

LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN BUSINESS STUDIES

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Abstract

The aim of this contribution is to share knowledge and experience of university teachers teaching Language for special purposes, Business Language and Language for Tourism in bachelor studies, using specific teaching methods and evaluating language competences of students according to the demands of the CEFRL. An important issue is the development of new teaching materials using modern information technologies. Language knowledge is a key competence of a university graduate. Subject matters of the studies for future specialists in the travel trade have to comprise topics on the development of tourism, geography of tourism, sustainable tourism, statistical reports, promotion and marketing, sustainable tourism and intercultural communication. Since our accession to the European Union, our country has had to comply with the standards to enable international comparison and to use the same approved unified terminology.

Keywords

Foreign language studies; Tourism; Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Introduction

The University of Business in Prague is a non-profit organization which offers bachelor programs in International Territorial Studies – Tourism, Informatics in Tourism, Aviation Transport Services in Tourism, and Guiding in Tourism. Studying foreign languages belongs to the main subjects. Students study two obligatory foreign languages, and other two languages are optional. Languages are studied during the whole course of their studies although there have been changes in the syllabi with the new accreditation. At present, during the first years of study in the bachelor study program there is a final state exam in the main foreign language at the end of the studies. Bachelor thesis contains topics written in Czech and English as well, and the summary has to be in English. Part of the final exams is a short summary of students' bachelor thesis and a discussion about it. There is of course a lack of knowledge of formal written English. So as a part of language tuition attention is paid to practical issues of the writing process, especially in the third year of study. In this field of study, foreign languages play an inseparable part of everyday life and form an inseparable part of the preparation of specialists in this sphere.

1 Subject Matter of the Foreign Language Studies at the University of Business in Prague

Subject matter of the studies for future specialists in tourism has to comprise topics concerning the development of tourism, future trends in tourism, holiday types, tourism geography, sustainable tourism, statistical reports, promotion and marketing in tourism,

sustainable and responsible tourism, and intercultural communication. Since our accession to the European Union, our country has had to comply with the standards to make international comparison possible; to use the same tourism satellite accounts and sectoral operational programmes for tourism and to use the same approved unified terminology. The tourism industry is one of leading industries worldwide. It is generally considered a significant economic contributor to the gross national product and the largest creator of jobs. It belongs to the most dynamically developing activities. Nowadays tourism is much more sophisticated, the lifestyle of tourists has changed a lot; tourists demand new products and they want to actively participate in tourism activities. All these new products must get a name, without that understanding between consumers and providers of the services would not be possible. The tourism industry offers employment to over one hundred million people in the world and the World Tourism Organization forecasts a further growth of international tourism. With our accession to the EU, there is a strong tendency to using a common language not only because of the fact that the costs of translations are very high.

2 Compliance with EU Policy Concerning Foreign Languages

Nevertheless, since its beginning the policy of the EU has also acted on the principle of multilingualism, which means that the national languages of all member states have the same status. This is related to the European citizens' right of language identity. The value and plurality of languages is being stressed and the interest of language acquisition is supported. On the contrary to globalization tendencies in other fields of social reality, the preservation of all European languages is demanded. [8]

With the accession to the European Union, our country is bound to implement the European Standard, the terminology of which is intended to serve as a common language. The development of tourism depends on the development of the infrastructure in the region. That is why individual regions are encouraged to prepare their own regional operational programmes. Future tourism planners on regional and local levels will have to be able to read EU documents on regional policies and prepare regional development plans and projects. All the cooperation with the EU must be submitted in English. The completion of terminology of the tourism industry has not been completed yet. Professionals use the adjective "tourism" in expressions like "tourism industry", "tourism activity", "tourism product" whereas the laymen uses "tourist" instead.

2.1 Terminology of the Tourism Industry

The terminology of the tourism industry develops very fast; each season brings new tourism products and activities. For students and future specialists in the tourism trade it is important to have an economic background, to master business correspondence and communication. That means, from the economic point of view, that understanding statistical reports in the form of tables and charts showing trends of travel and tourism is a must for a specialist in tourism. Information related to tourism and travel is displayed on pie charts, block charts and line graphs. Learners have to be able to deal with different forms and have to fill in, for example, customer enquiry forms. Further, they have to know the needs of different types of travellers, not to forget to mention visa requirements. Writing business letters – especially travel agency correspondence when dealing with clients, making reservations and making ticketing arrangements, acknowledgements of letters of complaint, is also a prerequisite. An important issue is organizing business trips, conferences and conventions.

The terminology develops very quickly, that is why we cannot limit ourselves to traditional textbooks and we have to cooperate with professionals in the business as well as with regional authorities to update our study materials. Let us take, for example, the term *reception*.

Professionals prefer to use the term *front office* or *front desk* rather than *reception*, because *reception* is also a term for a social event often held in hotels. Promotion and marketing in tourism represent other important issues – there are different types of advertising and promotion and competition in travel agency business is tough. Businesses with desire to participate in the market must know how to gain customer confidence, present their products, and ultimately close the sale. Students have to understand the role of advertising, which plays a major part in helping to sell goods in the market and is often used to launch a new product. Market research is used to identify what the consumers want; its results are used to anticipate what consumers will want in the future, what they are willing to spend on and how to persuade them to purchase products. This information is used before launching a new product to the market. Promotion on the Internet is a new way of promotion and skills as designing a website and planning promotional campaigns belong in here. There are of course problems connected with the development of tourism in the world, with over-consumption and waste and so terms and study fields like sustainable or responsible tourism have appeared. The problems include the overuse of water and natural resources, the possibility of using resources in a sustainable way, maintaining biodiversity and on the other hand finding ways to integrate tourism into planning and to support local economies. We also have to mention intercultural communication. Different countries and cultures have different ways of behaviour and international etiquette is an important topic since social behaviour and local customs have to be well known by a professional in the travel trade. He or she should be knowledgeable about introducing, bargaining, tipping, behaviour in business meetings etc. Let us mention some examples, e.g. introducing and behaviour towards women – when meeting a person in Spain or France, it is acceptable to kiss a lady on her cheeks. In Egypt and the Middle East this would be unacceptable, but it is acceptable with men. For the Japanese, it is unacceptable to blow one's nose in public; and touching a child's head in Thailand can even be legally sanctioned.

2.2 Topics of the Syllabus

Guiding. Working as a Tour Guide. How to be a Good Guide. A Guided Tour. Guide Commentaries. Promotion and Marketing in Tourism. Types of Advertising and Promotion.

What is Marketing. Selling Holidays. How to Sell a Product. Types and Market Segments. Holiday Advertisements. Holiday Promotion on the Internet. Designing a Website. Planning a Promotional Campaign. Developments in Tourism. Future Trends in Tourism. Advantages and Disadvantages of Tourism. The History of Tourism. Statements about Travel and Tourism. Future Trends in Tourism. The Effects of Tourism in the World. How to be a Good Tourist. The Impact of Tourism. Tourism and the Environment. Sustainable Tourism.

Marketing Tourism Responsibility. Computer Language and Computer Safety at Workplace. Intercultural Communication.

2.3 Entrance Exams in Languages and Forming Study Groups

During the first years of the existence of the University of Business in Prague there were regular entrance exams in languages as well. This was a good thing to give an overview about the level of the foreign language knowledge of our prospective students. Even if language groups were not formed according to the exact language knowledge of the students, the overall results at the end of the term were satisfying. Students in these mixed groups were motivated and their final results at the final exams were satisfying. Nevertheless, there was a period when we tried to group students according to their level of language knowledge even for the study of their first language. We found out, quite surprisingly, that students with a low level of language knowledge – beginners and lower intermediates – were not at least

motivated to learn more, to improve their language skills to get faster to a higher level, but they were satisfied within the group of equals.

According to this experience we do not try to form lower and higher levels of groups according to language knowledge concerning the first language, in which students have to pass their final exams. Students who enter tertiary education, i.e. the university, are supposed to have a good command of at least one foreign language and have passed their school leaving exam in this language. So we start teaching the language as a LSP (a language for special purposes) at intermediate to upper-intermediate level using corresponding textbooks. There are altogether six terms, or three years of teaching the first foreign language. We started with placement tests in the first lesson in the 2nd year of study of the academic year 2011/2012.

2.4 Test Sample

1. Whereyou born?

- a) did
- b) are
- c) were

2. Buses aren'tcars.

- a) as fast as
- b) as fast than
- c) faster as
- d) that

3. My birthday is26th March.

- a) on
- b) in
- c) at

4. Howyour name?

- a) are you spelling
- b) do you spell
- c) spell you

5. Wheretravel this summer?

- a) will you
- b) do you
- c) are you going to

B1

6. I don't like getting up early.

- a) So do I.
- b) Neither do I.
- c) So I.

7. Have a cup of coffee with me,?

- a) don't you
- b) won't you
- c) will you

8. After Ireading the book I went to the library.

- a) finish
- b) have finished
- c) had finished

9. I'd rather you anyone what I said.

- a) didn't tell
- b) wouldn't tell
- c) don't tell

10. I feel lonely in this city. I wish I.....more people here.

- a) know
- b) knew
- c) known

B2

11. Shevery pretty when she was young.

- a) had to be
- b) must be
- c) must have been

12. Whowas coming to see me this morning?

- a) you said
- b) did you say
- c) did you tell

13. The matchby 9 o'clock.

- a) will finish
- b) will be finishing
- c) will have finished

14. They climbed through the window without.....

- a) having seen
- b) being seen
- c) having be seen

15. It was.....journey.

- a) a three-hours
- b) three hours
- c) a three-hour

Read the text and choose the best word or phrase. Fill in the blanks with the correct letter (a–o). There are more words than you need.

The Phonecia is the latest addition to our world-famous (1).....of luxury liners. It has over 100 fully equipped (2)..... and has a large(3)with a wonderful view of the sea. The (4)..... include a gymnasium, a cinema, a ballroom, and on the top (5)there is a sun garden and swimming pool. There are three restaurants, and we also offer twenty-four-hour (6)..... From the moment you (7), the (8)..... will be on hand to look after your every need. We pride ourselves on putting our (9)first and are sure that when you (10)....., you will want to return.

- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------------|---------------|
| a) facilities | b) fleet | c) floor | d) passengers |
| e) check-out | f) embark | g) chain | h) porthole |
| i) double rooms | j) deck | k) two-berth cabins | l) crew |
| m) staff | n) disembark | o) cabin service | |

Conclusion

The results have shown that level B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages was reached by 32% of students, 65% of students were at level B1 and 3% at level A1, which is of course not satisfying. Our aim is to prepare students for their final exams at the end of the third year of study when they have to pass a written test and an oral exam on at least level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The oral exam consists of two parts – the first one is a question from 25 exam topics and the second part is a presentation and discussion about the student's bachelor thesis. That is why language for special purpose, in our case Business Language and Language for Tourism is a presupposition for passing the exam.

Literature

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VÝUKA JAZYKŮ V BAKALÁŘSKÉM STUDIU

Cílem tohoto příspěvku je sdílení zkušeností vysokoškolských učitelů vyučujících odborný jazyk pro ekonomy a pro odborníky v cestovním ruchu v rámci bakalářského studia s ohledem na specifické výukové metody a hodnocení jazykových kompetencí studentů vzhledem k požadavkům SERR pro jazyky. Jedním z témat je vývoj nových učebních materiálů pomocí informačních technologií. Znalost jazyka je jedna z klíčových kompetencí absolventa vysoké školy. Předmět studia budoucích odborníků v cestovním ruchu musí obsahovat témata o rozvoji cestovního ruchu, budoucí trendy, geografii cestovního ruchu, udržitelný cestovní ruch, statistické zprávy, propagaci a marketing a interkulturní komunikaci. Se vstupem do Evropské Unie musíme splňovat standard umožňující srovnání v mezinárodním měřítku v cestovním ruchu a používat stejnou odbornou terminologii.

SPRACHAUSBILDUNG IM RAHMEN DES BACHELORSTUDIUMS

Dieser Beitrag berichtet über die Erfahrungen von Hochschullehrern, die im Rahmen des Bachelorstudiums ökonomische Fachsprache sowie Fachterminologie aus dem Bereich Reiseverkehr unterrichten, über spezifische Lehrmethoden und die Bewertung der Sprachkompetenzen gemäß den Anforderungen des Gemeinsamen Europäischen Referenzrahmens für Sprachen. Einer der Punkte beschäftigt sich mit der Bearbeitung neuer Lehrmaterialien und mit der Nutzung moderner Informationstechnologien. Die Kenntnis von Fremdsprachen ist eine Schlüsselkompetenz von Hochschülern. Durchgenommen werden Themen des Reiseverkehrs, z. B. künftige Trends, Urlaubstypen, Tourismusgeographie, Tourismuspropagierung und Tourismusmarketing und interkulturelle Kommunikation. Mit dem Eintritt in die Europäische Union muss unser Land gewisse Standards erfüllen und nicht zuletzt eine einheitliche Tourismusterminologie nutzen.

NAUCZANIE JĘZYKÓW NA STUDIACH LICENCJACKICH

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest współdzielenie doświadczeń nauczycieli akademickich uczących języka specjalistycznego dla ekonomistów i specjalistów branży turystycznej w ramach studiów licencjackich, przy uwzględnieniu specyficznej metody nauczania oraz oceny kompetencji językowych studentów pod kątem wymogów CEFR (Wspólne Europejskie Ramy Odniesienia) w zakresie biegłości językowej. Jednym z tematów jest rozwój nowych materiałów dydaktycznych na bazie technologii informacyjnych. Znajomość języka obcego stanowi jedną z kluczowych umiejętności absolwenta wyższej uczelni. W programie studiów dla przyszłych specjalistów branży turystycznej muszą się znaleźć tematy dotyczące rozwoju turystyki, przyszłych trendów, geografii ruchu turystycznego, zrównoważonej turystyki sprawozdań statystycznych, promocji i marketingu oraz komunikacji międzykulturowej. Wraz z przystąpieniem do Unii Europejskiej musimy spełniać standard umożliwiający porównanie ruchu turystycznego w skali międzynarodowej oraz stosować tę samą terminologię specjalistyczną.