

Juliane House
Universität Hamburg
jhouse@uni-hamburg.de

The Role of English as a *Lingua franca* in Multilingual and Cross-Cultural Communication

Globalisation and internationalisation processes are currently leading to an enormous diversity of communication processes involving speakers from many different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The question then arises how this diversity can be efficiently managed. A simple solution is of course the use of a lingua franca, and today this lingua franca is clearly English. However, the suggestion to make use of the English language as a lingua franca in business, science and other influential domains has met with fierce opposition in many circles, particularly (and understandably) from philologists of national languages (such as German language and literature in Germany or French in France). In this lecture I want to discuss arguments for and against using English in different domains and for different purposes in multilingual and cross-cultural communication. To do this, I will first discuss the nature of English as a lingua franca. Secondly I will turn to the issue of English as a lingua franca in its function as a language of communication rather than a language for identification purposes, and argue my position from three different perspectives: a socio-political and socio-psychological perspective, a linguistic perspective and a pedagogic perspective. To support my argumentation I will present results from several empirical research projects currently carried out at the University of Hamburg.