

JOINT REPORT ON REALIZATION OF THE COURSE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF IN HIGHER EDUCATION -- ELEMENTARY LEVEL

General data: The course was developed and organized to fulfil the tasks within WP4.3 (Improving conditions for the development of English language skills in university administrative staff) and it is in line with advanced EU practices to provide language support to university and college services dealing with international cooperation and mobility. The model of a tailor-made ESP course was designed and planned to be realized within 30 - 60 classes (depending on the participants' prior language knowledge), covering specific vocabulary items and providing material for practicing all language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

The course material: The course is based on a coursebook especially made for university and administrative staff in charge to receive and communicate with incoming students. The course book, entitled *English in Higher Education Administration – Elementary Course Book*, was written by Jasmina Djordjevic, Savka Blagojevic & Biljana Mistic Ilic from the University of Niš. 200 copies of the book were delivered to all partner HEIs in Serbia, so that each course participant was provided by a personal copy. The course comprises key segments of administrative tasks related to admission and servicing of international students and a range of materials for listening and reading covering a variety of real-life situations in higher education administration, focusing on authentic materials and settings in Serbia and Serbian higher education. More information about the course book: <http://www.fuse.ni.ac.rs/workpackage-4/workpackage-4-news/215-english-in-higher-education-administration-elementary-course-book>

The objectives of the course: to develop English language skills among administrative staff working with international students and researchers at international offices and student services at universities, faculties and colleges in Serbia. The units and activities of the course are aimed at steadily developing both the learner's competence and confidence, so that by the end of the course they will be able to carry out their communicative tasks effectively.

The realization of the course: The course was realized at five Serbian partner universities (University of Niš, University of Belgrade, University of Kragujevac, State University of Novi Pazar, and at the University of Novi Sad. It was not held at the College of Tourism – Belgrade because its administrative unit is very small and includes only one person who is always helped by English teacher when foreign students/researchers visit this college. The reports were sent to the WP4 leader, supported by the analysis based on the questionnaire filled out by the course participants.

Each partner university organized the course according to their actual needs, concerning both the number of classes and the participants included in the course. Thus, a total number of course participants at five Serbian partner universities was 113 (90 female

and 23 male participants): 32 from the University of Niš, 25 from the University of Belgrade, 26 from the University of Kragujevac, 10 from the State University of Novi Pazar, and 20 from the University of Novi Sad.

Both the questionnaire and the instructions for analyzing the survey (in Serbian), and the translation of the questionnaire in English are available at:

http://mngt.fuse.ni.ac.rs/projects/wp4/dmsf?folder_id=110 The attendance lists of participants and photos taken during the courses are also uploaded and available at WP4 MNGT

COURSES HELD AT SERBIAN PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

1) University of Niš

The course was held from 1st October to 30th November 2016 (32 classes) and conducted by Jasmina Đorđević, PhD. A total of 32 participants completed the course and received certificates of attendance, while 29 of them filled out the questionnaire.

Results regarding the closed questions 2-8 show that:

- Almost half of the participants (41.38%) stated that their expectations from the course were to improve their communication skills in English in the field of administration. The second most prominent group (31.03%) answered that they expected to enhance their knowledge of English. A few participants, five (5) of them (17.24%) stated that they wanted to learn new vocabulary related to the field of administration and three (3) participants (10.34%) stated they wanted to take course in English.
- Most of the participants of the training course (62.06%) stated that their expectations were met by the course whereas approximately one third of them (31.03%) responded that their expectations had been exceeded. Only two (2) participants (6.90%) stated that their expectations had only partially been met.
- All participants (100%) agreed that the coursebook designed for the course was adequate.
- The teaching material motivated almost all the participants (96.55%) whereas only one (1) participant (3.44%) stated that they were not motivated enough.
- All of the course participants (100%) believed that the training course was interactive and that they were fully able to engage in all activities.
- A great majority of the course participants (89.65%) would recommend this type of course to their colleagues whereas 3 participants (10.34%) expressed they had some reservations regarding further recommendation.
- A great majority of the course participants (89.65%) confirmed the applicability of the course, whereas only three (3) of them (10.34%) believe that they would only partially benefit from the course.

Comments and recommendations

All attendants agree that courses like this should be organized on a regular basis. The main criticism expressed regards the duration and the number of classes as the participants believe that the course should last more than 32 classes. The attendants also believe that a subsequent level should be organized and thus provide them with deeper knowledge of English for administrative purposes. The general conclusion pointed out by the candidates is that they have benefited considerably from the course.

2) University of Belgrade

The course was held from 19th of September until 14th of October 2016 (60 classes) and was conducted by Milica Abramović, lecturer, with approximately 15 participants who attended each class. The questionnaire was completed by 15 out of 25 course participants (60%)

The results of the survey based on the questionnaire show that:

- The attendees joined the course in order to enhance their knowledge of the English language (33%), acquire the necessary vocabulary (40%) and enhance communication skills (66.6%).
- Almost all of the participants who completed the questionnaire agreed that the course had met (80%) or surpassed (13%) their expectations.
- All of them agreed that the course book was suitable for the course (100%)
- Also all of them think that the program provided sufficient motivation (100%)
- All participants believe that the course was interactive and engaging (100%)
- Also all of them would recommend this course to other colleagues (100%).
- Everyone agreed that the course was beneficial to a great degree (93%) and to a certain extent (7%).

Comments and recommendations

The participants of the course paid particular compliments to the lecturer, Milica Abramović, and asked for a continuation of the course (though a less intensive one, 2 or 3 times a week). One participant suggested using professional texts for reading practice.

3) University of Kragujevac

The course was held from 10th of October to 2nd of November 2016,(20 classes), and conducted by dr Branka Milenkovic. The number of participants was fluctating: 30 applied, 26 attended and 11 filled out the survey.The beginning of the course was announced at the UNIKG site: http://kg.ac.rs/vest.php?vest_je=1186

The results of the survey show that:

- Approximately half of the participants of the training course (45.5%) stated that their expectations from the course were to improve communication skills in English in their field of administration. The second most prominent group (27.3%) answered that they expected to enhance administration vocabulary.
- Most of the participants of the training course (81.8%) stated that the course met their expectations or and approximately one fifth of them (18.2%) responded that the course only partially met their expectations.
- The distribution of responses to this question was twofold, as a little over half of the participants responded that the provided course textbook was fully in accordance with the training course (54.5 %), whereas a little than half of the participants (45.5 %), responded that the textbook partially corresponded to the purpose of the course.
- The teaching material motivated most of the participants (81.8%), while fewer of them (18.2%) stated that they were not motivated enough.
- All of the course participants (100%) believed that the training course was interactive and that they were fully able to engage in all activities.
- All of the course participants (100%) would recommend this type of course to their colleagues.
- Most of the course participants (81.8%) confirmed the applicability of the course, whereas only approximately one fifth of them (18.2%) believe that the course would only partially benefit them.

Comments and recommendations

The course participants were extremely satisfied with the opportunity to be involved in the course and most of them suggested that this course should become a yearly practice at the University of Kragujevac. However, they showed the greatest concern with regards to the course schedule and being able to accommodate the classes with their obligations at the department. Therefore, we suggest a data analysis with regards to participants' availability prior to conducting the course in the future.

4) State University of Novi Pazar

The course was held from 14 October, 2016. – 5 November, 2016. (20 classes), and conducted by Sibela Eminović, lecturer. Course participants: 12 applied, 10 attended (fluctuating number), 9 filled out the questionnaire.

The results of the survey based on the questionnaire show that:

- The most prominent group (44.4%) answered that they expected to enhance their knowledge of English. The second large group (33.3%) stated that their expectations from the course were to improve communication skills in English in their field of administration.
- Almost half of the participants of the training course (44.4%) stated that the course met their expectations, or beyond their expectations (44.4%) and only one of them (11.1%) responded that the course only partially met his expectations.
- Participants responded that the provided course textbook was fully in accordance with the training course (88.8%), whereas only (11.1%), responded that the textbook partially corresponded to the purpose of the course.
- The teaching material motivated most of the participants (77.7%), while fewer of them (22.2%) stated that they were not motivated enough.
- All of the course participants (100%) believed that the training course was interactive and that they were fully able to engage in all activities.
- All of the course participants (100%) would recommend this type of course to their colleagues.
- All of the course participants (100%) confirmed the applicability of the course.

Comments and recommendations

The course participants were satisfied with the opportunity to revise and improve their knowledge of English, get introduced with vocabulary useful for their work, and expressed their willingness to continue with this on-the-job training regularly. The attendants also mentioned they highly appreciate the course textbooks, which might be helpful later in their work. The only obstacle was to adapt the course schedule to their office activities. Most of attendants suggested longer period with less numbers of classes as more convenient option. All attendants were pleasantly surprised with friendly atmosphere, team work and good communication with the colleagues from other services. It was an useful experience to be continued.

5) University of Novi Sad

The course was held from 10th of October, 2016 to 31st of November 2016. (40 classes), and was conducted by Vesna Lazovic PhD, Senior Lecture. As for the course participants: 23 applied, 20 attended (fluctuating number), 14 filled out the questionnaire.

The results of the survey based on the filled out questionnaire show that:

- Almost half of the participants of the training course (43%) stated that their expectations from the course were to improve communication skills in English in their field of administration. The second most prominent group (36%) answered that they expected to enhance administration vocabulary.
- Most of the participants of the training course (71%) stated that the course completely met their expectations and approximately one third (29%) responded that the course exceeded their expectations.

- The majority of the participants responded that the provided course textbook was fully in accordance with the training course (86%), whereas 14% responded that the textbook partially corresponded to the purpose of the course.
- The teaching material motivated most of the participants (93%), while one participant (7%) stated that s/he was not motivated enough.
- All of the course participants (100%) believed that the training course was interactive and that they were fully able to engage in all activities.
- Almost all of the course participants (93%) would recommend this type of course to their colleagues, one of them (7%) would recommend it with reservation.
- Most of the course participants (93%) confirmed the applicability of the course, whereas only 7% (one participant) believe that the course would only partially benefit them.

Comments and recommendations

The course participants were extremely satisfied with the opportunity to be involved in the course and most of them suggested that this course should be organized on a regular basis. They also suggested more advanced courses as well as teaching/ learning in smaller groups.

General conclusion

The language course *English in Higher Education Administration - Elementary Course* held at partner HE institutions in Serbia from October to November 2016, is a significant output within WP4.3, which did not only fulfill the original plans to develop model for English-for-specific-purposes courses for university administrative staff, but surpassed it by providing concrete language classes for administrative staff. Also, the coursebook designed for this specialized course and delivered to all course attendants can be considered an added value to WP4.3. Moreover, this course book can be of great help to administrative staff after they have completed the course and use it in their future work.

According to the questionnaire delivered after the course had been completed, all course attendants(113) were extremely satisfied with the course and thankful for having the opportunity to improve the language skills directly needed for their profession. This fact, undoubtedly, will have an important impact to managements of Serbian HEIs to consider the idea of organizing this type of course on a regular basis in future and with more administrative staff included. Thus, by developing the elementary English language course and designing the course book, WP4 team has made a solid ground for sustainability of this course, which in future can be also further developed into similar A2 or B1 course.