

Abstract

In my proposed PhD project, I will investigate the foreign accents of Swiss German speakers learning English. The project is divided into two main areas: on the phonetic level I will analyse specific English speech sounds produced by Swiss German speakers that include consonants such as [θ] and [ð], [ʒ], [dʒ], [w], [v], [r] and vowels like STRUT [ʌ], FOOT [ʊ], FLEECE [i:] and KIT [ɪ], FACE [eɪ], GOAT [əʊ], NORTH [ɔ:]. According to Swan (2001) these sounds are uncommon to the Swiss phonetic inventory and thus more difficult to produce. Furthermore, the second part of the project analyses the intonation as well as the rhythm of Swiss German natives speaking English. Data will be collected using prepared texts to read out loud as well as spontaneous speech so that the most natural speech can be recorded. Recordings will be partly transcribed and analysed using linguistic and statistical software. This project expands our knowledge in terms of teaching English in Swiss schools. As communication plays a crucial role at school and is an important part of the Swiss teaching curriculum, this research will enhance our understanding of how teaching material could be adapted in a Swiss learning context.