

THE EUROPEAN LANGUAGE CERTIFICATE- A BUSINESS CARD FOR THE FUTURE CAREER

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I would like to make a case analysis.

A few years ago, in the center of Bucharest a huge grand building was built as the headquarters for The Romanian Bank of Development.

A student of mine from The Applied Modern Languages Department, the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures (I have to emphasize the fact that in this department students have courses on economics, law, IT, translation theory and specialised languages in two major languages, in addition to this, they are supposed to have an elective language as well) who had English and French as major languages, and Spanish as elective language, succeeded in getting language certificates for all of these three languages. She lived in the youth hostel, being an orphan child with only a grandmother in the country, as unique relative.

My student saw an advertisement in the newspaper regarding a post of hostess in that big building. She went for the interview, she was short-listed until only two more candidates were selected for the final interview.

The jury was made of prestigious experts of the bank who, in turn, asked her several questions in English, French and Spanish. Impressed by my student's high level of performance in the three languages she was hired on the spot.

Similarly, all the graduates of the Applied Modern Languages Department were hired by big companies such as Michelin, HP, Procter & Gamble, Oracle, foreign trade firms, administrative institutions, etc.

Trilingualism was their business card that ensured the real success in their first job.

Since then, aware of this asset, I proposed in the Senate of our university that all non-philological students should attend the foreign classes organised by my department according to the European Common Framework. At the end of these courses, they will be given a language certificate, B1 level being the required level in order to be accepted for the graduation exam.

We are confident that this new academic year more and more students will enlist for the ECL certification, since such an European certification is part and whole of the documents that each European citizen should possess.

By using the communicative-functional approach, the ECL tests go beyond the language barriers, allowing their users to perform communicative tasks and activities in the most diverse contexts of social life.

The focus lies on the communicative approach: the use of standard language on familiar topics regarding family, work, environment, globalization, leisure activities, etc.

Thus, communication becomes part and whole of the tasks along which the candidates have to perform activities of interaction, reception, production, comprehension, mediation etc.

Multilinguism means nowadays at least 3 foreign languages spoken by any European citizen. The European policy promotes multilinguism not only in the educational system, but also in the economic sector, in legislation, in developing intercultural relationships.

I think we should make a contrastive analysis between multilinguism and plurilinguism:

Theoretically speaking, the former refers to the speaker's ability to use everyday phrases under ordinary circumstances as a tourist or a visitor in the particular country; the latter refers to speaker's ability to grasp the cultural and social characteristics of that particular language and civilization.

I emphasise once more the European feature of the ECL tests and the fact that ECL certificates ensure each young fellow to integrate within the European space, to migrate, to apply for a job, to

coordinate European projects and , why not, to get positions within the European institutions hierarchy.

The fact that, nowadays, English is in fashion is obvious, but not sufficient.

The world is a free market, we have to know how to speak several languages in domains such as marketing, management, banking, commerce. The result of any negotiation is ensured if we speak Russian with the Russian businessman, Polish with the Polish businessman, German with the German businessman, etc.

Thus, communication becomes more fluent and friendlier, conferring respect and diplomacy.

Only by valid and robust language certificates, acknowledged by the entire European Union can we facilitate the younger generation to find reliable jobs, in the most diverse domains.

The communicative approach underlies ECL tests, allowing the candidates to use the foreign languages as a communicative instrument, regardless of their specialisation or professional route, using different registers and styles, even different accents.

It is known that at present the policy used by BBC is to hire a lot of immigrants and to stimulate the use of the English language with their own accent- Indian accent when spoken by the Indians, Asian accent when spoken by the Asian people, etc.

Today, Europe is a global village, any Romanian citizen can apply for a job, in any European country, using the diploma from his/her university and also a European language certificate.

From this point of view ECL beneficiaries possess the necessary documents in order to fulfil their dreams.

ECL tests were constructed starting for the requirements claimed by the market. They are coherent, homogenous and unitary for the 15 languages of the Consortium.

The younger generation should learn how to be confident in themselves, to be successful professionally, on equal terms with any European youngster.

This confidence can be built only on something concrete, that can be valid, in any country, at any level.

ECL certificates are the perfect example in this respect.

Behind any such certificate, there is our wish to provide them those reasons that can make them attractive to any employer.

It is known that in order to be successful, one should do a job that provides pleasure, satisfaction and enthusiasm.

In order to succeed, our younger generation needs this kind of optimism and enthusiasm. Any young fellow will be appreciated for each kilo of enthusiasm, and such enthusiasm can be convincing if it is based on something valid – in our case, the European Language Certificate.

At the level of the European Parliament, this type of certification is already a policy accepted by all European Union countries.

Our ECL national system is growing every year.

This summer I was appointed to participate in the Fischer International Annual Conference and to talk about ECL certificates - about the efforts made in Romania, about multilingualism as policy underlying such certificates where Romanian is no longer perceived like a younger sister, instead it is considered a language with equal chances- in the auditorium, besides prestigious professors from Oxford and Cambridge Universities, there were more than 100 Romanian language teachers.

The interest manifested during my lecture proved the efficiency of such tests, but also the fact that they are not enough known at the national level.

The new education law stipulates that all 12th grade students should be tested in order to get a language certification.

Those who have already got such certifications at the European level, are exempt from this exam.

This the moment we have been waiting for: to convince the Ministry of Education to introduce on the list of acknowledged language certificate our certificates as well- ECL certificates- taking into account that their validity goes beyond the national frontier.