrinsic motivation means that a student reads because he or she expects to gain recognition for it (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Extrinsic motivation was found to have negative impacts on the development of children’s reading abilities because at some point the children will expect to gain recognition or praise for it and will not do it without (Retelsdorf et al., 2011).

### Definition of Autonomy Support

“Autonomy support allows children to solve challenging problems on their own, which gives them the feeling of being in charge and competent (...)” (Villiger-Hugo, Wandeler & Niggli, 2014, p.4).

### Reading Motivation

“Motivation is crucial to engagement because motivation is what activates behavior” (Guthrie and Wigfield, 2014, p.406). In other words, a person that is not or less motivated to complete a certain task will spend less time on it and put less effort in succeeding at it.

Taboada et al. (2009), who investigated the effects of motivation and cognitive abilities on reading comprehension, speak about a relation between intrinsic motivation and internal motivation because both mean that the motivation for doing something arises from a personal interest. They identify five dimensions of internal reading motivation that are alle related to each other:

1. *Perceived control*, which means that the students are in control of their own reading.
2. *Interest*, which is closely associated with cognitive processes, such as getting a deeper understanding of a text.
3. *Self-efficacy*, which describes the beliefs about one’s own abilities; in reading motivation, this describes a person’s evaluation on what reading activities he or she will be able to master.
4. *Involvement*, which is defined as “(...) the feeling of being absorbed in reading activities and spending significant amounts of time reading” (Taboada et al, 2009, p.88f.).
5. *Social collaboration*, which describes “(...) social interactions among learners in relation to literacy tasks (...)” (p.89).

Several studies that examine the development of reading motivation in children report a decrease of reading motivation as the children get older. Guthrie and Wigfield (2014), and Tassoni (2007) report a decrease of children’s internal reading motivation across primary school. Wigfield, Guthrie, Tonks and Perencevich (2004) reported a general decline in students’ motivation to complete academic activities and attribute this to the higher amount of feedback that children receive when they get older which can negatively affect their sense of competence. This is also in line with findings from a study that was conducted 17 years earlier in which Wigfield and Guthrie researched the reading motivation of fourth and fifth graders. In this study, fourth graders were found to read significantly longer per day than fifth graders (1997).

While they found a decrease in intrinsic motivation, Tassoni (2007) and Guthrie and Wigfield (2014) also reported an increase in extrinsic motivation and the focus to perform well in class. According to Guthrie and Wigfield (2014), this can be explained with students’ increasing awareness of their own capabilities compared to their peers’ capabilities and more competition within the classroom as the children grow older.

## The Role of Parents

Parents can play an important role in their child's academic motivation, but their involvement does not always have positive effects. The qualitative aspects of parental involvement in education are more important and more influential than the quantity of involvement, for instance a smaller amount of autonomy support can be more beneficial for the child's academic success than regular control (Villiger-Hugo et al., 2014). The reason for this is that autonomy support makes children feel competent and gives them the confidence to solve problems themselves, while control by the parents does not provide this experience.

The effects of parental involvement on reading motivation do not differ from this. When children receive parental support with their reading activities, they are more likely to voluntarily spend time on literacy tasks (Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems & Doan Holbein, 2005). Furthermore, Villiger-Hugo et al. (2014) found out that when parents read together with their children in early childhood, this can positively affect the children's reading motivation, also in subsequent years, so it can have positive long-term influences if parents get involved in their children's reading activities.

However, there can also be negative impacts on children's reading motivation (Gonzalez-DeHass et al. 2005), for instance when parents set expectations for their children's reading that are too high and cannot be met. In this case, parental involvement can even lead to reading anxiety in children (Villiger-Hugo et al. 2014). As stated by Jeynes (2010, as cited in Villiger-Hugo et al., 2014), parents' positive attitude towards education and reading is more beneficial than pushing the child to higher achievements through unrealistic expectations. The positive attitude shown by the parents can then have a motivational effect on the children. Parental involvement in education should be accompanied by a parenting style that is defined by acceptance and that encourages the child's autonomy (Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch & Darling, 1992). This is in line with the findings from Villiger-Hugo et al. (2014) who reported that emotional support from the parents is most beneficial for students' reading motivation because it fosters reading enjoyment.

While Villiger-Hugo et al. (2014) mention that parental involvement does not lead to higher reading comprehension abilities, Koskinen et al. (2000, cited in Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005) state that parents who reread book from school at home with their children can increase the children's text comprehension because the parents can give the children the support that they need to master more challenging reading tasks.

## Relation between Reading and Cognitive Development

A person's cognitive abilities are related to how well that person performs on reading tasks. This is related to the decoding skills, a cognitive ability that is needed for understanding a text. Good decoding skills lead to higher reading abilities and a better reading comprehension (Retelsdorf et al., 2011). Students who are good at decoding texts and for whom the process of decoding a text happens fast, will be able to understand texts better than students with weaker decoding skills. This is supported by the findings of Nation, Clarke and Snowling (2002, as cited in Retelsdorf et al., 2011) who reported that students who are weaker at reading often show lower cognitive abilities. In addition to this and supporting the findings of Retelsdorf et

al. (2011), Guthrie and Wigfield (2014) state that “(...) becoming an excellent, active reader involves attunements of motivational processes with cognitive and language processes in reading” (p.408).

Two other cognitive processes that are important for developing text understanding are *questioning* which describes the process of asking questions about a text that will lead to a better comprehension of the content and *activating background knowledge* about the topic that one is reading about (Taboada et al., 2009). In their study, Taboada and her colleagues report that an internal reading motivation, questioning and activating background knowledge, all independently from each other contribute to an improvement of a students' reading motivation. The internal motivation supports the activating of the cognitive processes that help in gaining a better understanding of the text.

### Relation between Bilingualism and Cognitive Development

People who grow up bilingually often show higher developed cognitive abilities and metalinguistic awareness than their monolingual fellow human beings because “(...) bilingualism is a force that enhances children's cognitive and linguistic development, improving access to literacy if the two writing systems correspond (...)” (Bialystok, 2008, p.3). This means that the previously mentioned higher abilities only apply to people who are bilingual in two languages that have the same writing system and who learn to read in both languages.

Furthermore, Bialystok (2008) mentions that the success of students in general depends on how proficient they are in the language of instruction. This is especially relevant for students who do not speak the language of instruction used in school at home. However, the success with which someone acquires a new language highly depends on his or her cognitive resources (Cummins, 1991). Adding to this, Linde and Löfgren (1988, as cited in Cummins, 1991) state that already gained academic proficiency in the first language can be transferred to the second language.

Therefore, bilingualism and cognitive development are interrelated. While bilingualism seems to support the development of cognitive abilities, those abilities also help bilinguals to become proficient in both languages.

### The Role of L1 and L2 for Bilingual Children

When children grow up bilingually, there is a distinction between early and late bilinguals around the age of six or seven. Distinguishing between early and late bilinguals is important because there is a difference in how their language processing network is activated. Early bilinguals create a network which is activated by both languages, their first language (L1) and their second language (L2), while late bilinguals create separate networks for each language (Liu & Cao, 2016). This explains why a high age of acquisition in the L2 often means that the level of proficiency that can be achieved is relatively low while a lower age of acquisition enables children to gain a high level of proficiency in their L2 (Liu & Cao, 2016).

The development of L1 and L2 mutually influence each other. There are three main reasons, why the process of acquiring an L2 also has an influence on L1 processing (Liu & Cao, 2016):

1. Less usage of the L1 (Baus, Costa & Carreiras, 2013, as cited in Liu & Cao, 2016)
2. Interaction of L1 and L2 and therefore linguistic transfer from L2 to L1 (Pavlenko & Malt, 2011)
3. The constant monitoring and controlling of two different languages (Kroll, Bobb, Misra & Guo, 2008)

A person's L1 plays a supporting role in L2 acquisition and development of literacy skills which makes the development of L1 particularly important (Gabriele, Troseth, Martohardjono & Otheguy, 2009). The level of proficiency that a person has achieved in the L1 has an influence on the acquisition of the L2 for instance, literacy skills (such as reading proficiency and decoding) can be transferred from L1 to L2 (Ball, 2010). This means that profound literacy skills in the L1 are not a requirement for achieving similarly high levels of proficiency in the L2, but they can help students in achieving them (Durgunoglu, Nagy & Hancin-Bhatt, 1993).

This is also supported by the widely accepted *interlanguage hypothesis* by Cummins (1984, as cited in Ball, 2010) that states that the level of competence that can be achieved in the L2 depends on the existing level of proficiency in the L1. In his theory, Cummins distinguishes between *basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS)*, meaning everyday oral communication, and *cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)*, meaning the ability to use a language in decontextualized ways, for instance in the setting of a classroom. He goes on by arguing that the language transfer from L1 to L2 can only happen if a person has achieved CALP in the L1. This will also enable the person to participate in academic learning which is not possible without having achieved CALP in the L1. Therefore, Cummins suggests conducting the general academic education of a child in his/her native language to ensure CALP in the L1 before moving on to the use and development of the L2.

However, Cummins' concept of *CALP* and *BICS* has been questioned in the past, for instance by Aukerman (2007), who argues that the definition of what counts as *CALP* is ambiguous, that the concepts are interwoven and can therefore not be clearly separated from each other. Furthermore, she argues that no classroom language can be described as deconceptualized, and therefore be identified as *CALP*, and that doing so is both inaccurate and pedagogically wrong since a context is always of great importance for teachers and students. Aukerman (2007) suggests moving away from the perception that *CALP* is a requirement for academic success and instead support the children's development of appropriate language through socially meaningful interactions and to establish an individual *context-embedded academic language* for each child.

As mentioned by Grabe (1991), one of the main differences between learning to read in L1 and L2 is that children who learn to read in their L1 already have a well-developed vocabulary and sense of grammar in that language which does not apply to children who learn to read in their L2. However, as mentioned by Grabe (1991), many children or people who learn to read in their L2 have a higher age and can therefore use more metacognitive strategies for developing further their reading abilities than younger L1 learners. Another difficulty for L2 reading that Grabe (1991) mentions is that L2 students' vocabulary recognition, when reading texts, can be influenced by wrong transfers from L1, for instance false cognates.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, there are many factors that influence the reading motivation and reading comprehension of students, for instance the type of reading motivation that the student feels, if, and in what ways, their parents are involved in their reading tasks, or the cognitive abilities that the student has already developed. All of this should be considered when working with bilingual students in international schools for whom the language of instruction in school is not their native language. Teachers should keep in mind the advantages as well as the disadvantages that the students' situation involves. They should try to support the students' intrinsic reading motivation, considering the effects that an education that is delivered in a student's L2 has on the language development of the L1, to be able to purposefully support the students and their language development.

## **Participants and Context**

The field research was conducted in the elementary department of an international school in a fourth-grade class. The school facilitates students from Early Learning, which begins at the age of three, to Grade 12, with about 40% of the student body being German nationals or having a shared nationality of which one part is German. In total, over 40 nationalities are represented at this school. The elementary department follows the International Primary Curriculum (IPC), whereas middle school and high school follow the International Baccalaureate (IB). Throughout the school day, English is the main medium of communication in this school.

The field research includes a total of 24 participants; 13 students who are German nationals or who have a shared heritage of which one part is German and whose native language is German, 9 parents of the previously mentioned students, the students' German teacher, and the school's librarian. The participating group of students includes all students from this class who speak German as their native language. They will be referred to as students A, B, C, D, E, F and G. The group represents a mix of genders and linguistic abilities (see *Table 1*). The students' linguistic abilities in English as represented in *Table 1* were assessed by the researcher using the information provided by Cambridge Assessment English (n.d.).

Student	Gender	Native Language(s)	Years attending an international school	Language Ability (German)	Language Ability (English)
A	male	German	2	native language	C1
B	female	German, Spanish	3	native language	B2
C	female	German	6	native language	C1
D	female	German	1	native language	A2
E	female	German	3	native language	B2
F	male	German, English	2	native language	native language
G	male	German	6	native language	C1

*Table 1 – Description of Participating Students*

## **Research Methodology and Methods**

For the purpose of this study a mixed methods research was conducted, including qualitative and quantitative data. The advantage of a mixed methods research is that it can provide a more complete understanding of the situation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018) and lead to a firmer conclusion because the qualitative data provides a reasoning for the findings, while the

quantitative data prevents outcomes from being subjective (Hope, 2016). The triangulation that is created through this application of a variety of methods, as well as through the inclusion of different perspectives, contributes to the reliability and validity of this study. As stated by Oliver-Hoyo and Allen (2006), triangulation contributes to the accurateness and validity of a study because a variety of methods is used to collect data that will be used to answer the research question. This way, different perspectives are included, and the weaknesses of each method are compensated by the other methods applied.

The research only explores the conditions in one class and is therefore a case study (Hope, 2016; Wellington, 2015). Case studies present a situation through the eyes of the participants (Cohen et al., 2018) and they answer a specific question that is linked to the researcher's interests and the context where the research is conducted (Hope, 2016). This makes a case study approach suitable for this research project's objective.

The field research in this project was carried out with the use of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and the conducting of model tasks from the German national VERA-3 test. This is a written test that is held nationwide in Germany in all third grades to investigate the students' competencies in different subject areas. As a minimum, it tests German reading abilities, but it can also include listening, spelling, language and language use (VERA - An overview, n.d.). This study, however, only made use of the component testing the students' reading abilities.

For the questionnaires, that were used to gather the data from the participating students' parents, an online survey via Google Forms was used. The participants were informed ahead of time and were asked if they would be willing to participate in the research. The ethical issues that arise when online surveys are used, as mentioned by Wellington (2015), were considered, and will be approached in the *Ethics* section.

The interviews, with which the data from the students, the German specialist teacher, and the librarian were gathered, were held in the form of individual, semi-structured interviews. The advantage of conducting individual interviews, as opposed to a focus group discussion, is that there will be no dominant participant who talks most of the time and therefore reduces the opportunities for the other participants to share their opinions or experiences (Wellington, 2015). Semi-structured interviews are usually the most valuable form of interviews, and they allow for a high degree of flexibility which enables the researcher to make individual decisions, for instance which topics to delve into in more detail for each participant (Wellington, 2015). The interviews with the students were adapted to their needs because it is important to create a safe context where they can share their opinion, experiences, and perceptions. To achieve this, the interviews took place in school, which is a familiar setting for the children. They were informed about the concept of anonymity and how this is ensured, the important role that the students play in this research was pointed out, so that they feel taken seriously, and the language that was used during the interview was adapted so that it matches the language that they are used to.

For the recordings of the interviews, notetaking during the interview and audio-recordings of the whole interview were used, as suggested by Wellington (2015). This makes the data more accurate because the notetaking can provide additional information about the context, such as

facial expressions, while the audio-recording captures all the interviewees' responses. After the interviews, the audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim to achieve the highest possible degree of objectivity. This way, it was ensured that the data that is gathered through the interviews is not biased or ambiguous (Wellington, 2015).

For the conducting of the VERA-3 model tasks, the group of participating students was given a model VERA-3 reading task that they completed individually. Their answers were checked according to the official answer key that is provided with each model task. The results produced quantitative data which was then used to assess the students' reading abilities in German. The participants' results were also compared to the average results that students in a German national school have achieved in the reading part of the test.

MAIN QUESTION				
		Sub question 1	Sub question 2	Sub question 3
M E T H O D	Questionnaire (parents)		x	
	Interviews (students)	x	x	
	Interview (librarian)		x	
	Interview (teacher)	x	x	x
	VERA-3 model tasks			
	Documents			x

Table 2 - Connection between sub questions and research methods

## Analysis

The data from this research was analyzed in a deductive way. For the deductive analysis, already existing theories were looked at and then tested by comparing and connecting them to the collected and analyzed data from the research (Cohen et al., 2018).

For the data analysis, the stages of data analysis suggested by Wellington (2015) were followed. These stages are immersion, reflecting, analyzing, synthesizing, locating, reflecting back, and presenting.

In the first stage (*immersion*), the data from all interviews was transcribed, using the notes that were taken during the interview as a support. Then all the gathered data was organized according to participants.

In the third stage (*analyzing*), the data was "taken apart" (Wellington, 2015, p.267). The answers given by the participants in the interviews and questionnaires were used to find patterns and themes that can be turned into codes. These codes/categories are *a posteriori* categories because they emerged from the data (Wellington, 2015).

In the fourth stage (*synthesizing*), the patterns, themes, and categories from the third stage were reflected on and they were redefined, if necessary. The coding process was continued by looking for contrasts and similarities in the participants' answers.

The students' results from the model VERA-3 tests compared to the average results from students at a German national school and linked to the findings from the interviews and questionnaires in order to provide a full overview about the students' reading abilities in German, and to be able to connect their reading ability to their reading motivation.

## **Description of Data**

This research includes three groups of respondents. The first group are native German students who attend an international school in Germany, the second group are the parents of native German students who attend an international school in Germany, and the third group are employees of an international school in Germany; a German teacher and a librarian. For each group of respondents, different research instruments were applied.

### Interviews

Interviews were conducted with seven native German students in an international school, their German teacher, and the librarian. The German teacher had been teaching at the international school since summer 2018, teaching German from grade 2 up to grade 7. Before that, she taught German at a school in England for three years. The librarian works with all students, from the Early Learning Centre up to grade 12, and was therefore able to provide a variety of insights.

The interview guide for the student interviews consisted of a combination of open and closed questions, a total of 17 questions, that dealt with the importance of L1 and L2 for the students, their reading motivation in each language, their perception on reading, the role of their parents regarding reading motivation and the development of reading abilities in German. This research made use of semi-structured interviews. The students were given the choice whether they would like to conduct the interview in English or in German to give them the opportunity to express their thoughts in the language they feel most comfortable in. Out of the seven students who were interviewed in total, five students chose to conduct the interview in German, two students chose to conduct it in English. These interviews provided valuable insights about the perceptions of the students. The interview guide is included in Appendix B.

The interviews with the German teacher and the librarian consisted of a combination of open and closed questions. The interview guide for the interview with the librarian included eight questions, the interview guide for the interview with the German teacher included 15 questions. Both interviews focused on the nature of reading motivation represented in the pupils in this school, how the school supports the native language development of its students, and what they personally do to support the students' development of reading abilities and reading motivation in German. The interview guides are included in Appendix B.

### Questionnaires

All parents of native German students from grade 4 in this international school were asked to participate in this research project by completing an online questionnaire. The parents were asked to sign an informed consent form. After all parents had returned the consent form, an online questionnaire consisting of 16 questions, a combination of open and closed questions, was sent to the group of parents who had agreed to participate. The parents were asked to

complete this questionnaire within the period of two weeks. Nine out of 11 parents who had offered to participate completed the questionnaire (response rate of 82%). The completion of the questionnaire was anonymous, and a polite reminder was sent out to the parents after one and a half weeks because, as mentioned by Wellington (2015), both previously mentioned aspects are methods to maximize the response rate. This reminder resulted in two additional responses. The survey questions are included in Appendix B.

### VERA-3 Model Task

For this research, the VERA-3 model task “Naturkundemuseum” was conducted with all native German speaking students from the class who had agreed to participate and whose parents had given their informed consent for their child’s participation in the research. The task was retrieved from Item pool (2021) and can be found in *Appendix C*. It was used in consultation with the class’ German teacher. Before the task was conducted, the students were introduced to the task, a mixture of multiple-choice questions and open questions, and they were informed about how the results of this task are used in this research. During the conducting of the task, the students were only given support related to the understanding of the questions. No support was provided for answering the questions to ensure the validity of the data. The results were then compared to the results from a similar reading task that two classes in a German national school had reached as part of the official VERA-3 test in 2017.

## **Analysis and Discussion of Findings**

### Reading Motivation and Engagement in Reading Activities in German

Reading motivation is the main factor that determines how much a person reads in his or her free time (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2014). Out of the seven German national students that were interviewed for the purpose of this research, 57% stated that they enjoy reading and 43% of them stated that they mostly enjoy reading. None of the participants stated that they do not enjoy reading. When asked about which language they prefer to read in, 3 students (43%) replied that they prefer to read in German, 2 students (29%) prefer to read in English and another 2 students (29%) enjoy reading in both languages equally (*Figure 1*). Student D for instance, stated that she prefers to read in German because “English is just too difficult”. Student G prefers to read in German “because it is [his] native language and [he] feel[s] more confident in German” whereas student F stated that he prefers to read in English because he “enjoy[s] it more and because [his] [favorite] books are in English”. The other participants did not give a reason for the preference. In the interviews, a relation between the languages spoken at home and the reading motivation in these languages was noticeable. The students who only speak German at home mostly stated that they prefer to read in German because they find it easier to understand while students who speak German and English at home more often stated that they prefer reading in English or that they enjoy both equally. This suggests that students mostly prefer to read in the language that is easier for them to understand and that they feel more confident in. This is supported by the librarian who stated that “[German students] do have a motivation to learn, but they of course tend to fall back on German because it is their first language, they are more comfortable, it is a sense of reading comfort, they are used to German”. These findings confirm the theory by Grabe (1991) who stated that learning to read in the L2 is

challenging for many children because their vocabulary in the L2 is less developed than in the L1. For many children, this makes reading in the L1 easier than reading in the L2.

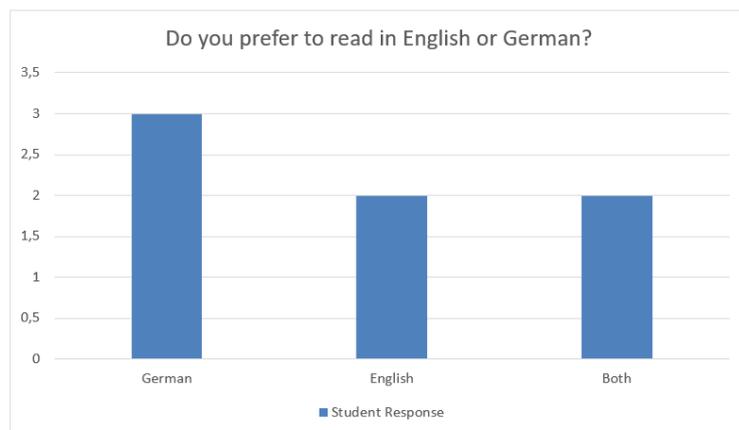


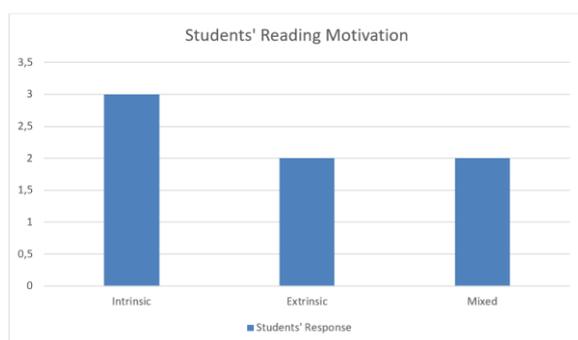
Figure 1

Many studies report a decrease of the reading motivation across primary school (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2014; Tassoni, 2007). This was not confirmed in the student interviews. All students who were interviewed for this research stated that their interest in reading and their general reading motivation has continuously increased across primary school. However, in the interview with the librarian, she mentioned that “(...) from the enjoyment or the self-motivating point of view [the intrinsic reading motivation] definitely decreases” in middle school and high school. This suggests that, instead of across primary school, as mentioned by Guthrie and Wigfield (2014), the intrinsic reading motivation begins to decrease at a higher age, according to the librarian at the beginning of middle school. The librarian mentioned that one possible reason for this decrease in intrinsic reading motivation could be that “they are given so much more material that they have to read (...) that therefore they see reading more as an academic chore they have to do.” One consequence of this high amount of academic reading that the students are required to is that, according to the librarian, the extrinsic reading motivation increases. This confirms findings by Guthrie and Wigfield (2014) who also observed an increase in extrinsic reading motivation as the students get older.

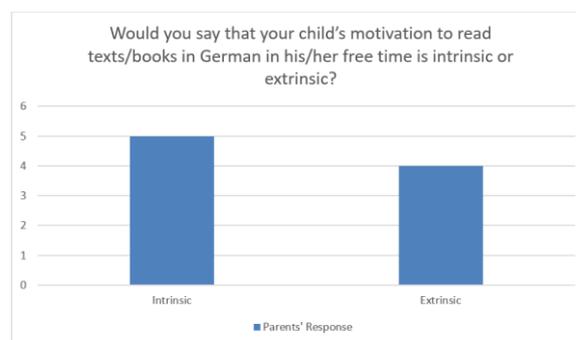
When being asked about the reasons for the increase in reading motivation, student D answered that her reading motivation has increased because she now “(...) understand[s] more words, and also more difficult words”, and student G stated that for him, the reason is that “[his] parents now provide more interesting books that [he] enjoy[s] to read” and that he can now choose his own books. Most students mentioned factors that are related to the increasing ability to understand more complex words and texts and therefore being able to choose books that reflect their personal interests. This is in line with the findings by Taboada et al. (2009) who emphasize the importance of asking questions about a text and activating background knowledge. These two processes are more likely to happen when a student can read about topics, he or she is interested in. The importance of being able to read about topics that one is interested in was also mentioned by the librarian who stated that “[i]f you want to read about it, you are going to look for it”. The students’ and the librarian’s statements all emphasize the importance of intrinsic reading motivation and autonomy support, as mentioned by Villiger-Hugo et al. (2014)

which suggests that students' intrinsic reading motivation can be fostered by giving them a free choice of what they want to read and when they want to read it.

The type of reading motivation that were identified in the student interviews are shown in *Figure 2*. For identifying the type of reading motivation, the students' answers to question such as "Do you enjoy reading?" or "Why do you read in your free time?" were analyzed and matched to the according type of reading motivation. *Figure 3* shows how parents assessed their child's reading motivation in the questionnaire. Both groups of participants show a higher representation of intrinsic reading motivation, which has been confirmed by the librarian's observations. She reported a higher number of students with an intrinsic reading motivation in elementary school, than students with an extrinsic reading motivation. Furthermore, she mentioned that "(...) the motivation if you want to read is going to be much greater than if you are told to do something", which highlights the importance of intrinsic reading motivation for students' development of reading abilities. This has also been mentioned by Retelsdorf et al. (2011).



*Figure 2*



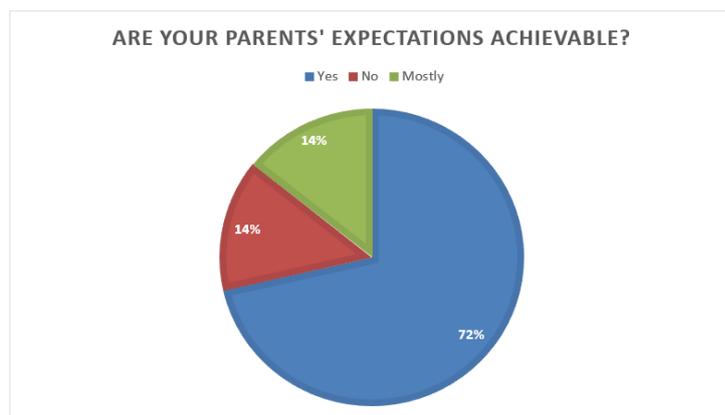
*Figure 3*

When asked about the frequency with which their child reads German books for enjoyment in their free time, 37% of the parents stated that their child does this daily, 12% stated that their child does this about once per week, 36% responded that their child does not read German texts or book in their free time at all. 15% were not able to answer this question because they do not keep track of their child's reading habits. The questionnaires showed that all parents who stated that their child does not read any German books in their free time, also related an extrinsic reading motivation to their child. This relates to findings about intrinsic reading motivation by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) who found out that children who show an intrinsic reading motivation are more likely to spend their free time reading.

### Role of Parents

As mentioned by Villiger-Hugo et al. (2014), parental involvement can have a strong impact on students' reading motivation, positive as well as negative. This has been confirmed in the interview with the German teacher who stated that she has experienced parents' expectations leading to students who "(...) nearly break together under the pressure they put on themselves because the parents seem to have a high focus on the correct and the best outcome (...)". This, again, supports the importance of an intrinsic reading motivation mentioned by Retelsdorf et al. (2011), as well as the findings by Villiger-Hugo et al. (2014) who stated that parental involvement can lead to increasing reading anxiety in children if the parents' expectations are

too high. *Figure 4* shows the students' responses when interviewed about their parents' expectations and whether they think they are achievable.



*Figure 4*

When asked about their parents' expectations regarding their reading abilities and habits, 72% of the students stated that they think these are achievable and realistic, 14% found them mostly achievable, and 14% stated that they are too high. Student F stated that the parents' expectations are too high and mentioned as a main reading motivation to "(...) improve writing skills and to become more knowledgeable", therefore he shows an extrinsic reading motivation, whereas students who reported that their parents' expectations are achievable, mostly showed an intrinsic reading motivation, for instance student C who stated that her parents "(...) don't really care how good [she] read[s] (...) because they don't want to say 'you have to read this long' if it's not fun for [her]". This relates to the German teacher's statement that parents' involvement and encouragement should not be the main motivational factor for students and suggests that parental involvement that puts a lot of pressure on the students leads to an extrinsic reading motivation, while parental involvement that relies on positive reinforcement fosters an intrinsic reading motivation (Villiger-Hugo et al., 2014).

43% of the students mentioned in the interviews that they are encouraged by their parents to read German books in their free time, another 43% stated that they are not encouraged by their parents and 14% stated that there are occasionally encouraged. However, out of the 43% who said that they are encouraged on a regular basis, only 1/3 stated that being encouraged by the parents has a positive effect on their motivation and leads to an increased reading motivation. *Figure 5* shows the number of students who mentioned in the interview that they read German books or texts together with their parents. As mentioned by Villiger-Hugo et al. (2014), it can have positive effects on a child's reading motivation when parents read together with them in their childhood. In this study, many students who show a high intrinsic reading motivation stated that they do not, or only occasionally, read together with their parents. Most student, however, reported that they used to read together with their parents when they were younger, such as student A who stated that he "used to have bedtime stories but now [he] just read[s] them on [his] own". The results from the parent questionnaires showed the same responses and are also represented in *Figure 5*. The higher number of total parental responses can be explained with a higher number of participants in this group compared to the students. These responses suggest that reading together with the parents in the early childhood can positively affect a

student's reading motivation but with an increasing age, the importance of this factor for the development of the reading motivation decreases.

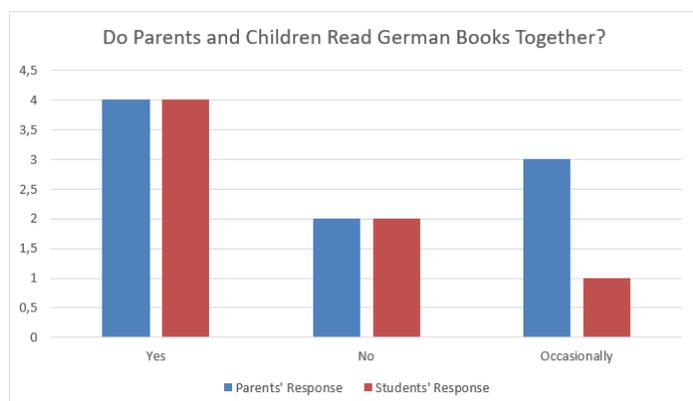


Figure 5

67% of the parents stated that they do not think their child spends enough time on practicing their German reading abilities. When they were asked how much time they consider sufficient, their answer all ranged from 15 to 30 minutes per day. However, only one participant in the questionnaire mentioned that they have a rule at home for how much time the child should spend on practicing German reading abilities. This rule was described as “for school reading 15 minutes per day, for private reading minimum three hours per week”.

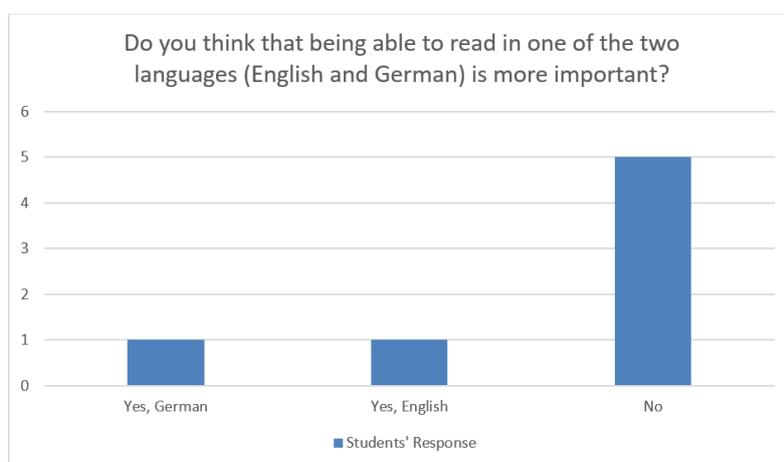
Apart from this, it became visible that many parents have high expectations for their children's German reading abilities, considering that they send their child to an international school with English as the main medium of communication. While 77% of the parents expect their child to be able to fluently read and understand German texts, and to reach the same level of proficiency that children of the same age at German national school reach, only 11% stated that they have no concrete expectation, and 22% stated that their expectation is that their child “gets better at it”. 56% of the parents stated that they communicate these expectations to their child while 44% state that they do not do this. This shows that although the parents decided to send their child to an international school where the medium of instruction is English, most of them still find the development of German reading abilities very important.

#### Students' Views on the Role of the English and German Language

The German teacher reported in the interview that she observes that the German students' perception on the importance of the German language is affected “[b]ecause the major school language is (...) English”. One way this becomes visible is that, according to the German teacher, “(...) the motivation [to read in German] is often less developed because as the school language is English and the requirement to read English books in very predominant (...) it is more of a challenge (...) to introduce German books and to support (...) reading in German”.

The librarian, however, reported that she observes the opposite when working with German national students. According to her, German students borrow more books in German than in English. This has also been confirmed by the answers from the student interviews, where the students reported a higher motivation to read in German, as represented in *Figure 1*.

At the beginning of each student interview, the interviewees were asked which languages they speak at home with their family. 57% of them stated that they only speak German at home, 29% stated that they speak German and English, and 14% stated that they speak German and Spanish. *Figure 6* shows the students' perceptions on the importance of being proficient in reading in English and German. As shown in the graph, the clear majority of the students considers reading abilities in both languages equally important. Student C explained this answer by arguing that "(...) somewhere in the world you need every language". The explanation mentioned by student G was that "you need German because we are in Germany (...) and English is important for when you go on vacation and they speak a different language than German, then you need English". This suggests that although English is the dominant language in the students' school life, they still see the importance of not neglecting the development of reading abilities in German and most students' motivation to read in German is not affected by this.



*Figure 6*

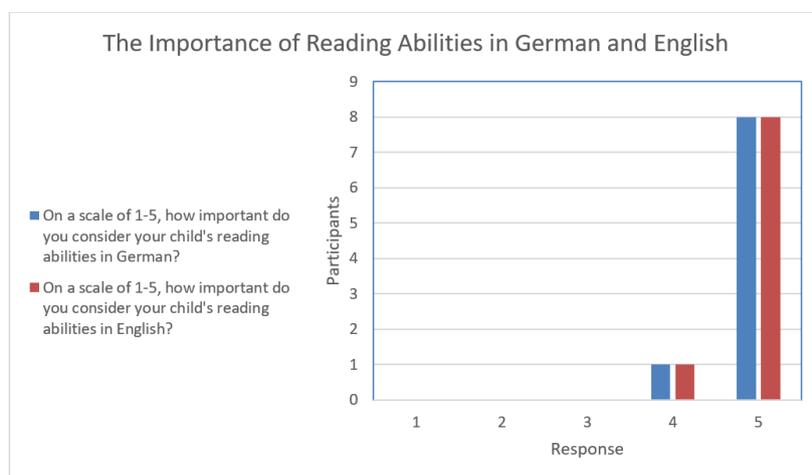
Student F, who stated that reading abilities in English are more important explained this by saying that they "(...) are in an English school and everyone here speaks English and (...) I can understand it better", whereas student D, who considers German more important stated that this is because she "understand[s] it better". It is important to note that for each of the students, the language they consider more important is also the language that they mostly use at home. Student F who ranked English as more important said that he speaks English with almost his entire family, except for one parent and therefore feels more confident in English, and student D, who ranked German as more important had only recently transferred to the international school when the interview was conducted and therefore had a very low level of English. This suggests that the perception on the importance of each language might be affected if a student shows clearly higher confidence in one of the languages.

Relating to this, the librarian emphasized the importance of finding a balance between supporting a student's native language development and the development of the English language, so that no language gets neglected, and she stated that "(...) flexibility is needed to the 'what suits the child' and not 'the child suits the system'". Additionally, she mentioned the importance of reading for building up vocabulary and for learning how to express yourself in a language. This is important for the development of both languages English and German, and it therefore underpins the importance of finding a balance between both languages. As shown in

the example of student D, there was no balance between the English and the German language because the German language is predominant in her life. This affects her perception on the importance of the English language, whereas for student F the English language is predominant and therefore, the perception on the importance of the German language is affected.

The students' parents were asked in the questionnaire about their perception on how their children assess the importance of each language. 56% of the parents stated that they think their child perceives both languages equally important, while 44% saw a difference in how their child's perceives. Of these 44%, 50% think that their child considers German more important because the child mostly speaks German in their private life with family and friends, while another 50% think that their child perceives English as the more important language because it is the school language.

*Figure 7* illustrates the parents' responses when they were asked to rate the importance of reading abilities in both languages on a scale of one to five. As the graph shows, seven parents consider reading abilities in both languages equally important (78%) while each 1 parent (11%) thinks that German or English is more important. The parents who consider English more important explained this by stating that "as English is the main language at school, I feel that first of English is more important than German but as German is only ranked [one] point less than English, it does not get neglected". The reason mentioned by the parents who consider German more important was that "(...) the mother tongue is the basis of everything that follows".



*Figure 7*

### Reading Abilities in German

The students' reading abilities in German were tested using a model task from the German national VERA-3 test, the students completed this task independently. The results from the international school in Germany were compared to the results of two classes from a German national school on a comparable task from the VERA-3 test. *Table 3* represents how many correct answers each student scored, for the calculation of the average score, the highest and the lowest score for each class (highlighted in grey) were excluded to get more meaningful numbers and to ensure validity. *Table 4* shows the results for the same classes and tasks, organized according to how many students answered each task correctly.

	Class from an International School in Germany	German National School Class 1	German National School Class 2
Student	Correct Answers per Student in %	Correct Answers per Student in %	Correct Answers per student in %
1	80	42	17
2	70	21	75
3	80	50	92
4	60	71	13
5	100	38	88
6	50	54	0
7	100	0	13
8	40	75	92
9	60	63	63
10	70	50	79
11	90	50	88
12	80	50	83
13	-	83	50
14	-	13	96
<b>Average Total Score</b>	74	48	63

Table 3 - VERA-3 results per student

Task Number	Correct Answers per Task – International School (in %)	Correct Answers per Task – German National School Class 1 (in %)	Correct Answers per Task – German National School Class 2 (in %)
1	92	73	92
2	83	100	85
3	50	0	31
4	83	55	54
5	100	27	77
6	33	64	62
7	83	55	46
8	67	73	77
9	83	64	46
10	58	36	31
11	-	0	8

Table 4 - VERA-3 results per task

Comparing the results of the international school class and the German national school classes in Table 4 shows that the students in the international school had the lowest scores on tasks three and six and the highest scores on tasks one and five. According to Krelle et al. (n.d.), tasks one and five are focusing on the competency to systematically look for information in the text, so this appears to be a competency that most students in the international school have developed. Tasks three and six relate to two different competencies, according to Krelle et al. (n.d.). Task three relates to the competency to systematically look for information in a text, like one and five, and task six requires the competency to reflect on a given piece of information and then give one's own opinion about it. This is a more complex task and the low score of students in the international school might suggest that they have difficulties with this type of complex reading task. However, task seven had the same requirement to generalize information and then reflect on it, and 83% of the class answered this question correctly.

As mentioned by Guthrie and Wigfield (2014), developing high reading abilities involves and requires motivational and cognitive processes. This is also supported by Guthrie et al. (2007) whose study showed that "(...) general reading motivation was associated with reading comprehension growth (...)" (p. 304). The students in the interviews all showed a high reading

motivation in German and together with the results from this reading task, they match the findings by Guthrie and Wigfield (2014) and Guthrie et al. (2007). The findings suggests that a high reading motivation can lead to higher levels of reading comprehension and general reading abilities.

### How the School Supports the German Language Development

As stated by the librarian in the interview, it is important to support the development of English, as well as the development of the native languages of the students and to find the right balance. In the library she tries to offer books in all languages that are represented among the pupils, for instance books in Arabic, Mandarin, German, Russian but also minority languages such as Tamil or Wolof. To support the native language development, she encourages students to borrow these books to read them in their free time and, as she stated, she invented a library policy “(...) that children who have (...) another language are welcome to borrow an additional book in their own language”. This way, she wants to contribute to promoting native language reading.

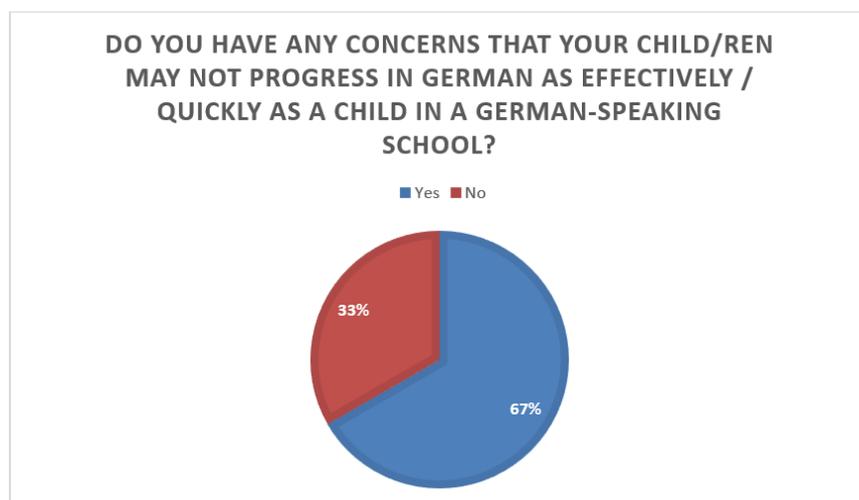
Furthermore, she used to organize a multilingual festival once a year to “(...) let the students who have [a native language] like Hindi or Tamil, whatever their other language is, to shine, and they can then either say things, (...) count to ten (...) do the alphabet, write something, read something in their language, and it’s also incredibly important when students first come to the school, because especially if English is not their first language, and therefore (...) it gives them a sense of familiarity, there is something they already know, there is their home language and it’s a security feeling”. This offer focused especially on students who speak minority languages. These festivals, however, could not be offered anymore due to the Covid-19 pandemic because the different cohorts were not allowed to mix. In addition to this, after-school language courses that had been offered before the pandemic started also had to be cancelled. In these courses, students were offered the opportunity to learn a variety of languages up to IB level. The previously mentioned examples show how the pandemic situation affects the school’s support for native language development in negative ways. The librarian concludes that “[the school] could do much better” at supporting native language development, relating to all languages not only to the development of German abilities.

In the interview with the German teacher, she confirms the librarian’s evaluation of the school’s support of native language development. As a German teacher, she focused more on the support of German language development, stating she “(...) feel[s] that German is not sufficiently supported. There used to be a German classroom [with materials] (...) which are now sort of in the small gym and nobody really uses them because they are out of reach”. She also thinks the school should focus more on expanding the German part in the curriculum because according to her, “(...) the majority of parents are keen on core subjects, such as mathematics and German.” She also mentioned that the library continuously supports the German language development by providing class sets of German books and offering a variety of reading books in German.

According to the German teacher, the standards for the subject German in this international school differ from those in a German national school, “(...) because the mainstream schools

have their scheme of work which is by each [state] defined (...)”. However, she also mentioned that she uses workbooks that are also used in German national school to plan her lesson to ensure that “(...) it will always be in line with the general requirements for that age (...)”.

In the questionnaire that was sent out to the parents, they were asked about whether they have concerns that their child may not progress in German as effectively as a child in a German national school and 67% of the parents expressed concerns about this (see *Figure 8*). Despite these concerns, the parents all decided to send their children to an international, English-speaking school. In the questionnaires, the parents mentioned a variety of reasons for their decision to choose an international school, instead of a German national school, such as the belief that the International Baccalaureate “(...) meets the need of today’s society (...)” more than the German Abitur. Other reasons that were mentioned are giftedness of the child and that the education in international schools in general is better, in terms of higher quality, less racism and more care to the children. Furthermore, the wish “[t]o help the children cope in a globalized world” was mentioned, as well as to help the child “to be able to communicate with others without restrictions”. The parents’ expectations towards an international school are very high and varied and seemed to outweigh the concerns about the progress in the German language.



*Figure 8*

## Quality and Limitations

The objective of this research is to find out how being educated in a language that is not the native language can affect reading abilities and motivation in the native language. The research includes questionnaires and interviews to find out the participants’ perceptions and experiences, those of the students and their parents and those of the (teaching) staff in school, the German specialist teacher and the school’s librarian. The results from the VERA-3 model tasks produced quantitative data to add on and support the findings from the interviews and questionnaires. The triangulation of the included methods of data collection, as well as the variety of data that was collected from different participants ensures the validity of this research project (Cohen et al., 2018). If quotes were taken from interviews that were conducted in German, a bilingual teacher from the school checked the translations to ensure that they accurately reflect the meaning.

Most of the data that was gathered as part of this research project is based on the perceptions of the participants, which needed to be interpreted. This can lead to biased or subjective outcomes but the including of a variety of perspectives that is achieved by including many different participants. Furthermore, the qualitative data from the VERA-3 model task minimizes subjectivity in the research and strengthens the validity of this research project.

Another limitation of this research project is that it is a case study, so it only provides insights for the one international school in Germany where the research project was carried out which means that the findings from this research are only applicable to this context. This makes the results of this study, like every case study, less generalizable for other situations and contexts (Wellington, 2015). However, it should also be acknowledged that case studies can give valuable and unique insights into the circumstances of a particular case, that these insights are still somehow applicable to other similar contexts and that they can be transferred to other situations (Cohen et al., 2018; Hope, 2016; Wellington, 2015) because the findings of multiple case studies together can achieve greater generalizability (Cohen et al., 2018).

In addition to this, the perspective of more teaching staff should have been included. This was not possible in this study due to the small size of the school and therefore only few specialist teachers. Furthermore, including the perspectives of more students and parents to get a greater variety of opinions and perceptions would have added to the meaningfulness of this study. However, this was also not possible because all German national students' and their parents' participation was requested.

The results from the VERA-3 model tasks that were used to compare the participants' results to the average abilities of students in a German national school are results from the academic year 2017/2018. German national schools have not conducted the VERA-3 test in the academic years 2018/2019 and 2019/2020, so although these results may not represent the most current development in students' reading abilities, they are the most recent data from this area and because the test itself did not change, the use of this data seems reasonable. Furthermore, the data for the whole state that the international school is located in was not available, so the results from the international school were only compared to the results of two German national classes. Comparing them to the average scores of students from the whole state would have further added to this study's validity.

## **Ethics**

A part of the data that was gathered for this research project includes personal experiences and perceptions of the participants. Therefore, all participants were informed about the use and the processing of the data before the research was conducted. For all students and school staff, this happened in school. The students' parents were informed through a letter (included in Appendix A) containing all relevant information. If the parents agreed to participate in the study, they were asked to sign a consent form that was sent home together with the information letter, and to return this either via email or in school. The choice that the parents were informed about the study in a letter, instead of inviting them to attend an information meeting, was made based on the pandemic situation at that moment which did not allow for an in-person meeting with the parents. The information letter and the consent form were provided in English and in German

to acknowledge possible preferences on the side of the parents and to make all information accessible to all participants.

Participants were informed about how the data will be stored and who will have access to it. The data was anonymized before being included in the research and it was treated confidentially. The participants (or their guardians in case of minority) were asked to sign a form of informed consent to officially give permission that their data is used in the study. They were also informed about the possibility to withdraw at any time and about what will happen to the data after the research has been completed. Another important aspect that the participants were informed about is that there will be no disadvantages for any participants who cannot or do not want to participate or who decide to withdraw from the research (Wellington, 2015). In case of questions that arise, participants were given the opportunity to contact the researcher via email before, during or after the research process. The ethical issues about storage and that may arise when using an online questionnaire, as mentioned by Wellington (2015), were considered, and prevented by informing the participants that only the researcher will have access to the data, that it will be stored only on the researcher's private laptop and only until the research project has been finished.

During the student interviewing phase, a child protection issue came up in one of the interviews. The researcher then had to decide whether this information should be shared with the school's child protection office. Since the researcher had told the participating students before the interviews that only anonymized information would be used and that the teachers and parents would not be informed about the content of the interviews, sharing this piece of information with the child protection office was not in line with this assurance. However, because the researcher was then informed that child protection issues had come up in that family before, she decided to disclose the information. The researcher decided that the importance of ensuring the safety of the child outweighed the importance of ethical assurances regarding anonymity and confidentiality. As stated by Wiles, Crow, Heath and Charles (2008), confidentiality can be broken if it is in the interest of the participant. This applies to the given situation and the decision to do so was taken seriously by the researcher and thought through.

## **Research Conclusion**

### Sub-Question 1: To what extent are the students motivated to read in their native language?

The findings from the field research suggest that in general, students mostly prefer to read in the language that is easier for them to understand and that they feel more confident in. In almost all cases included in this research this was the German language which can be related to the more well-developed vocabulary in German than in English (Grabe, 1991). This means that although the students attend an international school, where the language of instruction is English, most of them still preferred to read in German.

The study supports the findings by Villiger-Hugo et al. (2014), who stated that parental involvement in reading can have a positive, as well as a negative impact on the students' reading motivation. It confirms the theory that parental involvement that puts a lot of pressure on the

student is likely to lead to an extrinsic reading motivation, while parental involvement that uses positive reinforcement can foster an intrinsic reading motivation.

In addition to this, the data gathered for this study disproved the findings by Guthrie and Wigfield (2014) according to which the intrinsic reading motivation decreases across primary school. Instead, it suggests that the intrinsic reading motivation begins to decrease at a higher age, according to the librarian in middle school.

Sub-Question 2: What are the students' views on the role of the English and German language in their lives?

Although English is dominant in the school life of all students who participated, they still all see the importance of not neglecting the development of reading abilities in German. The motivation of most students to develop further reading abilities in German was not affected by the dominance of the English language in their school life. Six out of seven German national students showed a high awareness of the importance of developing further their German reading abilities, only one student perceived the English language as more important.

However, two students stated that they find one of the languages more important. For both students, this was the language that they show clearly more confidence in. This suggests that the students' view on the role of L1 and L2 in their life may be affected if they show clearly higher abilities in one of the languages, so that this language is perceived as more important.

Sub-Question 3: How do the parents and the school support native language reading?

Although the school where the research was conducted does not have an official policy on native language development, there were still many ways identifiable in which native language reading is supported. For instance, the librarian organized multilingual festivals and established a library policy that supports native language reading. However, both, the German teacher and the librarian stated that they believe the German language is not sufficiently supported, yet. The German teacher mentioned that she sees the necessity to develop further the curriculum for German to extend the support in this area.

It must be noted that some shortcomings in the area of supporting the native language development can be attributed to the pandemic situation which does not allow the school to mix cohorts. Therefore, many activities that would support the native language development under normal circumstances, such as after-school language courses or the multilingual festival, had to be temporarily cancelled.

The parents' expectations towards the international education in general were observed to be very high, especially in the area of native language development. 77% stated that they expect their child to develop the same linguistic abilities in German as a student in a German national school. 58% of the students stated that they read German books together with their parents on a regular basis, 86% stated that they at least used to do this when they were younger. All students showed a high reading motivation in German, so the findings from this study are in line with those by Villiger-Hugo et al. (2014) who reported a positive effect on children's reading motivation if parents and children read together.

Research Question: What is the possible impact of English as the medium of instruction in a German international school on German national students' reading motivation in their native language?

As previously mentioned, most students who participated in this study mentioned that they prefer reading in the language that is easier for them to understand. In the case of German native students who attend an international school in Germany, the language that is easier for them to understand was mostly German.

Only student A and student F stated that they prefer reading in English over reading in German however, these preferences cannot be linked to the international education with English as the medium of instruction. In the private lives of these two students, the English language played an important role already before they attended an international school.

From the data that was collected for this study, no major impact of English as the medium of instruction on German national students' reading motivation in their native language was observable. Most students reported a high motivation to read in German and according to the parents, 37% of the students read German books in their free time on a daily basis. The findings from this study therefore suggest that the reading motivation of the students depends on other factors, such as the support provided at home (Villiger-Hugo et al., 2014) and being able to decide what they want to read (Taboada et al., 2009).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Because the findings of this case study are only applicable for the context where the research has been conducted. The situation in more international schools should be examined to make the results more valid and generalizable to more contexts and environments. The methodology and research tools used in this project, as well as the study's results can be used as a starting point for research projects in similar contexts.

Another point that could be included in further research is the effect on reading motivation in other native languages that are not spoken in the location of the school. The results for these languages might be different from those found in this research project as these languages might not be supported in school. Therefore, the development of linguistic abilities in these languages would only take place at the children's home. The differences in learning to read in L1 and L2 reported by Grabe (1991) could be included and tested with children for whom the acquisition of two languages happens completely separately.

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## **Appendix A: Consent Forms**

## Grade 4 Consent to Participate in Research

██████████ 11.03.2021

Dear Parents of Grade 4a and 4b,

My name is Louisa Wowerat, and I am currently a student teacher at the ██████████. I am studying International Teacher Education for Primary Schools (ITEps) at NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences in The Netherlands and I am now writing my Bachelor Thesis.

I am conducting research on bilingualism in international schools and the relationship between the native language and the English language as the medium of communication, focussing especially on the German reading abilities of German national students in an international school in Germany. Therefore, I would like to ask you for your permission that you and your child can be included in the research.

The participation in the research is entirely voluntary, you and/or your child can withdraw at any time during the research. In that case, data that has already been collected from you and/or your child will not be included in the research.

The research instruments that will be used for the research include individual interviews with your child, reading tasks that will help me assess your child's reading abilities in German and a questionnaire to you that asks about the use of German in your child's life and the reading habits of your child at home. The collected data will be kept confidential and anonymous. The study will not include individual data in a form by which you or your child can be identified.

If you have any questions about the procedure of this study, I will be happy to answer them.  
You can contact me at ██████████.

Thank you very much in advance for your help!

Kind regards,

Louisa Wowerat  
Student Teacher

# Informed Consent Form

I voluntarily consent for me and/or my child (please specify below) to participate in this study on the relationship between the native language and the English language in an international school conducted by Louisa Wowerat between March and May 2021.

I understand that the participation in this study is entirely voluntary. I give permission to use the collected anonymised data for the purpose of the research.

I understand that I can withdraw my child at any time during the research.

I know that the researcher will answer questions I have about the research, now and at any time during or after the research.

Name of the child: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the parent(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email address for contacting: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick the applying box(es):

- I hereby give my consent that my child participates in the study mentioned above.
- I hereby give my consent to participate in the study mentioned above.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Einverständniserklärung für die Teilnahme an einer Studie

11.03.2021

Liebe Eltern der Klassen 4a und 4b,

mein Name ist Louisa Wowerat und ich absolviere im Moment ein Praktikum an der . Ich studiere Grundschullehramt für Internationale Schulen (ITEps) an der Hochschule NHL Stenden in den Niederlanden. Im Rahmen meines letzten Studienjahres schreibe ich aktuell meine Bachelorarbeit.

Hierfür führe ich eine Studie zu Bilingualismus an internationalen Schulen und dem Verhältnis der Muttersprache Deutsch und dem Kommunikationsmedium in der Schule (Englisch) durch. Der Fokus meiner Studie liegt auf der Lesekompetenz von deutschen Schüler\*innen im Fach Deutsch. Ich würde Sie für diese Studie gerne um Ihr Einverständnis bitten, dass Ihr Kind an dieser Studie teilnehmen darf. Außerdem würde ich Sie gerne auch um Ihre Teilnahme bitten.

Die Teilnahme an der Studie ist freiwillig. Sowohl Sie als auch Ihr Kind können zu jedem Zeitpunkt vor oder während der Studie Ihr Einverständnis widerrufen. In diesem Fall werden Daten, die bis zum Zeitpunkt Ihrer Widerrufung bereits erhoben wurden, nicht für die Studie verwendet.

Die Studie wird für Ihr Kind aus einem individuellen Interview und einer Aufgabe zur Testung der Lesekompetenz bestehen. Für Sie besteht die Teilnahme an der Studie aus einem Fragebogen, der sich mit der Nutzung der deutschen Sprache und den Lesegewohnheiten Ihres Kindes beschäftigt. Die Daten, die hierdurch erhoben werden, werden selbstverständlich vertraulich behandelt und anonymisiert. Die Studie wird keine individuellen Daten enthalten, anhand derer Sie oder Ihr Kind identifiziert werden können.

Sollten Sie Fragen zum Ablauf der Studie haben, dann beantworte ich diese gerne jederzeit. Sie können mich kontaktieren unter .

Vielen Dank im Voraus für Ihre Hilfe!

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Louisa Wowerat  
Studentin

# Einverständniserklärung

Ich erkläre mich mit der Teilnahme an der Studie zur Beziehung von Muttersprache und englischer Sprache an internationalen Schulen - durchgeführt von Louisa Wowerat im Zeitraum März bis Mai 2021 - einverstanden.

Mir ist bewusst, dass die Teilnahme an der Studie freiwillig ist. Ich erlaube die Nutzung anonymisierter Daten von mir und/oder meinem Kind (bitte unten angeben) in der oben genannten Studie.

Mir ist bewusst, dass ich meine Teilnahme und/oder die meines Kindes zu jedem Zeitpunkt vor oder während der Studie widerrufen kann.

Mir ist bewusst, dass die Forscherin meine Fragen zur Studie zu jedem Zeitpunkt vor, während oder nach der Studie beantworten wird.

Name des Kindes: \_\_\_\_\_

Name des/der Erziehungsberechtigten: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail-Adresse zur Kontaktierung: \_\_\_\_\_

Bitte zutreffende(s) Kästchen ankreuzen:

- Ich gebe hiermit mein Einverständnis zur Teilnahme meines Kindes an der oben genannten Studie.
- Ich gebe hiermit mein Einverständnis für meine Teilnahme an der oben genannten Studie.

Datum: \_\_\_\_\_

Unterschrift: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix B: Interview Guides**

## Interview Guide - Students

1. General questions:
  - 1.1. How old are you?
  - 1.2. What language(s) do you speak at home?
2. Questions about L1 and L2
  - 2.1. Do you consider all languages that you speak equally important?
  - 2.2. Which language do you use the most in your daily life?
3. Questions about reading motivation in free time:
  - 3.1. Do you enjoy reading?
  - 3.2. Do you prefer to read in English or German (or another native language)?
    - 3.2.1. Why?
  - 3.3. Would you read more if you had more time?
  - 3.4. What kind of books/texts do you enjoy most?
  - 3.5. Why do you read?
  - 3.6. If you compare yourself now and when you were in first or second grade, do you think that your interest in reading has increased or decreased?
    - 3.6.1. Why?
  - 3.7. Do you think it is important to be the best in reading?
    - 3.7.1. Why/Why not?
4. Students' perception of reading:
  - 4.1. Do you think reading is important?
    - 4.1.1. Why/Why not?
  - 4.2. Do you think it is equally important to be good at reading in English and German or do you think that one of them is more important?
    - 4.2.1. Why?
5. Role of parents:
  - 5.1. Do your parents encourage you to read in your free time?
    - 5.1.1. If yes, how?
  - 5.2. Do you feel more, or less motivated to read after your parents encourage you to read in your free time?
  - 5.3. Do you read together with your parents? /Do they give your guidance or support when you are reading?
    - 5.3.1. Does that help you?
6. Is there anything else you would like to mention?

## Interview Guide – German Teacher

1. Since when do you teach German in international schools?
2. Before that, how many years did you teach German in German national schools?
3. From what you have experienced in this school so far, would you say that English as the main medium of communication affects the (4<sup>th</sup> grade) student's perception on the importance of the German language?
  - 3.1. If yes, how?
4. Have you experienced any general differences in the reading abilities of German national 4<sup>th</sup> grade students in international schools compared to German national 4<sup>th</sup> grade students in German national schools?
  - 4.1. If yes, how do they differ?
  - 4.2. What would you say is the reason for this difference?
5. Are the standards for German national (4<sup>th</sup> grade) students in this school the same as for German national students in grade 4 in a German national school?
  - 5.1. If no, how do they differ?
6. Would you say that the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' motivation to develop further their German reading abilities in an international school is comparable to the students' motivation in German national schools or have you observed any differences?
  - 6.1. If differences have been observed, how does it differ? (higher or lower motivation)
    - 6.1.1. What would you say is the reason for this difference?
7. Would you say that the nature of the students' motivation to read German texts/books in this school (especially in 4<sup>th</sup> grade) is intrinsic (reading for enjoyment) or extrinsic (reading to get good grades/to receive recognition, etc.)?
8. Do you think that the development of German national students' German abilities is sufficiently supported by the school?
9. In your opinion and from what you have experienced so far, what role do the parents play in the development of the German abilities of German national 4<sup>th</sup> grade students in this school?

## Interview Guide – Librarian

1. Do you think it important that students have access to a library in school?
  - 1.1. Why?
2. Do you personally think it is important to also provide books in the students' native languages (if this is not English)?
  - 2.1. Why?
3. Do you think that the school does enough to support the native language development of German national students?
  - 3.1. If yes, what exactly do they do?
  - 3.2. If no, what do you think should be changed?
4. Would you say that it is important to encourage the students to read in their native language in their free time, as well as in school?
  - 4.1. Why/Why not?
5. From your experience so far, would you say that the students in this school have a higher motivation to read in English or in German/their native language?
  - 5.1. What do you think is the reason for this?
6. Do you think that the students' reading motivation in general is more of intrinsic or extrinsic nature or would you say that both is represented equally?
7. How do you assess the reading motivation of fourth grade students regarding intrinsic or extrinsic motivation?
8. If you compare the reading motivation in first or second grade to the reading motivation in higher grade, such as fourth grade, would you say that the reading motivation increases or decreases?
  - 8.1. What would you say is the reason for this?
9. What do you do in the library to increase the students' reading motivation?
10. Do you think that English as the medium of communication in this school affects the perception on the importance of the native language for students who speak a different language at home?
11. Do you think that there are enough German reading books available in the library for German national students to develop further their reading abilities in German (different genres/topics, books for different age groups, etc.)?

12. Do you currently (in the pandemic situation) also offer German reading books to the students?
13. Do German native students often ask for German reading books and do they borrow more reading books in English?
  - 13.1. What do you think is the reason for this?
14. Is there anything else you would like to mention?

## Questions from Parent Questionnaire

1. What is/are your native language(s)?
2. Which language(s) do you speak at home with your child?
3. On a scale of 1-5, how important do you consider your child's reading abilities in German?
4. On a scale of 1-5, how important do you consider your child's reading abilities in English?
5. If the importance of the reading abilities in English and German differs:  
Please explain why you consider one of them more important than the other.
6. Why did you decide to send your child/ren to an English-speaking international school?
7. Do you have the feeling that your child perceives one of the languages that he/she uses in his/her daily life more important than the other(s)?
  - 7.1. If yes, which language do you think is more important to your child and what do you think is the reason for this?
8. What expectations do you have regarding your child's reading abilities in German?
  - 8.1. Do you communicate these expectations to your child?
    - 8.1.1. If yes, how?
9. Do you have a rule for how much time your child should spend on practicing his/her German reading abilities per day or per week?
  - 9.1. If yes, what is the rule?
10. How often per week does your child read German texts/books on a voluntary basis (for enjoyment, in his or her free time) without being encouraged to do so?
11. How often per week do you read German texts/books together with your child?
12. Would you say that your child's motivation to read texts/books in German in his/her free time is intrinsic (e.g., reading for enjoyment) or extrinsic (e.g., reading to become better at it/to get good grades)?
13. Do you have any concerns that your child/ren may not progress in German as effectively / quickly as a child in a German-speaking school?
14. Do you think that your child spends enough time on practicing his/her reading abilities in German?

14.1. If no, why not? How much more would you consider sufficient?

15. Is there anything else you would like to mention?

## **Appendix C: VERA-3 Reading Task**

# Naturkundemuseum



<b>Angebot 1</b>	<b>Luftexperimente</b>
Datum	8. September, 15.30 Uhr bis 17.00 Uhr
Beschreibung	Nach einer spannenden Führung durch die Sonderausstellung „Herrscher der Lüfte“ wollen wir verschiedene Experimente durchführen, um den Flug der Tiere zu verstehen.
Zielgruppe	Kinder ab 8 Jahren
Leitung	Ina Meier
Preis	2,50 €
Anmeldung	Anmeldung erforderlich. Tel: 0898-3144 (Di - Fr 10.30 - 16.30 Uhr)

<b>Angebot 2</b>	<b>Drachen schauen und Drachen bauen</b>
Datum	16. September, 15.30 Uhr bis 17.00 Uhr
Beschreibung	Wir schauen uns die Sonderausstellung „Flugsaurier“ an und erfahren, was sich die Menschen über Drachen erzählen. Anschließend bauen wir unseren eigenen flugfähigen Drachen.
Zielgruppe	Kinder ab 7 Jahren
Leitung	Gerd Richter
Preis	2,50 € + Kosten für Bastelmaterial
Anmeldung	Anmeldung erforderlich. Tel: 0898-3144 (Di - Fr 10.30 - 16.30 Uhr)

<b>Angebot 3</b>	<b>Walderlebnisspiele</b>
Datum	22. September, 15.30 Uhr bis 17.00 Uhr
Beschreibung	Bei unseren Walderlebnisspielen können die Kinder als Detektiv, Künstler oder Förster draußen den Wald erkunden.
Zielgruppe	Kinder von 6 bis 8 Jahren
Leitung	Ina Meier
Preis	2,50 €
Anmeldung	Anmeldung erforderlich. Tel: 0898-3144 (Di - Fr 10.30 - 16.30 Uhr)

<b>Angebot 4</b>	<b>Muschelwerkstatt</b>
Datum	25. November, 15.30 Uhr bis 17.00 Uhr
Beschreibung	Experimente und Herstellung von schönem Muschelschmuck
Zielgruppe	Kinder ab 8 Jahren
Leitung	Miriam Teile
Preis	2,50 € + Kosten für Bastelmaterial
Anmeldung	Anmeldung erforderlich. Tel: 0898-3144 (Di - Fr 10.30 - 16.30 Uhr)

Weitere Angebote findet ihr unter: [www.naturkundemuseum-angebote.de](http://www.naturkundemuseum-angebote.de)

Grafik: IQB

### Teilaufgabe 1:

Im Text findest du Angebote ...

- eines Verkehrsmuseums.
- eines Heimatmuseums.
- eines Kunstmuseums.
- eines Naturkundemuseums.

**Teilaufgabe 2:**

Wozu werden nach der Führung durch die Sonderausstellung „Herrscher der Lüfte“ noch Experimente durchgeführt?



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**Teilaufgabe 3:**

Wann kannst du im Museum anrufen, um dich für eine Veranstaltung anzumelden?

- montags um 16.00 Uhr
- dienstags um 8.00 Uhr
- freitags um 14.00 Uhr
- sonntags um 11.00 Uhr

**Teilaufgabe 4:**

Einige Kinder wollen in der Schule ein Herbstbild gestalten. Dazu wollen sie Formen und Farben in der Natur erkunden.

Welches Angebot können sie nutzen?

- Luftexperimente
- Drachen schauen und Drachen bauen
- Walderlebnisspiele
- Muschelwerkstatt

**Teilaufgabe 5:**

Lena möchte ihrer Mutter eine Halskette schenken.  
Welches Angebot sollte Lena nutzen?

- Luftexperimente
- Drachen schauen und Drachen bauen
- Walderlebnisspiele
- Muschelwerkstatt

**Teilaufgabe 6:**

Katrin malt sehr gern und möchte an den Walderlebnisspielen teilnehmen.  
Marie meint: „Das ist nichts für dich, denn da erkundet man als Försterin den Wald.“

Stimmst du Marie zu? Begründe deine Entscheidung.



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**Teilaufgabe 7:**

Warum muss man für die Angebote 2 und 4 mehr Geld bezahlen als für die anderen Angebote?



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**Teilaufgabe 8:**

Bei den Angeboten gibt es Informationen ...

	stimmt	stimmt nicht
zum Titel der Veranstaltung.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
zur Dauer der Veranstaltung.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
dazu, wie viele Kinder teilnehmen dürfen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
zum Preis der Veranstaltung.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
dazu, ob es besonders für Jungen oder für Mädchen geeignet ist.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
dazu, wer die Veranstaltung leitet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Teilaufgabe 9:**

Dich interessiert alles, was fliegt.

Welche **beiden** Angebote kannst du nutzen?

Angebot: \_\_\_\_\_

Angebot: \_\_\_\_\_

**Teilaufgabe 10:**

Wo kannst du dich über weitere Angebote dieses Museums informieren?



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