

LOWER SECONDARY STUDENTS PARTICIPATION IN NON-LANGUAGE CLASSES IN ENGLISH AND SELF-REPORTED INDICATORS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

ÚČAST ŽÁKŮ NIŽŠÍHO SEKUNDÁRNÍHO VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ NA VÝUCE NEJAZYKOVÝCH PŘEDMĚTŮ V ANGLIČTINĚ A JEJÍ SOUVISLOST S VYKAZOVANÝM SOCIOEKONOMICKÝM STATUSEM

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Abstrakt

Nejazykové třídy, které jsou plně nebo částečně vyučovány v angličtině (matematika, přírodní vědy, ICT atd.), se v posledních letech staly prioritou pro mnoho rodičů a škol v ČR. Tato studie si klade za cíl prozkoumat vztah mezi vykazovaným socioekonomickým statusem (SES) studentů a jejich účastí v těchto typech tříd. Ukazuje se, že participace žáků na nejazykových hodinách v angličtině souvisí s vysokým vykazovaným SES, což naznačuje nerovný přístup.

Klíčová slova: nižší sekundární vzdělávání, bilingvní vzdělávání, Česká republika, jazykové vzdělávání a výuka

Abstract

Non-language classes that are taught fully or partly in English (math, science, ICT, etc.) have emerged as an educational priority for many parents and schools in the Czech Republic in recent years. This study aims to examine the relationship between self-reported indicators of socio-economic status (SES) and student participation in these types of classes. The findings show that the participation in non-language English classes relates to high SES indicators, suggesting unequal access.

Keywords: lower secondary education, bilingual education, the Czech Republic, language learning and teaching

1 INTRODUCTION

A push by schools to offer non-language classes that are taught fully or partly in English has become commonplace in order to attract the attention of parents and students. However, with this push there has also been a marked disparity between the types of students who can access this type of education (Smith Slamova, 2021).

2 THEORY

Reynaert (2019) found that when Czech students had long-term exposure to non-language English classes, their productive vocabularies increased. Slamova (2021) found that Czech primary students enrolled in these types of classes had higher SES. The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (2020) reports that inequalities in education are a problem in the Czech Republic, stemming from the education system's inability to motivate students from low SES backgrounds to work toward higher education and attain opportunities to increase SES.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Our sample consists of 1,403 9th graders from basic schools and students from corresponding grades from multi-year grammar schools in the Czech Republic. We have included similar numbers of grammar schools (public and private) and basic schools (public and private). Indicators of SES for the purposes of this paper include: more than 50 books in English at home, parent education level, and extra classes in English. We compared the self-reported SES indicators of students who took non-language classes partly or fully in English and students who did not.

4 RESULTS

Of students who participated in non-language classes in English, a significant majority reported that at least one parent had reached at least the ISCED 5 education level. For all four types of schools (public basic school, private basic school, public multi-year grammar schools, and private multi-year grammar schools), it holds that students attending non-language classes in English have

significantly more educated parents than students who do not attend such classes. Additionally, students who reported having over 50 English books at home were about twice as likely to participate in non-language classes in English. Also, a higher percentage of students in non-language classes in English reported taking extra English classes at schools.

5 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

A significant percentage of students who participated in non-language courses in English reported indicators of high SES, signaling that students who access these types of classes are generally privileged in terms of SES. This finding demonstrates that SES is still a dividing and deciding factor regarding access to naturalistic exposure to English in academic settings in the Czech Republic. Future research regarding opportunities for all students to access non-language classes in English would help to reduce the inequalities in access to English language exposure among Czech students.

6 LITERATURE

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