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Linguistic Challenges for Migrant Retail Workers

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1 Introduction

The project “Meet the Need. Vocational Teaching Material Supporting the Integration of Migrants into the Labour Market” aims at developing sector-related vocational teaching materials which support the integration of migrants into the labour market. The project started in January 2011 and will run until December 2012.

The Meet the Need Project is supported by the European Commission within the Lifelong Learning Programme, Grundtvig. In Austria, the project is co-financed by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture. The Research Institute of the Red Cross is project coordinator. The project consortium consists of the following project partners from six European countries: Research Institute of the Red Cross (Austria), queraum kultur- und sozialforschung (Austria), lernraum.wien (Die Wiener Volkshochschulen GmbH (Austria)), Asociatia pentru Educatie si Dezvoltare Durabila (Romania), Mhtconsult, (Denmark), Anniesland Research, Consultancy Limited (United Kingdom), Thüringer Volkshochschulverband e.V. (Germany), and Agenzia per lo Sviluppo Empolese Valdelsa (Italy).

Austria, Denmark, Italy and Germany are developing training materials for different sectors whereby Austria concentrates on material for the retail sector.

Background of the project

Language has many dimensions: It influences our personal and social identities, furthers cohesiveness within a certain group, and gives us a socio-cultural, religious and value-related structure, which we can relate to (Kuss & Pfabigan, 2009, p. 39). It is used for everyday communication but also as an important resource in educational contexts and the workplace.

Many migrants, who have to change their language during the course of their day, may suffer from lack of structure and loss of a sense of belonging. Migration often entails maintaining the balance between core aspects of personal and social identity as well as opening up to a new “world of language” (Krumm, 2008).

The linguistic demands in the workplace are on the increase. Skills such as teamwork, (oral) communication with colleagues and written documentation and record-keeping are required more and more often (Paleit, 2000). Many people who do not have German as a first language, but have already attended language courses and have good language skills, are nevertheless confronted with substantial problems when trying to access qualified jobs. When someone cannot speak or write accurately, this can often be interpreted as professional deficiency (Knapp, 2002). Results of a Statistics Austria survey showed that more than one out of four migrants (27.5%) felt over-

qualified for their current job. In comparison, only one out of ten people without a migrational background feel overqualified in its occupation (Statistik Austria, 2009).

Language knowledge is one key area of competence for migrants' labour market integration in the receiving country. Finding adequate and qualified work can be challenging for migrants. At the same time it is necessary for the host society to stop applying a deficit-oriented model when it comes to defining migrants' professional resources (Meyer, 2008); „little regard is taken of the migrants' existing linguistic competence. This means that both the individuals themselves, as well as the host country, do not make sufficient use of these skills“(Showmi, 2012).

Second language teachers are reporting an increasing demand for vocation related language teaching materials (which provide specific vocation related terms, exercises and explanations) (Zelger, 2007). Improving language skills for the workplace contributes to an enhancement of migrants' labour market opportunities; at the same time bolsters their self-confidence by giving them access to vocationally relevant knowledge and skills. Furthermore, it supports the process of becoming familiar with the “second (or third) culture”, thus strengthening social affiliation.

For the successful teaching of e.g. German as a second language, competent and professionally trained teachers, who are provided with adequate materials (Hufnagl et al. 2011), are required. These materials should be the basis for needs' related (language) instruction. The current situation for teachers (precarious working conditions), however, often does not allow them to undergo initial needs' analysis with their learners in order to understand what they really need and to then create tailor-made teaching/learning materials accordingly. At the same time, appropriate textbooks or other authentic material for these courses are not being made available. The project „Meet the Need“ is a first step towards closing this gap.

Objectives

The “Meet the Need” Project follows these objectives:

- Analysis of the requirements for vocation related language teaching materials
- Development of a compendium consisting of vocation related language teaching materials for five sectors for use by second language teachers
- Promotion of social inclusion of migrants by enhancing their vocational second language competence, thus heightening their chances of labour market integration.

Target Groups

The compendium is developed for second language teachers and will be a resource for their general second language training. Moreover the compendium will also include self-study materials for the learners.

Procedure

Four project partners will work on (basic) teaching materials for a specific field. Austria (FRK and lernraum.wien) will develop materials for the retail sector.

The needs' analysis was conducted in two steps. The first step included desk research to identify which sector or labour market field the teaching materials should aim to encompass. The selected sector had to meet the following criteria: a relevant number of persons with migration background are already working in the sector, and the future demand in the chosen sector is believed to hold good chances for persons with migration background. For this purpose, quantitative data and reports from Statistics Austria (statistics on population, migration, labour market, micro-census), from the Main Association of Austrian Social Security Institutions and from the Public Employment Service Austria (for example the qualification barometer) were analysed. Furthermore, relevant reports and research material which was published in the last few years were examined (Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich, 2011; Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich. ABI, 2010; European Migration Network, 2011; Fassmann & Reeger, 2008; Statistik Austria, 2009, 2010). The results of this desk research are laid out in Chapter 2. At the same time, lernraum.wien conducted an inventory and assessment of already available teaching materials and selected good practise materials.

The relevant occupational field or industry sector was selected according to the collected data. FRK and the evaluation partner queraum collaborated in the development of interview guidelines for the second step: the conduction of guideline based interviews and focus groups with managing personnel, retail staff and teachers in order to gain insight into the requirements for vocational teaching materials.

The results, which are laid out in this report establish the foundation for the next work packages: In workshops with vocational experts' relevant terms and phrases, understanding of employer expectations and challenges for migrants will be gathered. The collected material will be reviewed by language teachers and then, in a final phase, it will be merged to a compendium.

2 Rationale

In the 1960ies and 70ies the Austrian Labour Market Policy concerning foreign labour was characterised by the so called “Guest Worker System“ (Castles 2006; Schierup et al. 2006; Fassmann 2008, 11; Bauböck, 1994). Foreign workers, who came mainly from Yugoslavia and Turkey, were recruited to primarily meet the demand for low skilled labour. A rotation system was introduced to avoid settlement of these guest workers. The foreign labour force was supposed to meet the demand for labour only temporarily, and to return back to their countries of origin when they were no longer needed. In fact the guest worker system failed. Although the recruitment was stopped in the 70ies, due to family reunification and other reasons many former guest workers became permanent residents or Austrian citizens. Due to family reunification, the number of immigrating women from Yugoslavia and Turkey has increased since the 1980ies. Nowadays former Yugoslavian (36%) and Turkish (13%) citizens make up 50% of the foreign population (Fassmann & Reeger, 2008, p. 6) (see Table 1). Persons who belong to the second generation – i.e. who were born in Austria and have – some of them - acquired citizenship, are widely noticed as those facing language and educational deficits which are leading to further social problems. Furthermore this topic has become highly contested and exploited in a populist manner by some politicians.

The guest workers of the past were mainly employed in low skilled sectors and their descendants had less education in comparison with the general population (European Migration Network, 2011; Fassmann & Reeger, 2008, p. 14). The problems which were generally ascribed to this group were not generally made by the guest worker himself, but by the system, which did not aim for inclusion.

Since the 1980ies a growing number of immigrants came from the former East Block Countries (mainly from Hungary, Czech, Slovakia). In addition, refugees and asylum seekers from many other crisis weary countries (Balkan, Africa) also came to Austria. The Austrian immigration law and labour market policy became much more restrictive (Bauböck, 1994; Castles, 2006; Schierup, Hansen, & Castles, 2006). The strategy of temporary employment was continued in some sectors (e.g. agriculture). Labour market access was limited only to highly qualified persons and to cover labour shortage. Due to the rigid labour market policy, Austria has a flourishing informal and irregular work system in areas such as construction, catering and social and care work (European Migration Network, 2011, p. 105; Forba, 2007).

Since Austria’s EU accession (1995), EU and EC members have partly (depending on accessing the EU) free access to the Austrian labour market. Nowadays, 50% of the migrants come from EU- and EC member states (including also Austrian repatriates). This group comprises the total

inflow; but this does not mean that all of them are working in Austria (European Migration Network, 2011; Fassmann & Reeger, 2008).

Table 1: Population by citizenship on January 1, 2007

Citizenship	Absolute	as % of the total population	as % of all foreign citizens
Total	8,298,923	100.0	
Austria	7,472,910	90.0	
Foreign	826,013	10.0	100.0
Europe	717,894	8.7	86.9
EU-14	161,803	1.9	19.6
<i>Germany</i>	<i>113,668</i>	<i>1.4</i>	<i>13.8</i>
EU-10 (2004)	84,123	1.0	10.2
<i>Poland</i>	<i>34,676</i>	<i>0.4</i>	<i>4.2</i>
EU-2 (2007)	29,958	0.4	3.6
<i>Romania</i>	<i>23,048</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>2.8</i>
Former Yugoslavia	297,141	3.6	36.0
<i>Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>	<i>86,427</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>10.5</i>
<i>Croatia</i>	<i>57,103</i>	<i>0.7</i>	<i>6.9</i>
<i>Serbia and Montenegro</i>	<i>137,289</i>	<i>1.7</i>	<i>16.6</i>
Rest of Europe	144,869	1.7	16.6
<i>Turkey</i>	<i>108,808</i>	<i>1.3</i>	<i>13.2</i>
Africa	20,897	0.3	2.5
America	16,898	0.2	2.0
Asia	54,855	0.7	6.6
Other	15,469	0.2	1.9

Source: Fassmann, 2008, p. 5 (Statistics Austria)

The past decades showed increasing numbers of immigrants from Western neighbouring countries – the majority coming from Germany. Workers belonging to EU-15 and EC member states do not need a permit of residence or a work permit, and no language skills are required. Just for persons of some of the new member states (enlargement of 2004) the labour market access is restricted until 2011 or 2014 (Fassmann 2008, p. 7). So far, the temporary or circular labour migration by members of these countries was substantial and irregular (undocumented or illegal) work in the service sector, especially nursing, caring, construction occurred (European Migration Network, 2011; Forba, 2007, p. 105) is notable.

Table 2: Total Labourforce in ISCO-88 by Professional Groups 1-9 and Citizenship 2009

Nationality	abs.	rel.
Austria	3.571.034	89,40%
Foreign	422.910	10,60%
EU-15	105.245	2,60%
EU-10	55.008	1,40%
EU-2	20.428	0,50%
Thirdstate nationals	242.229	6,10%
	3.993.944	100%

(Source: European Migration Network, 2011, p. 39, Labourforce survey 2009)

2.1 Legal Status

In contrast to EU and EC citizens, third-country nationals are required to fulfil strict requirements if they want to access the labour market or migrate to Austria. Third state members vary according to legal status. Asylum seekers and persons eligible to subsidiary protection are not allowed to work legally in Austria. Third state members who do not seek asylum need a long term resident (EC) or working permit, which is regulated by the Red-White-Red Card Plus since 2010. The employment of third country nationals has to be verified by the labour market service or is quoted. There are some groups who are exempt from this regulation such as household nurses, newspaper distributors, voluntary workers, au-pairs, internships, researchers (Beratungszentrum für Migranten und Migrantinnen, 2011; European Migration Network, 2011; Fassmann & Reeger, 2008, p. 14f).

In general, the access to the Austrian labour market is extremely restricted. The political goal is to streamline the access to highly skilled workers or experts in a certain demand area, which cannot be covered by domestic personnel. Nevertheless, the demand for low and medium skilled labour in Austria is high – even in European comparison. Labour market policy tries to remedy the shortage of low skilled labour by temporarily permitting migrants to work (e.g. seasonal workers, circular workers in the agricultural sector) – therefore de facto continuing on with the guest worker system (Castles, 2006; European Migration Network, 2011, p. 4, 24, 62; Schierup, Hansen, & Castles, 2006).

General trends of higher flexibility and de-standardisation of employment affect workers with migration background in the same way as the domestic workforce. Self-employment has increased significantly in the last two decades (Fassmann & Reeger, 2008), and new types of work relationships have been established for example in the home nursing and care sectors (Bachinger, 2010).

2.2 Socio-demographic Composition of the Migrant Labour Force

The socio-demographic composition of the migrant labour force has considerably changed since the 1970s in terms of country of origin, age, gender and education/qualification.

Gender

The higher rate of migrating women is influenced by many factors such as changing family patterns, changes in the gendered division of labour and increased labour demand caused by the expansion of the service sector (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2000; Sassen, 2001). Regardless of their educational level, many women perform undocumented work in the household sector. More women are migrating from recent EU member countries and are finding employment in healthcare and social services, tourism and domestic services. Women from third state countries and those who do not have a work permit are also working in these sectors. Especially women from EU-10 countries with a higher educational level find themselves working in the service sector in de-qualifying work positions (Fassmann & Reeger, 2008, p. 17). Women from third state countries such as the former Soviet States or as Belarus and those who do not have a work permit are also working in these sectors – but mainly in undocumented work relationships.

Qualification and Labour Market Position / Occupational Position

The educational level and labour market position of the foreign workforce differs by country of origin. EU citizens are employed mainly in the service sector, whereby EU-15 immigrants find themselves in higher qualified sectors of the labour market¹, EU-10 immigrants hold a middle position, but tend to be employed below their level of qualification.² EU 15 citizens are to a higher extent employed in the real-estate and business related sectors and EU-10 citizens are increasingly finding work in the health and social care sectors. Citizens from former Yugoslavia and Turkey are to a high proportion employed in semi- and unskilled sectors of the labour market. They remain in sectors which are avoided by the domestic labour force such as manufacturing, goods production, accommodation, and catering. The highest proportion of migrants (22%) works in manufacturing, construction, transport and mining. 19% of this group are third-country nationals (European Migration Network, 2011, p. 61f; Fassmann & Reeger, 2008, p. 17, 18).³ Second

¹ Highly skilled professionals in engineering and related professions (ISCO3) are mainly from another EU-15 country (6% of the total), followed by EU-10 (4%) and third country nationals (3% of the total) (European Migration Network, 2011, p. 61f).

² “Almost 40 percent are employed as semi-skilled or unskilled workers even though almost 90 per cent have completed an education by far exceeding compulsory schooling. “Hence de-qualification is another attribute of the new East-West migration” (Fassmann & Reeger, 2008, p. 17).

³ According to ENM in housekeeping and restaurant services 21% of all employees are migrants. The major group are third country nationals (12% of all employees), followed by other EU-15 nationals (5% of all workers in 2009, largely from Germany), by citizens of EU-10 countries (3%) and EU-2 countries (1%). 9% of all health professionals except nursing are migrants, basically from EU-15 (7%) and EU-10 (1%). Nursing

generation migrants increasingly work in the wholesale and retail trade sectors. The proportion of second generation migrants in this sector is 22% (first and second generation 17% in total). Wholesale and retail trade and manufacturing are the only sectors in which the proportion of second generation persons is higher than the proportion of first generation workers (Statistik Austria, 2010).

Table 3: Employed Persons 2009 by Economic Activity, Migration Background and Generation

Employed persons 2009 by economic activity, migration background and generation Source: Statistics Austria, micro census, labour force survey 2009, yearly average, population in households)				
Sector and occupation (Economic activity)	employed persons			
	without migration background	with migration background		
		total	first	second
			Generation	
	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
Wholesale and Retail trade	15,6%	17,1%	16,2%	22,5%
Manufacturing	14,9%	15,1%	15,1%	15,5%
Accommodation and Food Service Activities	5,0%	12,3%	13,4%	6,0%
Construction	8,2%	10,8%	11,4%	7,5%
Human Health and Social Work Activities	9,7%	8,6%	8,8%	7,6%
Administration and Support Service Activities	2,6%	7,4%	8,0%	4,3%
Transportation and Storage	4,9%	5,4%	5,3%	5,9%
Education	6,6%	4,2%	3,8%	6,4%
Professional Scientific and Technical Activities	5,4%	4,1%	4,2%	3,6%
Public Administration and Defence, Compulsory Social Security	7,7%	2,5%	2,1%	4,9%
Personal service activities	2,5%	2,3%	2,2%	3,0%
Information and Communication	2,7%	2,1%	1,9%	3,4%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	1,6%	2,1%	2,2%	1,4%
Financial and Insurance Activities	3,9%	1,9%	1,4%	4,7%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	6,4%	1,1%	1,2%	0,9%
Real Estate Activities	0,7%	1,0%	1,0%	1,3%

personnel is not captured in the occupational classification of 223, but rather in 323 (non-academic nursing and care), where more than 11% of all workers had a foreign citizenship in 2009.: 8% of employees in personal care work are migrant workers, mostly female, evenly spread over the various source countries (3% of the total from third countries, 2% ex aequo from EU-15 and EU-10 and 1% from EU-2) (European Migration Network, 2011, p. 61f).

Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities	1,2%	0,6%	0,5%	1,1%
Activities of Households as Employers	0,2%	0,3%	0,4%	0,1%

2.3 Future Labour Demand

Forecasts identify shortages in skilled and highly skilled labour segments mainly related to positions in the EU. Nevertheless in Austria, in 2009, medium skilled positions comprised 54% of the 52.700 vacancies, followed by highly skilled jobs. Engineering and health care are the two main sectors where labour shortages exist. Besides a quantitative shortage, a qualitative shortage has also been identified due to the lack of professionally trained domestic workers. This is particularly the case for the social and health care sectors. The validation and recognition of skills and qualifications is considered a major problem in this respect (European Migration Network, 2011, p. 103f).

Retail Trade

Based on the results of the desk research on the labour market, FRK and lernraum.wien decided to concentrate on learning materials for the retail trade sector. The wholesale and retail trade sectors are the second largest private sector employers in Austria. Half of the enterprises in this sector are retailers - the three largest areas being clothing, food and DIY/building materials. Employment grew by 7 % in the wholesale and retail trade between 2002 – 2007 and the retail trade is forecasted to continue growing over the next five years (Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich. ABI, 2010, p. 162).

Against the background of this data it appears reasonable to improve the labour market opportunities for immigrants by developing language learning materials for this sector. As mentioned above, a growing number of employees in this sector are already from a migrant background. Persons with migration background from former YU and Turkey, especially those who are low skilled, are at high risk for unemployment (Fassmann & Reeger, 2008, p. 17). Therefore an especially vulnerable group can be targeted by elaborating language teaching material for the sector retail trade.

According to the Qualifikationsbarometer of the labour market service communication skills are particularly required in the sector retail trade. Working in retail trade means to have frequent contact with customers. Employers request strong communication skills, friendliness and sales talent (Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich. ABI, 2010). Thus it is very important have good language skills in order to be employable.

In the next section the methods of data collection and the results of the interviews with managers, employees and teachers, which FRK and lernraum.wien conducted, are presented.

3 Methods

After reflecting desk research's results on labour market and the inventory of learning material, guideline based interviews and focus groups with managing personnel, employees and second language teachers were conducted in order to explore the requirements for specific vocational teaching material.

3.1 Description of the Sample

3.1.1 Overview of the Sample

Table 4: Sample

Method	Managers	m	f	Migrants	m	f	Teachers	m	f
Face to face interviews	7	3	4	2		2			
Telephone interviews	0			0					
Focus group				4 (1)		4			
Online survey							13	3	10
others									
TOTAL each group	7	3	4	6		6	13		

3.1.2 Interviews with Employers

FRK contacted seven headquarters of the largest food retail chains and DIY markets in Austria. Since all these companies have very strict policies regarding interviews, FRK decided to find other ways to access the field. Contacts via FRK networks and according to the snowball principle were utilized in order to find interview partners. A press release was also sent out by the FRK.

The contacts were established by phone and e-mail. About 30 contacts were made in total. FRK conducted six interviews with five managers - one of which was a social worker as well - and two directors of a vocational school for the retail trade sector. The interviewed managers are human

resources managers, line managers and market managers of three companies, which are a large bakery chain, a large supermarket chain and a social market⁴.

The interviews were conducted between July and September 2011 in Vienna. Each interview took an average of 45 minutes.

3.1.3 Interviews with Migrants

The contact to the interviewees was established by the managers of the concerned companies. Two interviews and one focus group with four participants were undertaken. All of the interviewees are employed in food retail; the interviews were conducted at the work place or surroundings visited by the interviewers, who were members of the FRK project team. The focus group took place in the premises of FRK. The focus group was performed in a structured manner according to the interview guideline. All interviews and the focus group were audio taped, transcribed and analysed with support of the text analysis software MaxQDA.

3.1.4 Interviews with Teachers

It was planned to conduct face-to-face or phone interviews with teachers working in the field of “German for occupational purposes”, who have a lot of experience and can give valuable insights into the development of suitable teaching materials. As the number of such teachers in Austria is quite limited (due to the limited number of specialized German courses), they were addressed through personal contacts (via e-mails or phone). Although several dates and possible places for the interviews were offered, it was not possible to conduct them as originally planned. The main hindrance being that they had very tight work scheduled as the semester was just drawing to a close and the holiday period was just starting. However, some of them agreed to answer the questions in written form. Therefore the interview guideline was adapted to a questionnaire and was sent out to them via e-mail. Additionally, the questionnaire was sent to German language trainers of the “Wiener Volkshochschulen” through the Department of Education and to a network of teachers who had taken part in a conference on Adult Education in Austria in November 2011 (organized by the AK Wien, Wiener Volkshochschulen, University of Vienna and others).

13 people (three male and ten female) returned the questionnaire. Nearly all of them are quite experienced as German as a second language trainers: Seven of them have 20 or more years of teaching experience, four have five to ten years and two have two years of teaching experience.

⁴ The latter is a socio-economic company, which employs and trains unemployed people and collaborates with the Labour Market Service (AMS)

They have different institutional backgrounds: six from the Wiener Volkshochschulen, four from private language schools and/or general education centres and three from vocational schools.

Eight trainers had experience with specific vocation related teaching materials; six also had experience with specific vocation related German courses. One person declared to have teaching experience in vocation related courses with other languages than German.

4 Results Occupational Field

In the following section the results of the interviews with managers, vocational school directors and staff with migration background in retail trade are outlined.

4.1 Recruiting Process

All of the managers which were interviewed (i.e. human resources managers, store managers, vocational school directors) and staff members were asked about the recruiting process. Managers were asked to provide information about how they go about finding personnel (e.g. labour market service, job advertisements). Additionally, they were asked to tell us about structure and method of the job interview and how new employees are initially supported within the company.

The recruiting process is conducted in various ways. The labour market service was frequently named as partner for recruiting (E1, E2, E4, E7)⁵. A large proportion of the retail staff is found internally through allocation from other branches or company media such as the website. Large companies place adverts on radio or TV and even conduct castings (E5, E6). Others rarely use adverts, mainly because of the cost (E1, E2). Adverts in print media are used only for vacancies, which are very difficult to fill, such as baker or electrician, or in the case of larger store openings (E1, E2). Two companies offer special “recruitment days” to aid job applications (E2, E4). One company is legally bound to only recruiting via the labour market service. Nevertheless, applicants have to undergo a recruitment process as in other companies. The job interview includes questions about current knowledge and qualifications, interests and personal motivation for the application. Language skills (listening and speaking) are also evaluated.

Staff members were also asked to report their experiences with job applications. They were invited to reveal how they search and receive information about job vacancies, how they prepare for the application and their opinion about the recruitment process. Some indicated that they became

⁵ The abbreviation for quotes of managers is E, and for interviewed migrants is M.

active themselves in order to find a job. One interviewee was employed after a job request directly in the store (M5). In one case the interviewed person found the current job during her education. The teacher made the contact to the employer. These strategies for finding a job were not mentioned by the managers in their interviews.

Application Materials

E5 und E6 emphasize that almost all large companies require a written application and a written aptitude test (E5, E6). The application materials are an important instrument for pre-selection. The CV is decisive in this regard and might present a serious obstacle for the candidate. One manager points out that some applicants do not even know how to write a CV and how to comply with the formalities (E1). Thus some applications do not include a CV. Besides checking the completeness of the application files, the existence of a CV and its compliance to formalities, the content is checked (gaps in the CV) and the candidate it matched to the job profile. E1 indicated the problem of lack of traceability of documents, for instance because of missing references (E1).

Job Interview

Although the written application materials might be decisive, the personal interview plays a major role in the recruiting process. E5 and E6 emphasize the importance of the first impression. The candidates' behaviour in the job interview, their choice of dress etc. can be crucial success factors (E5, E6). The purpose of the interview is also to assess the language skills (E7). Two interviewees mentioned that the applicant has to fill in an application form at the beginning of the job interview (E7, E4). Language skills can have a higher impact than other skills, for instance occupational skills, even if there is proof of qualification (i.e. certificate) (E2). The discussion of the CV is a means to evaluate professional competences and language skills as well (E7). During a job interview, managers explain tasks, work processes and working conditions. It is important for managers that applicants understand these explanations (E1, E4, E7).

In one company applicants sometimes have to undergo a second job interview with a manager on a lower hierarchical level (area manager, store manager) (E2). German skills are not specifically examined but evaluated on the basis of the application forms. Prior are comprehensibility and communication skills (E7). M6 reported a written maths test which was part of the application procedure. One respondent mentioned that some applicants are accompanied by children who act as a translator. The language skills of these applicants are assessed as insufficient (E7). Persons who have already resided in Austria for a longer period, but still have poor language skills, are critically assessed (E7). On the other hand, it was emphasized that language skills often rapidly improve by day to day practice.

Initial Support at the Workplace

On the first working day a new staff member is introduced into the company (E1, E2, E3). They are mainly supported by the job training facility (E1, E2, E3, E7). After this basic training the new employees receive specialized and further training according to a procedure for the particular departments and work area (e.g. cash desk, varying food departments) (E1, E2).

In the beginning, trainings on occupational safety and hygiene are also offered (E1, E3). Additional training material is distributed (E1). During the first days and weeks tasks are often completed in pair work in order to support the new employee (E1, E2, E3, E7). E7 reported that employees with different levels of language skills often work in pairs in order to support each other (E7).

4.2 Linguistic Challenges in Job Functions and Operations

4.2.1 Job Functions and Activities in the Retail Trade

The next part of the interviews focussed on the concrete functions and activities which employees have to carry out in the retail sector: The interview started with questioning managers and staff on a typical working day: "What do they have to do in the morning/ at noon/ in the afternoon?" This question aimed at identifying possible language related difficulties in daily work activities. At this stage, the authors explicitly point out that the following summary is written without any claim to completeness or technical exactness.

Summarised, so called "activity-groups" with more or less extended tasks and frequencies can be sub-divided based on the respondents' descriptions. These activities are accomplished in different "areas of operation". Different activity-groups and related tasks cannot be separated, but occur in all areas of operation.

Activity groups are: Contact with customers, tasks relating to managing cash, checking and monitoring, shelf-serving, handling/treatment of goods, managing deliveries, storage of goods, cleaning, and filling out forms and lists.

Areas of operation can be divided into: Fruit and vegetables, bread and pastries, delicatessen (sausages, cheeses, and meat – all goods which need to be prepared personally), drinks, storage, shelf, and cash/till.

Contact with Customers

Customer's relations and support can be seen as core in retail: "...*Customers support is our main task: Serving and talking to customers*" (E3). And this is true for all staff and is especially relevant

in small stores as all staff have to carry out all tasks. In this context, working at a delicatessen is especially highly rated, as one manager pointed out: "... *delicatessen – well, this is genuine traditional sale: 'Good afternoon, Ma'am, how can I help you'? ... Someone who is a real seller is happy to work in the area of delicatessen and not with stock and shelve filling*" (E2).

Managers and staff marked the importance of customer orientation; however difficulties are also mentioned in this context: it is always necessary to be friendly and polite, but the customers themselves do not always behave in this way "... *[Customers] who do not understand and start shouting if we do not stock a certain product...*" (M6). Two managers also mentioned difficulties with customers in situations when they are impatient and impolite; these especially require good, differentiated language skills and competence in reacting to customer behaviour (E5, E6).

Cash Desk

Normally, all staff members will perform all tasks; exceptions only exist for storage work and working at the cash till: "... *as the cash area is a financial area, money is the focus and mathematical competence is needed; thus, here we are selective*" (E4). Another manager also mentioned the necessity of mathematical competence for changing money and for keeping an overview of proceedings (E1). Moreover, communication competence is needed; one interviewed staff member argued: "... *someone who does not speak good German cannot do this job*" (M5).

Checking and Monitoring

Various checks and monitoring of prices, price signposting, expiration dates, quality of goods, and contents have to be signed off by employees. Deliveries of goods also have to be checked and in case of discrepancies objections made to the delivering party. (E2, E4). Goods can often have varying terms and have to be identified, quantity controlled and noted in lists; thus, reading and writing competence is also necessary for this kind of work (M5, M6, E2, E5).

Shelf - Serving

Tasks in this context are checking of expiration-dates, shelving and replenishing goods, sorting out damaged goods and presentation of wares as well as cleaning. "*For all this work ... German language knowledge is not that important*" (E2).

Forms and Lists

Daily work also includes filling in forms and lists concerning: weight of goods, quantity, names, pieces, etc.; when changing the responsibility for the cash, the cash balance has to be checked and signed off; deliveries have to be signed off when accepted. Moreover, goods-groups have numbers which again have to be entered into lists whereby this work becomes easier with time.

Additional tasks are administrative duties such as filling out time-sheets or holiday-lists.

Cleaning

Cleaning tasks are also required to be fulfilled. Although active speaking is not necessary, there are several rules which have to be read, understood and followed by each staff member, e.g.: hygienic rules or safety regulations.

Treatment of Goods

Retail staff also has to perform operational tasks with the goods such as sorting, packing etc. „... *Manipulation means that we need to sort, pack, re-pack goods*” (E4), or „... *to bake pastries, instructions have to be understood*” (M6).

4.2.2 Language Skills for Daily Operations

Based on the information concerning tasks, which have to be carried out in the retail sector, interview partners were asked to describe language related difficulties which (might) occur, and which were then allocated to the four language-competences: *Speaking (S), Listening (L), Writing (W) or Reading (R)*].

Speaking

Speaking-competence and pro-active communication was especially relevant: *“Talking and understanding. Sales are in focus, genuine sales, communication, human relations”*(E2); the interviewee states that talking is most important and highlights the necessity of understanding *“just ‘normal’ Viennese language or Austrian language”* (E2). In this regard, customer advisory service is particularly important and this starts with exploring the customer’s needs and requests. One respondent says that *“... these are two different things – what the customer is telling us and what he actually needs”* (E6). Thus, good service is essential and in order to be able to deliver it, salespersons have to feel comfortable with specific terms and phrases and need to be linguistically competent (E5, E6). Another key capability is to know how to formulate questions, interpret answers and identify important information (E5). Further aspects pertain to articulation, e.g. pronouncing the German „ü“ correctly (E3), prioritising tasks e.g. being able to finish a conversation with a customer in a polite manner (E3, E5, E6). Moreover, answering in a *„culturally fitting manner“* was mentioned as being important as well as being able to deal with impatient and stressed customers (E5) and not making a situation worse through inappropriate linguistic reaction (E6). Furthermore communicating with colleagues also requires good language skills in speaking and understanding as *„... if I can understand better, there is less chance of a misunderstanding*

occurring ..." (E1); this is also estimated as an option for exclusion *„(because) I cannot talk with others adequately“* (E5). All interviewed managers pointed out that all customer conversations have to be carried out in German and that the staffs have to speak German with each other. Especially the latter was underlined by one manager drastically: *“... Heaven forbid! – a situation where you have three migrants talking the same language in front of German speaking customers...”* (E6). Challenges with speaking German mentioned by migrants were especially related to their capability to ask if they have understood everything. There was also a degree of uncertainty concerning asking for advice: *„Well, once is ok, but too often is not good. Because then they would think that I am not capable for doing this work and then, yes, then they would fire me. This has happened to me in the past* (M2).

Listening

Several interview partners mentioned that active listening is necessary all the time and that the competence as well as courage to enquire is also needed. It was also found that understanding dialects was especially difficult; also the intonation of sentences/ terms can lead to uncertainty, e.g. when someone is grumbling or complaining, the salesperson might feel personally affected (E4). Four interviewed migrants also mentioned that they sometimes receive too many information in one sentence and feel confused and do not know how to react (M2, M4). Further challenges occur through poor articulation, soft-spoken customers as well as fast speakers (M1, M2, M3, M4).

Writing

Writing is of minor importance in the retail sector. Required competence is usually related to technical terms; this was highlighted in situations when customers are being served: *„ ... to be fit in technical terms. I am not allowed to write „Furnier“ with „V“. This emits - quite honestly – incompetence”* (E5). Interviewed migrants stated that spelling was a challenge and named some typical words, which they found difficult to write (e. g. „Kipferl“, M1). But it was also noted that by and by technical terms were learned automatically.

Reading

Language competence in reading is very important. Besides reading, understanding, checking and filling out lists using technical terms, there are also documents which have to be distributed to customers such as brochures, information about special offers, prices and price-changes, product information etc. Moreover, there are rules regarding dress-code, hygiene, resting periods or safety regulations that have to be understood. The question of checking occurs when documents have to be filled out, signed off (i.e. time sheets etc.). The commissioning of goods also requires more elaborated German reading competence and knowledge of technical terms - all areas which were perceived as being particularly challenging by the interviewed migrants (M1, M4, M5, M6).

4.2.3 Dealing with Challenging Situations

Managers and staff with migration background were asked how they deal with challenges and/or barriers. All managers claimed that the opportunity to talk with superiors was a necessary prerequisite to dealing with challenging situations. This is standard in all companies. One manager states the following:

„The market management is responsible for these issues – especially if there are problems with customers. Also if there are complaints, which the staff can't manage alone: The task of the market management is to support the staff.” (E2)

One manager says that in their company conversation courses are offered on demand. Furthermore the interviewees say that diverse backgrounds of experience (due to different cultural origin) may cause misunderstandings and resulting problems can be solved through conversation.

The interviewed staff members consider talking about challenges as helpful and supportive. Usually no action is taken by the staff, for instance in case of language challenges with customers: *“When you don't understand a word, then you say nothing. Only listening and not understanding...”* (M4). A further opportunity in dealing with language challenges which was mentioned was *“asking the colleagues for help”* or *“searching for terms in the dictionary”*.

4.3 Supportive Activities

Both managers and staff were asked what could be supportive in dealing with challenges and/or barriers. All interview partners regard a language course, which is targeted towards the respective sector, in this case the retail trade, as a useful tool. Only one manager mentions job application trainings – or other courses, which could be externally commissioned, but held in the company premises. The majority of companies do not offer language courses. Nevertheless, one manager said that information about available courses (type and content) is always forwarded to the staff. This manager also mentioned that apart from the information about language courses, the activity in the branch itself is a support for learning the language, because it has to be used in everyday work. Another manager points out that it is necessary for staff with migration background to learn dialect phrases in the language courses, in order to be prepared for everyday work. Another interview partner suggests that staff with the same language of origin should be allowed to work together, so they can help each other to learn the language. When asked which activity could be supportive for employers to deal with challenges and/or barriers, one manager answered that a schedule of courses in the company would be helpful. In the interviews with the staff the question

was also asked: Which actions could be taken in order to support migrants in dealing with challenges and/or barriers? One interview partner considers a course that is offered and paid by the company as valuable support. Thereby the course should be obligatory, so the staff have to attend. Furthermore the interviewee points out that a course offered by the company may increase the chances of migrants at the labour market, because language requirements would not be that high. Thus, migrants could learn the language for use in the occupational activity. Another person who was employed as a trainee when the interview was undertaken explained that they could often talk to their superior about any problems. This was considered especially helpful in the early years of employment.

4.4 Value and Use of Employees Language Skills

The managers were asked if the companies in the retail trade make any use of the diverse language skills of their staff and if these skills are of any value to them. One interview partner answers:

“We are proud of the fact that we have 40 nationalities in our company because we say that it doesn’t matter where somebody comes from, but rather if he or she enjoys the work and is doing well. That’s what counts.” (E1)

This interviewee sees the advantages with regards to customer connectivity, since at many locations where the company has branches the number of customers with migration background is very high.

One manager points out that most of the retail customers speak German. However, the employment of staff with migration background is especially useful for tourists and customers who also have a migration background as it reduced the risk of conflicts.

Also staffs were asked about the value and usage of their language of origin. In reply to the question, whether they had the possibility to use their language of origin in everyday work, one interviewee said:

“Yes, of course, very often. Since where I am working, there are many foreigners. And when they notice, you speak Serbian, Bosnian or Turkish, they begin to talk. And quite often they need my need help.” (M6).

4.5 Experience with Language Courses

4.5.1 Experiences of Employers

As already established, the majority of retail companies do not offer in-house language courses. One manager says that in their view, it is the duty of the employee to learn the language before applying for work. Furthermore, the high fluctuation rate makes it difficult to invest in language trainings. Additionally, one manager points out, all new staff has to learn the technical vocabulary for their specific surroundings – this applies to staff with and without migration background.

In opposition to this, one manager stated the disadvantages for staff members of not being able to take part in in-house trainings:

“What we heard is that the people who work already often don’t have the time during the day. Partly the courses take place in the evening which makes it difficult for many participants because of childcare responsibilities. The best solution therefore would be daytime courses which would be efficient in terms of energy consumption, word procedures and compatibility with family life ...” (E4)

4.5.2 What Migrants Experience

The staffs were asked to relate their experience with language courses and give their view of what the courses should entail in order to support the course participants adequately in their language learning.

Varying experiences came to light: Some interview partners claimed that the language course which they attended was very useful, others rated their training as *“not good at all”* (M2). Two employees believe that the courses should be better adapted to the needs of the participants. For instance, the participants should be tested beforehand, in order to find out their language level and allow appropriate course allocation. However, this test should not be just in written form, but also the listening and speech comprehension should be incorporated. Other employees wished for the courses to be divided by age group as this is an important ingredient in establishing a good atmosphere for studying.

One interview partner attended a language course where the language teacher came from a migration background. The majority of the course participants had the same language of origin as this language teacher, which is why this language was used extensively during the course. The interviewee perceived this as negative and suggested that the language to be learned should be used throughout the language training.

The majority of the interviewed employees regard tutorials which are related to practice as helpful measure in classes. One interview partner mentions that they learned very much in a course, in

which many expressions out of newspapers and phrases about certain topics were taught. Exercise examples for homework were also positively rated.

One interviewee described that courses offered by the labour market service were not useful for the professional career they had in mind and stated that *“The courses should match the interests and the career aspirations.”* (M2)

4.5.3 Success Stories and Recommendations

Success Stories

At the end of the interview the managers were asked to tell a success story and to give recommendations. Learning the language and occupational advancement were considered successful (E1, E2, E5, E6). E1 told the story of an Iranian women, who learned German and eventually became an area manager responsible for 15 branches (E1). The manager of the social supermarket perceived labour market integration as the major success (E7). The high motivation and willingness to learn of some staff members were emphasized (E1, E2, E3, E5, E6). Some expressed their admiration for those learning German despite of all the difficult conditions some job-seekers have to face. Child care commitments and certain religious characteristics (wearing of a headscarf) were also often mentioned in this context (E1, E2, E3).

Recommendations

Finally, some recommendations are presented, which were given by the interviewees based on their experience. A5 and A6 pointed out that the requirement to comply with rules and regulations has to be based on reciprocity. Requirements must not be one-sided, but should also address domestic employees i.e. the code of behaviour (greeting of customers). Such a code of behaviour should include speaking in an understandable manner - which also applies to the domestic workers (E5, E6).

E5 and E6 consider labour market access as the biggest barrier for migrants. They emphasize that if you talk about labour market inclusion, you must also talk about the access hurdles involved. In order to facilitate the labour market access the labour market service (AMS) should offer training and courses that not only concentrate on language, but also include non-verbal communication and cultural tools – i.e. dress and eating culture. The course should teach “socially desirable behaviour” (i.e. that a husband should not accompany a wife to a job interview) (E5, E6). The cultures have to be treated equally (E5, E6). An interviewee talked about culture coaching which is offered in Switzerland (but only) for high positions (E5, E6). E5 and E6 report that tests for recruitment purposes very often include questions about the national culture and general

knowledge. They recommend also informing oneself about the company. These questions are standard in every recruitment process. All these aspects are important for all job applicants, not only for these with a migrant background.

5 Results Language Teaching

5.1 Challenges in Teaching and Learning Vocation Related Language

Challenges in Teaching

One of the main challenges in teaching German for specific/occupational purposes is how to gain knowledge and information about the actual communicative requirements in a specific job – in other words: how to find out what the learners need and which skills are decisive for successful work and participation in a team. *“Practical relevance and usability as well as relevant activities”* (T8) are the most important things for good teaching. One has to keep in mind that teachers are primarily experts for the language and not for every discipline: *“The most difficult thing is to assess what the participants DE FACTO need for their work in a company, because I am ‘just’ a language trainer and not familiar with operational sequences in a firm.”* (T12) *“It is hard to teach the language of an occupational area which one is not familiar with (e.g. technical language).”* (T5)

Many interviewed teachers also find it hard (or even impossible) to gain access to certain jobs in order to collect data about the specific linguistic requirements of that area (compare also 3.1.2). This includes information about entry level tests, assessments, examinations, etc. (T2) One trainer (T10) also mentions the challenge of making contact with employers as they do not see it as their task as a language teacher, rather the responsibility of employment agencies. However, in this context cooperation would make sense.

Closely connected to the two topics described above is the question of *suitable material for teaching* that all teachers picked out as a central theme: Where/How can teachers find/develop material for vocation related courses? One problem that might occur here is the *“big difference between theory (classroom) and practice (workplace)”* (T3).

Many teachers (T1, T3, T9, T11, T13) emphasise that it is a big challenge to work with heterogeneous groups where learners have widely varying preconditions/backgrounds concerning linguistic, occupational and social competence. It is often difficult *“to support every single participant in a heterogeneous group and to meet the specific demands and expectations of the learners in the best way”* (T1). Sometimes *“individual (very specific) language/occupational training would be necessary considering the individual life situations of the participants including legal*

situation, ignorance of employers, missing recognition of qualifications; many participants are forced to work in unskilled jobs to earn their living although they have higher qualifications” (T3). It also can be a challenge “to prepare participants for a job they have never done before (no knowledge of specific vocabulary in their first language)” (T5). In this context it is very important to find a good way of motivating the learners and “to give them ‘the benefit of the doubt’ and encourage them to learn” (T6).

Regarding the teaching itself teachers are confronted with the question how to adapt or change their “traditional” classes in order to meet the needs of the learners, e.g.: “How can I combine professional language with general language?” (T2). Or more detailed comment: “How can I teach vocabulary, orthography, norms, and synonyms in correspondence in a way that it seems meaningful to the participants?” (T7) These issues also show the necessity for specific teacher training and further education on this topic.

Vocation Related Language Challenges for Migrants

The teachers were also asked to assess the biggest vocation related language challenges for migrants based on their experience. Most of them broached the issue of register/stylistic level of language and the need of participants to “learn how to deal with different linguistic levels (dialects, sociolects, formal/informal speaking styles etc.)” (T13) and to “distinguish between professional (adequate) and colloquial language use” (T5). Also the use of dialect is a big issue in Austria – many people use their dialects even in official (workplace) settings. This leads to a “big discrepancy between the language that is taught in class and the language the learners are confronted with in the workplace” (T3). Participants of all German courses need to be prepared for this reality outside the classroom environment.

Another big challenge is the lack of chances to practice outside the classroom where special language is “learned without the direct contact to a company (only theoretically)” (T12). One teacher points out that “in the long run, special vocabulary can only be developed in practice (on the job). Many learners don’t get this possibility. If they work, many people speak their languages of origin.” (T3)

On a personal level, the trainers think that the development of self-confidence and a general capability of expression are crucial: “It is important to develop self-confidence in asking when a piece of information was incomprehensible (esp. dialect expressions of German speakers)” (T1). This has to be seen also in the wider context concerning missing acceptance at the workplace due to racism etc. (T5).

A further challenge for migrants is the introduction into the specific working environment in Austria (T10). Many migrants have “insufficient background knowledge of occupational fields” (T9) - this

impedes on their chances of successful job-seeking and integration. The learners must be given the chance to “*acquire new knowledge and put it into practice*” (T7, T8).

The following – more concrete – topics were individually mentioned:

“Successful contact with customers both in terms of language and culture” (T11)

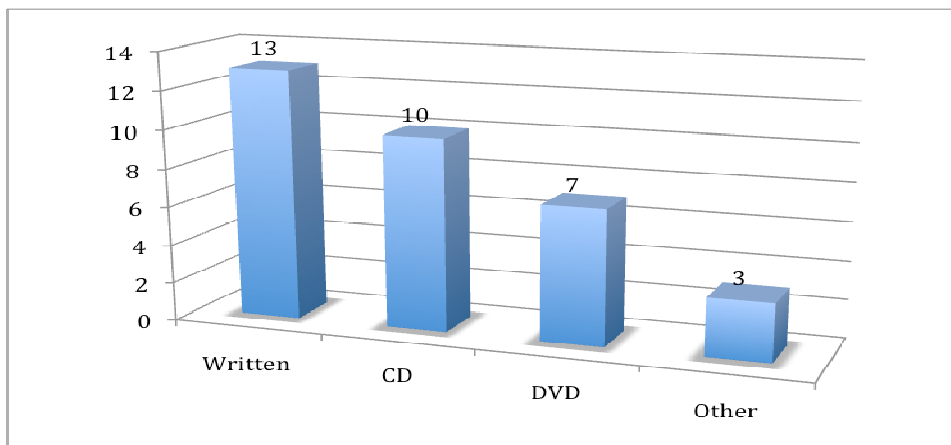
“Studying for exams, practising job interviews, dealing with reactions of customers/colleagues concerning language proficiency” (T2)

One teacher brought up that commanding the language of origin (first language(s)) is a prerequisite for learning German (T6). This is, however, a matter of language learning in general – not only for specific purposes. Several studies have shown that the development of cognitive academic language proficiency is based on the stable development of a first language.

5.2 Concrete Material Related Aspects

Most of the teachers would prefer a written version of the teaching material AND a digital version, both in word- and pdf-format. Two trainers emphasised that multimedia-based material would be the best choice.

Fig. 1: Preferences Teaching Material

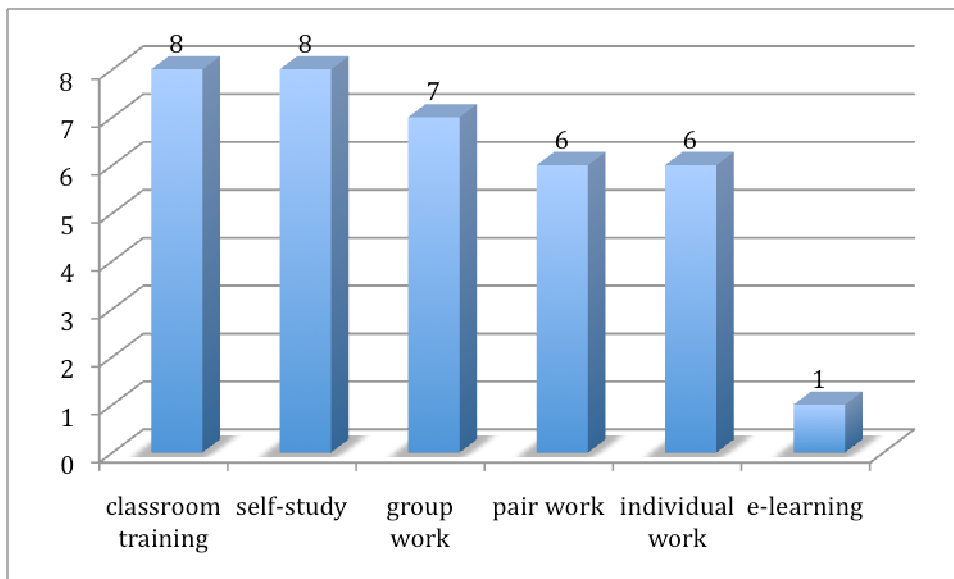


Ad Other: online, films, observations/job-shadowing in companies

An online availability has the advantage of the data being up-to-date and convertible. One trainer suggested a kind of platform that allows user-defined expansion and also cooperation with employers, exchange of experiences with migrants who work in the same occupational field, etc. (T3).

According to the trainers, the material should set the stage for different types of teaching, especially in-class and self-study settings.

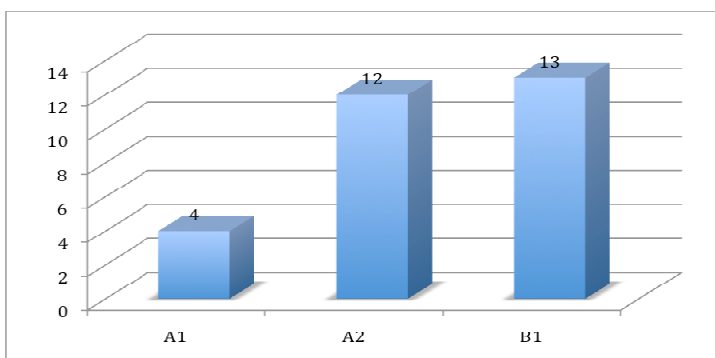
Fig. 2: Type of Material Demanded



Some teachers pointed out that it is important to include tasks for all four language building skills (reading, writing, speaking and especially listening) and offer a variety of methods.

With regards to the language level, most of the trainers preferred the materials to be developed for A2 and B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Moreover, the materials should be flexible and easily adaptable to different levels.

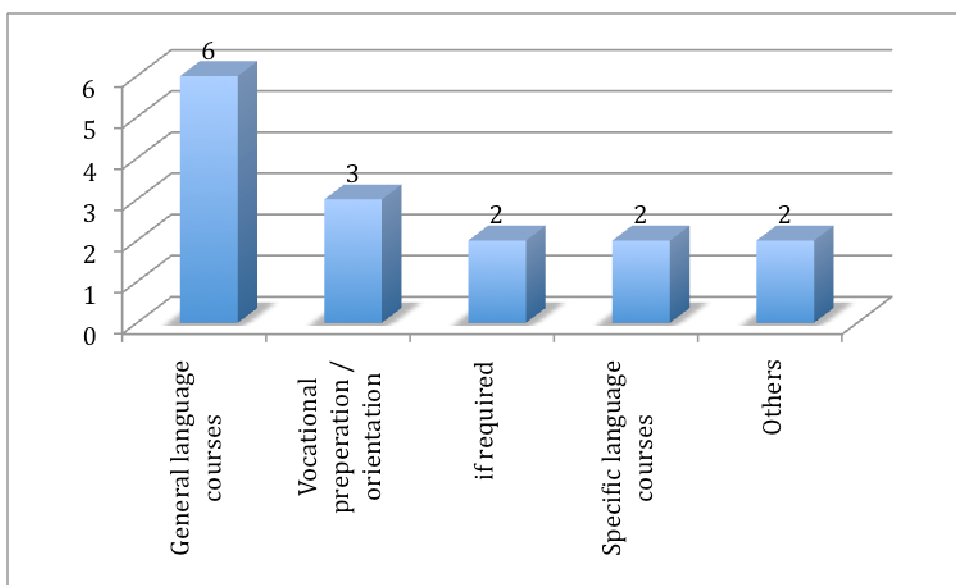
Fig. 3: Language Level



Some of the trainers remarked that the level might also depend on the occupational field and the respective skills required (e.g. writing A2, but speaking B1). One teacher (T2) gave the following examples: nursing B1, workman A2. This appraisal is certainly worth discussing and might vary from workplace to workplace. In general, the material should be designed for higher levels because many migrants already work in low-skilled or unqualified jobs, where the linguistic requirements are quite low (T13).

The teachers were also asked in which situations they could see themselves using such materials. Most of them would use them in general German-as-a-second-language-courses when the topic work/career/future is taught and discussed. They emphasised that in this context it would be very useful to have authentic material. Some of them would use them for vocational preparation or orientation classes (e.g. end of secondary school level).

Fig. 4: Field of Application

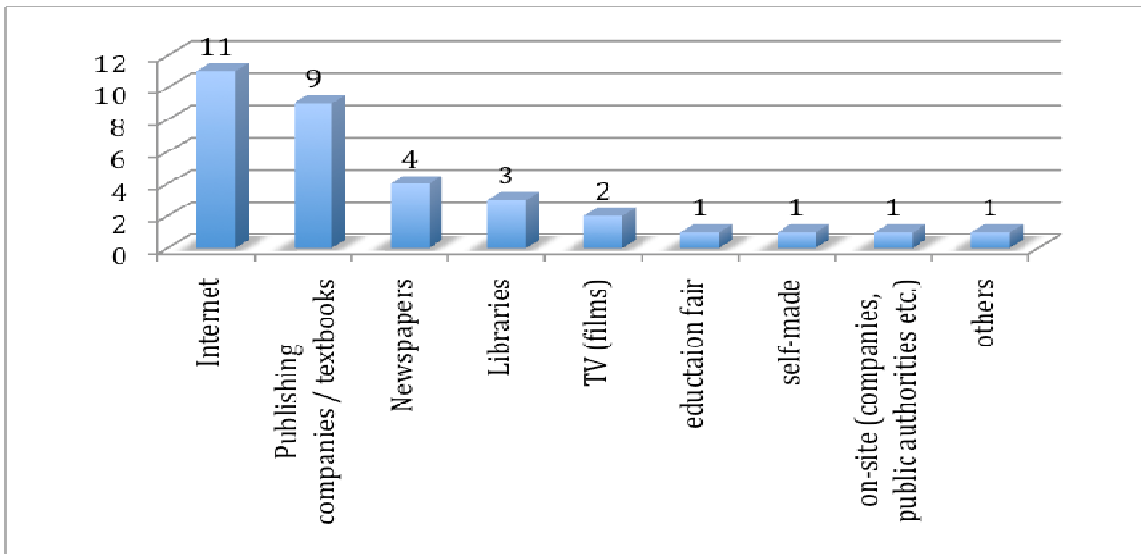


An interesting point was made by one teacher, (T11) who voiced their concern that the focus on fulfilling the requirements of the so called „Integrationsvereinbarung“ (integration agreement in Austria), may hinder work on other topics (e.g. vocation oriented issues). Migrants in German-as-a-second-language-courses would – very understandably – find preparation work to pass their language tests (A2 and since 2011 also B1 for permanent residency) the highest priority and would be less interested in other topics even if these are interesting and relevant.

Availability of Teaching Material

Most of the teachers search for teaching materials on the internet or in textbooks and through publishing companies. Many of them emphasize the need for authentic texts from everyday life in Austria (e.g. from newspapers or TV). The materials, which they found in this way were generally not ready for use and had to be adapted or newly developed (e.g. tasks for authentic texts).

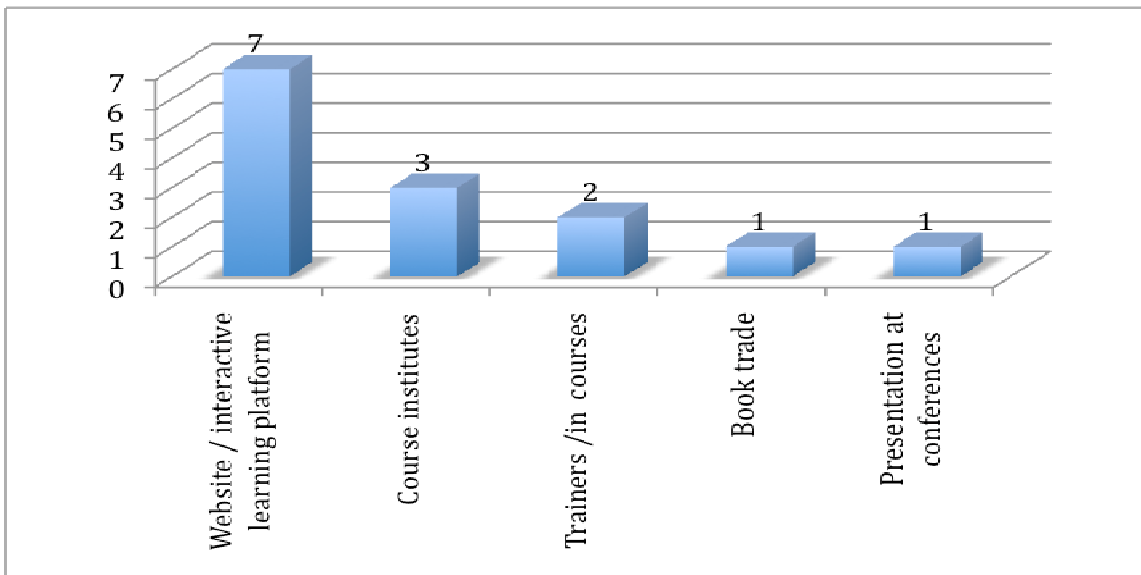
Fig. 5: Availability of Teaching Material



ad Others: www.ibw.at, Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft, Wien.

As most of the teachers search for material in the internet they suggest a website as best means of distribution for any vocation-oriented teaching and learning materials. Also language institutes are regarded as good places to make materials available. Two trainers suggested sending a small sample of the compendium to the teachers themselves. The presentation of the materials at relevant conferences, workshops, symposia etc. was also considered a valuable idea.

Fig. 6: Suggested Means of Distribution



5.3 Practical Teaching Experience and Suggestions

Some of the trainers described *successful teaching situations* in regard to vocation related teaching. Nearly all of them mentioned quiz-games, role-plays (e.g. situations from their workplace which they would like to change) and scenarios with vocation-oriented topics as specifically effective methods. All these situations, which are cited below, have some crucial factors in common: They

- consider and actively include the learners' vocational experiences;
- focus on the participants;
- are relevant, "concrete" and meaningful to the learners;
- true-to-life/work
- increase learning motivation;
- are interactive and require the learners' active participation;
- allow immediate feedback.

"A former student came to the German class, talked about his job and answered questions of the learners, afterwards the teacher offered some exercises, a reading text and homework about his visit." (T12)

"We prepared and wrote letters of application and CVs for "real" jobs together and sent them to the companies." (T10)

"The participants wrote and talked about their working routines and played some characteristic situations. They also brought material from their workplace (e.g. printed forms, schedules) that were filled in together." (T13)

"An expert from a specific vocational field came to the class and taught a lesson together with the language teacher (content and language integrated learning)." (T13)

"The classes were held directly at the workplace in a company. So the situations, materials, correspondence etc. could be used from everyday work and set into practice immediately." (T3)

The main difficulty in those teaching situations is if nobody in the class has real experience in a certain vocational field and the instruction is just based on "assumptions" and "guesses" of the reality in the workplace. Another obstacle to successful learning is low motivation on the part of the Austrian/German-speaking colleagues to support the learners. In this context it is noticeable – as

T3 points out – that most of the migrants speak two or more foreign languages, while their Austrian colleagues can only speak basic English.

Finally, the following suggestions were made by the interviewed teachers. The planned material should help to raise the general awareness of the learners with regard to how to express lack of understanding, misunderstandings etc. Moreover, the vocation oriented teaching material should be connected to vocational training if possible. Some teachers would find it helpful if the material contain an introductory chapter to specific vocational fields that allows quick orientation for the teachers who are not familiar with this field. Last but not least, networking activities for teachers working in this field was considered as extremely important.

The materials which the teachers considered as particularly useful are:

“General” Material:

- Österreich Spiegel (<http://www.oesterreichinstitut.at/387.0.html>): a newspaper for German language classes with articles from Austrian and German newspapers including exercises for vocabulary, grammar etc.
- <http://www.hoertexte-deutsch.at>: audio data (dialogues, spoken text), 32 authentic texts from everyday-life in Austria
- Textbook “Lagune” (http://www.hueber.de/sixcms/list.php?page=pg_info_willkommen_lag): funny listening comprehensions
- Textbook “Schritte” (http://www.hueber.de/seite/index_sri)
- Textbook “Themen aktuell” (<http://www.hueber.de/themen-aktuell>)
- “Österreich Hörgeschichten”: spoken texts about a Turkish family living in Austria
 - o (http://www.integrationsfonds.at/top_services/lehmaterial/#c957)
- Material for German as a second language and literacy: <http://www.graf-gutfreund.at/>
- Authentic texts like information brochures, flyers, maps, pictures etc. of companies

“Specific” Material

- “Deutsch für KonsumentInnen”:
 - o (<https://broschuerenservice.bmask.gv.at/PubAttachments/Deutsch%20fuer%20KonsumentInnen.pdf>): texts, information, exercises for German classes

- Online Material: “Schritte plus im Beruf” (http://www.hueber.de/seite/pg_beruf_info_srp)
- Textbook “Alltag, Beruf & Co” (<http://www.hueber.de/alltag-beruf>)
- Textbook “Kommunikation im Beruf” (www.cornelsen.de/erw/reihe/1.c.1916322.de/titel)
- Textbook “Geschäftskommunikation – Besser telefonieren / Verhandlungssprache”
 - (http://www.hueber.de/huebershop/liste.html?selected_elka_id=553061&p=407982:408136:408145)
- Fachsprachenmaterialien des Österreich Instituts (Bank, Jus, Pflege)
 - (<http://www.oesterreichinstitut.at/materialienreihe.html>)
- “Testbuch Wirtschaftsdeutsch”
 - (http://www.hueber.de/huebershop/liste.html?selected_elka_id=553061&p=407982:408136:408145)
- Study material for “Prüfung Wirtschaftsdeutsch International” (PWD) (<http://www.dihk-bildungs-gmbh.de/index.php?id=8>) - high level!
- authentic texts like information brochures, flyers, maps, pictures etc. of companies

One teacher (T3) pointed out that there is no “*successful*” material per se, because the use of material always depends on the learning situation, the general conditions of a language course and the needs of the participants. Especially in vocation oriented language courses it is always necessary to include the participants’ experiences at the workplace, their personal circumstances etc.

In conclusion the following criteria characterise “*successful*” teaching material (T2): *target group appropriate, simple, authentic, up-to-date, flexible, and applicable in interactive settings.*

6 Summary

Based on the results of the desk research on the labour market situation and of the appraisal of available teaching materials, FRK and Lernraum decided to develop teaching materials for the retail sector. The retail trade is forecasted to be a growing sector and the number of persons with migration background working in this industry has increased over the last five years. Language

teachers emphasize that the main challenge in teaching German for occupational purposes is how to gain information about the specific language skills which learners need in their field of work.

The main results of the interviews conducted with managing and sales staff in the retail trade sector and language teachers are the following:

Language requirements:

- Writing:
 - Application material (CV) forms the first barrier to even low-skilled jobs.
- Application procedure:
 - Speaking: Job interview: The language skills of the applicant are assessed during the job interview (ability to talk about the CV, understanding of explanations, job description, work process ...).
 - Writing: Entry-tests
- Job training:
 - Listening: Understanding of work instructions, understanding of rules (e.g. hygiene)
 - Reading: Understanding of information material for job training,
- Operations: Customer contact is most challenging:
 - Listening: understanding especially of unclear pronunciation, dialects, socio-lects.
 - Speaking: Ability to pose questions, express lack of understanding, to react/answer in an adequate manner, ability to distinguish between adequate professional and colloquial language use,
 - Writing: Spelling of technical or special terms, filling in forms and writing lists.
- Persons with migration background are frequently lacking knowledge about the occupational field, teachers should be capable of provide learners with this kind of information.

Therefore teaching materials should fulfil the following requirements:

- Content has to be **relevant**, **concrete** and **meaningful** to the learners.

- Language which is used in **the workplace, practice orientated** in terms of language and culture. It would be useful to have **authentic material**.
- Exercises which **address all four skills** (reading, writing, speaking and especially listening and offer a variety of different methods).
- Language level: the material should be designed for a higher language level (**A2 – B1**), preparation for tests (which is important because of legal requirements).
- Online availability is suggested, material should allow user-defined expansion
- **Effective Methods:** Quiz-games, role-plays, scenarios with vocation-orientated topics
- It is important to develop the learners' **confidence** and increase their motivation to learn.

The main challenge in vocational language learning is to bridge the gap between the real working situation and the classroom.

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