

English speakers find it difficult to learn Luxembourgish - But help is offered on the Internet

Some grievances are noticed only when you yourself are affected by them: When the husband of Liz Wenger moved to Luxembourg, he immediately wanted to learn Luxembourgish. But they quickly realized that the courses were crowded and they would cost too much money and time. "When we wanted to tackle the issue ourselves, we found that there were virtually no resources for English-speaking people," said Liz Wenger, who holds a "Zertifikat Lëtzebuerger Sprooch a Kultur," in the "Journal" interview. But she did not give up and started to write a book two years ago, which is aimed at precisely this target group. But a book is not enough, her language approach embraces different forms of media.

A differentiated approach

Starting point for anyone interested is the Internet platform LearnLuxembourgish.com. From here you get to the blog and to the various social media accounts. The contents are naturally matched: "On the social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, Google+) I publish short sentences or phrases together with their English translation every day." On the blog however, Liz Wenger publishes more in-depth information. "Here I can explain Luxembourgish in greater detail and point to problems that many English speakers share," explains Liz Wenger.

She also reaches out to the emotions of the reader: "An important point of the blog is to take away the fear of learning a new language, a fear that many adults have in common."

The fact that she currently mainly uses the Internet, has the advantage that she gets immediate feedback on her articles. So she sees that not only foreigners want to learn the language on Facebook and Twitter, but also many Luxembourgers who follow her posts to learn how to spell Luxembourgish. In any case, she sees social media as a great opportunity to reach people: "Social media is like a big megaphone which asks the world "Do you want to learn Luxembourgish?", says Liz Wenger. The response shows that there is interest, because some articles get up to 1,600 likes on Facebook, while the number of visitors on her site can increase to 10,000. The expat community has become aware of the page as well.

New proximity

The book that has been in the works since 2012 will appear at the beginning of 2015. The aim of the book matches the online strategy: bringing Luxembourgish closer to the English-speaking audience with simple concepts and examples.

The book is written in an easily understood style, so that it does not just target native English speakers but also those who learned English as a second or third language.

The online presence will, of course, be maintained, as the objectives don't change: bringing Luxembourgish language and culture closer to as many people as possible.