

21.3.2026

**Author**

EARLS, Clive W.

**Title**

Striking the balance : the role of English and German in a multilingual English-medium programme in German higher education / Clive W. Earls

**Publication year**

2014

**Source/Footnote**

In: Current issues in language planning. - 15 (2014) 2, S. 153 - 173

**Inventory number**

44456

**Keywords**

Deutsch als Fremdsprache ; Fremdsprachen ; Studienreform

**Abstract**

In 2002, English-medium degree programmes (EMDPs) became a permanent feature of German higher education (HE). While this action marked an important step towards government-supported institutionalisation of English in Germany, no formal strategy or guidelines governing the role of English in HE have been developed. To date, research in this area in Germany has been predominantly focused on the top-down perspectives of decision-makers comparatively few studies have been conducted into bottom-up perspectives of those directly experiencing such language policy and planning decisions. In this paper, empirical data resulting from a mixed-method case study conducted at a German HE institution will be analysed to reveal hitherto unexplored bottom-up insights into the lived reality of an EMDP in Germany. The paper begins with an introduction to such programmes in Germany, before outlining the methodology pursued and exploring demographics and participant motivations within the programme under investigation. Applying Spolsky's (2004, p. 39) framework for analysing language policy, the de facto language policy experienced by study

**21.3.2026**

participants is revealed, providing insights into daily linguistic practices within the programme, and the pragmatic and ideological roles that English and German play in participants' reported experiences. Uncovering this de facto language policy serves to provide policy-makers at the top level with bottom-up perspectives for future policy formulation which may lead to a more well-grounded language policy (Shohamy, 2009, p. 188). (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

**Signature**

95 765