# **Analysis of Customers' Satisfaction in the** Language School with the Right of State **Examination, Hradec Králové**

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#### **ABSTRAKT**

Bakalářská práce se skládá ze dvou částí. Teoretická část se zaměřuje na zákazníky, jejich význam a roli ve společnosti. Také je zde popsána změna vnímání zákazníka z pohledu společností. Dále se tato část věnuje marketingovému výzkumu a jeho procesu. Jsou zde popsána jeho jednotlivá stadia a zvýšená pozornost je věnována dotazovaní jako způsobu získávání informací.

Ve druhé části je analyzována spokojenost zákazníků v Jazykové škole s právem státní jazykové zkoušky Hradec Králové. Na základě výsledků této analýzy je navrženo několik doporučení směřujících ke zlepšení stávající situace.

Klíčová slova: marketingový výzkum, marketingový průzkum, dotazník, zákazník, spokojenost zákazníků

#### **ABSTRACT**

This bachelor thesis consists of two parts. In the theoretical part the customers are in focus. Their importance and role in company is described and so is the change in perception of them. Further in this part the attention is paid to marketing research itself and the marketing research process. The individual stages of the process are described and special attention is paid to questioning and questionnaire as a method of acquiring information.

In the second part the satisfaction of customers in the Language School with the Right of State Examination Hradec Králové is analyzed. Based on the analysis, several recommendations serving for improvement are suggested.

Keywords: marketing research, marketing survey, questionnaire, customer's satisfaction

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#### INTRODUCTION

The aim of this Bachelor thesis is to find out why the number of customers in the Language School with the Right of State Examination, Hradec Králové has been decreasing in recent years. The author will lead a survey about customers' satisfaction in this language school for two main reasons – firstly, because of the loss of customers and second, she used to study there and during the time she has built precious relationships, which will now be useful for gaining information. The author would like to explore the cause of current problem. As the decreasing number of customers is the major problem of the language school, it was chosen to be the topic of this thesis after consultation with the director of the school.

In the theoretical part, author will summarize the knowledge of leading a marketing research and of customers' satisfaction based on literary sources. First, the importance of satisfied customers and their role in a company will be pointed out. Then, the author will focus on the main principles of the whole process of marketing research from the first step of choosing a type of research that would be the most appropriate one to the final analysis and interpretation of collected data. In the theoretical part, special attention will be also paid to creating an effective questionnaire, which will be one of the essential sources of information in the practical part of the thesis.

In the practical part, the author will introduce the Language School and its offer. That will be followed by mapping the competition and comparing competitors' offers. Further in this part, the author will focus on analyzing and interpreting data collected from the questionnaire, internal documents of the language school, interviews and observation. At last, certain recommendations on improvement of current situation will be suggested.

# I. THEORY

#### 1 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The aim of this part is to summarize general knowledge about satisfied customers and explain and show the shift of company's attitude towards them and the causes of it. The information will be acquired from books and internet sources concerned with this issue

#### 1.1 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is characterized as "the degree to which there is a match between a customer's expectations of a product and the actual performance of the product." (Baker 1998)

According to the degree of match between expectations and performance, three types of customers exist (Kotler 2001): dissatisfied, satisfied and delighted.

- Customer is dissatisfied when his/her expectations exceed the performance.
   Dissatisfaction may be caused by company's exaggerated promises. The more company promises, the higher are customer's expectation. In such cases, it is more difficult to satisfy the customer; on the contrary, if the company evokes only a little expectation, customer will probably be satisfied.
- When the expectations meet the performance, the **customer** is **satisfied**.
- And last, delighted customer is customer whose expectations were exceeded by the performance of product. (Kotler 2001)

## 1.2 Marketing Management Strategies

Some 40 years ago, marketing philosophies which were in use were: the production concept, the product concept and the selling concept. Over the years, two new philosophies came into focus – marketing concept and societal marketing concept. Emerging of these new concepts has been caused by the change of proportion between products and customers. The number of products is increasing, while the number of customers is still relatively the same. Due to this fact, companies have to focus more on customers, if they wish to be successful. In the description given below, the shift in philosophy of marketing is explained. (Kotler 2001)

• The Production Concept

The production concept is one of the oldest among all the concepts. It suggests that customers are interested in low price and good availability and do not focus on quality much. This concept may appear in two different types of situation – first, when demand is

higher than supply, and second, when the production costs are too high and need to be lowered. In the first situation, the solution is increasing the production, and in the second one, the solution is increasing of productivity.

#### • The Product Concept

The product concept relies on product and its qualities. It suggests that buyers will appreciate the quality, innovation and other features of the product. As it is almost clear now, customer and his/her needs do not get much attention in this concept and neither do the competitors.

#### • The Selling Concept

Selling concept is driven by an idea that without massive promotion and large scale of products, customer would not buy enough from a single company. Therefore, the aim is to sell what is produced, not to produce what is wanted, and the goal is certainly not a satisfied customer. This concept usually goes hand in hand with unsought products and non-profitable areas and uses all the possible promotion to attract as many people as possible. In the following figure, the different approach of selling and marketing concepts is perfectly visible:

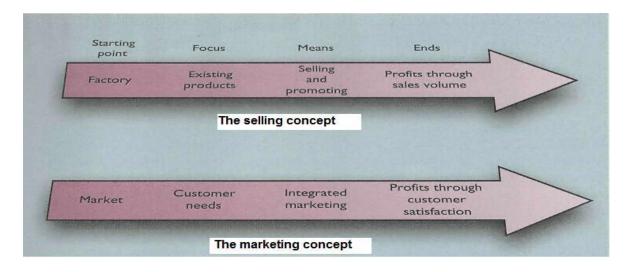


Figure 1. "The Selling and Marketing Concept Compared" (Kotler et al. 1999, 19)

#### • The Marketing Concept

"The marketing concept holds that achieving organizational goals depends on determining the needs and wants of target markets and delivering the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than competitors do." (Kotler et al. 1999, 19)

#### • The Societal Marketing Concept

This concept is based on balancing three aspects: profit of company, customer needs and society's interest. The new aspect of this concept is that the long-term welfare of society is taken into account. Is seems very reasonable in this age, when world has to face environmental problems, lack of resources and many other problems. (Kotler 2001)

# 1.3 The Importance of Satisfied Customer

From the previous part, it is obvious that the role of customers did undergo a big change. From not being paid attention to them at all, customers have become the centre of attention with emerging of so-called customer-oriented companies. To satisfy customers is becoming more and more difficult due to still-increasing quality of products and services. However, if a company wants to stay in competition, it has to focus on customers' need. They play essential role in success, and they bring the biggest part of company's profit. Further important aspects of satisfied customer are following (Zikmund 2003):

- Satisfied customer remains loyal towards company,
- Satisfied customer is willing to pay more for products that make him/her satisfied or delighted,
- Satisfied customer will share his/her experience with friends, which may bring new customers,
- Satisfied customer is likely to buy more product of a company.

#### 2 MARKETING RESEARCH

The goal of this part is to define what is a marketing research and survey. Individual types of the research will be described, as well as the stages of it. Later in this part, special attention will be paid to methods of acquiring information, especially questioning. As it will be essential for the analytical part of this thesis, creation and structure of questionnaire will be in focus, at last.

# 2.1 What Is a Marketing Research

When there were many customers and few products in the past, the goal of marketing research was to explore new techniques and innovations that would increase the profit of companies; customer was not the priority. Nowadays the situation has changed dramatically. As there are so many products available, companies need to listen to their customers and try to satisfy their needs; and marketing research is a tool for acquiring information about various issues ranging from market potential to satisfaction of customers.

Definition says that marketing research is "a process of systematically gathering and analyzing data in support of more effective marketing decision making." (Dacko 2008, 337) The main characteristics of marketing research are uniqueness and up-to-date information. On the contrary, it is demandingness on acquiring such information and on personnel as well.

The term *marketing research* is often confused with terms *market research* and *marketing survey*. A marketing survey is only a part of marketing research. It is much shorter and does not go as deep as the research does. Therefore, it is important to differentiate between these two terms. A market research is a research of one specific market.

Generally, marketing research is divided into 4 basic stages (Kotler et al. 1999):

- Defining a problem and research aims
- Developing the research plan
- Implementing the research plan collecting and analyzing data
- Interpreting and reporting the collected information

## 2.2 Marketing Research Process

As the marketing research consists of more parts that influence each other, it is necessary to follow certain rules and order. Otherwise, we will not get the needed information or pay extra money for correction. The four basic stages of marketing survey mentioned above can be placed into two stages: preparatory and implementation stage.

#### 2.2.1 Preparatory Stage

Preparatory stage consists of defining a problem and research aims, brief analysis of current situation and developing a research plan. This stage asks for special diligence because all the further research is based on it.

### Defining the Problem and Aims of Marketing Research

Defining the problem is the most important part of each research and might also be the most difficult. Sometimes, it is obvious that the company is facing a problem, but the cause of it might not be as obvious as it seems. Due to that, a careful definition is crucial for avoiding extra costs, delays and other inconveniences.

When the real problem is discovered, the aims come into focus. The aims vary in each situation and based on their nature, the types of research is determined. As for the aim, three types of research are distinguished: exploratory, descriptive and causal.

- The exploratory research aims at providing preliminary information that will help to define the exact problem and its dimension. It does not provide any conclusive evidence; these are provided by the following research, which is usually expected to take place. (Zikmund 2003)
- The aim of descriptive research is to describe certain characteristics, such as customers' attitude, needs, opinions or demographics. It is based on previous understanding of the problem.
- The goal of **causal research** is to explore relationships, causes and consequences. (Kotler et al. 1999, Kozel 2006)

#### Analysis of Current Situation and Comparison of Primary and Secondary Research

Another important part of the preparatory stage is a brief analysis of current situation. It is an informal process of gathering all information and opinions available, concerning the field of certain research. Such pieces of information are acquired from so-called informed people, who know the issues thoroughly, or from competitors. It might happen that at least one of the competitors have already faced and solved the same problem. In that case, it would not be necessary to go through the whole research process, which would safe plenty of time and money.

When gathering all the available information, secondary information should be searched for, first. It is possible that the information for solution of the problem already exist; therefore, it is advisable to do the secondary research thoroughly. It might safe lot of time and money. Within the secondary research, the internal information is looked for first and later for the external ones. If there is not enough information of this type, it is time to proceed to primary research, which is more expensive and time-consuming but accurate and recent. (Kozel 2006)

#### Plan of Marketing Research and its Content

Plan is the last part of preparatory stage and once the plan is done, it is time to proceed to implementation stage. The plan functions as a document of all aspects of the research. "It outlines sources of existing data and explains the specific research approaches, contact methods, sampling plans and instruments that researchers will use to gather new data." (Kotler et al. 1999, 321) When the plan is finished, it is important to do a so-called pilot study on a small sample of respondents. This will test the correctness and intelligibility and reveal possible mistakes. In this stage, there is still enough time to correct them.

#### 2.2.2 Implementation stage

Implementation stage includes data collecting, processing and analyzing, interpretation of results and final report on the results.

#### Data Collecting and Data Processing

To obtain the right information, the collecting of them must as first be well-organized. When collecting the primary sources, one of the three basic methods will be used: observation, questioning or experiment. The choice depends on many factors, for example the aim of research, the purpose of research, etc.

Observation is suitable in cases, when the research needs to be done in secrecy, so that the respondents' behavior is not influenced in any way. The advantage of observation is that it does not depend on willingness of observed people and moreover, people act naturally when they are not aware of being observed, therefore the results are more realistic than when they would be aware of it. When it comes to

interpretation of observing, some troubles might occur. First, it is difficult to analyze certain features and observer may misunderstand them, second, it is timeconsuming.

- Questioning is the most common method of collecting data and will be described in detail later in this work.
- Experiment is used when it is difficult to obtain the information from real life. Usually, certain situation is evoked in a group of people and the data are collected from their behavior. However, evoking the artificial situations is not easy and participants know that they are part of experiment so they might not act in the same way as if it was real. (Kozel 2006)

After collecting desired amount of data, the next step is to check and revise them. Completeness and legibility should be checked and special attention should be paid to validity and reliability of answers. It is possible to go through all the data or just choose random pieces. The next step is to check the logical aspect – whether the responder answered true.

At this stage, the data are ready for **coding**. "Coding is a technical procedure by which raw data are transformed into symbols." (Churchill 2005, 408) Thanks to this process, the analysis can be done by computer. Due to fast development of computer systems, this part of research is facing a huge development and is becoming much easier and more accurate. (Churchill 2005)

#### Analyzing Data

Last but one step in this stage is the analysis of data. The aim of analysis is to build results based on the collected data. The results are usually analyzed in form of tables, graphs, etc. and statistically described. (Zikmund 2003)

#### Interpretation of Results

Interpretation of results consists of transforming results into conclusions and suggestions on solving the problem. Its purpose is to explain the results. Based on the results, certain recommendations should be given as well. In fact, it is the most important part of whole research for managers as they are likely to follow it. Therefore, is should be written as a continuous text that is well-formulated and understandable.

As there are many possible relations and data to be interpreted, it is important to focus on those pieces that are relevant for the specific research. It is useless to cover data which are not related to the purpose of research. (Zikmund 2003)

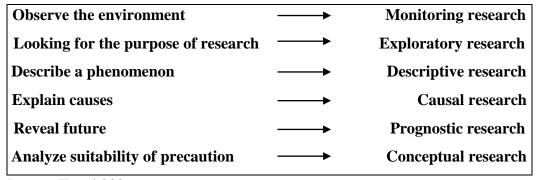
# 2.3 Types of Marketing Research

There are many types of marketing research which can be divided according various criteria. The most common division is division according to purpose. Here, the monitoring, exploratory, descriptive, causal, prognostic and conceptual researches are differentiated.

#### Monitoring Research

As it is obvious from the table below, the goal of monitoring research is to observe the environment and look for potential threats, opportunities, strengths and weaknesses of marketing environment of company. It appears in the beginning of questionnaires where it provides for entering information. The data are acquired from secondary information, observation or questioning.

Table 1. Types of Research according to its Purpose



Source: Kozel 2006.

#### Exploratory Research

Exploratory research is used to gain a deeper understanding of something. It can be used when the purpose of research is not clear and needs to be narrowed, or when the amount of information about market is not sufficient. These data are looked for during informal talks with specialists, or by observing and previous experience. (Zikmund 2003)

#### • Descriptive Research

Descriptive research aims at description of situations or phenomenon important for certain research. It maps current situation on the market and is basic for research. It does not focus on causes; however, the causes might be explored during the process and then used for future prediction. The data are collected through questioning, observation and secondary sources. (Zikmund 2003)

#### • Causal Research

The goal of causal research is obtaining information about relationship between subjects of the research and cause-effect relation. Most often, such information are obtained from questioning and experiment. (Kozel 2006)

#### • Prognostic Research

This type of research aims at predicting future development/situation/state. It uses and follows the information of all previous types of researches and on their basis it comes up with future predications. (Kozel 2006)

#### • Conceptual Research

This is the highest level among these types of researches. It looks for complex results and adds information about suitable tools for staying ahead of competition, eliminating threats and using the opportunities. (Kozel 2006)

# 2.4 Process of Questioning and Basic Principles for Creating A Questionnaire

#### 2.4.1 Questioning

Questioning is a widely used mean of collecting primary data. It is based on acquiring answers from respondents, who are relevant to the aim of the questionnaire. When creating a questionnaire, first it is necessary to realize what questions will be asked. Having the goal of questionnaire, a list of needed information should be made, so that the goal can be achieved. Such list of information will be very helpful as the key words and questions are included in it. It is important to go through the list, cross out the unimportant facts and check whether the any important questions are not missing. There are several methods of questioning, each having its advantages and disadvantages, each influencing the final form of questionnaire. (Kozel 2006)

#### Methods of Questioning

**Personal questioning** – is based on face-to-face communication. The major advantages of personal questioning are the direct feedback between respondent and questioner and the fact that the chance of misunderstanding is minimized as anything unclear can be directly explained by the questioner. Next plus of this method is its highest return rate. On the contrary, it is time-consuming, pricey and organizationally-demanding

and the results are deeply influenced by respondents' willingness to answer; sometimes the respondents might be influenced by the interviewer. (Zikmund 2003)

Written questioning – is based on questionnaires being sent to respondents by post or distributed during various occasions. A cover letter is a crucial part of all written questionnaires. Placed in the beginning, its aim is to motivate respondents to answer. It should explain the aim of questioning, guarantee anonymity and mention the benefits for answering. Concerning the financial aspect, this method requires the lowest budget. No trained questioners are needed. Moreover, it is comfortable for respondents as they have certain time span for thinking about the answers and they are not nervous about the presence of questioner. On the other hand, written questioning has high requirements on the composition of questions. They have to be precise and simple, so that the respondents understand them clearly. The major disadvantage is very low return rate – a good return rate is said to be circa 30 %. However, quality of the cover letter and other aspects of the questionnaire, such as theme, length or form, might have very positive influence on the return rate. (Kotler 2003)

**Telephone questioning** – can be compared to personal questioning, only the eye contact is missing. Nowadays, it is very popular form of collecting information. Questioners have to be well-trained to keep the interview going as this type of questioning is the easiest to escape from for the respondents. The biggest advantage is the speed of acquiring data. The whole phone-call should not last more than ten minutes, otherwise the respondent looses attention, gets bored or even irritated. Therefore, questions should be short and simple and the interview fluent. (Zikmund 2003)

**Electronic questioning** – is the latest method of questioning and is based on the use of internet. Nowadays it is used very often due to spread of usage of internet itself and due to the fact, that people find it comfortable and quick. The questionnaires are sent on e-mails or can be found directly on web pages. There are more advantages when compared with other methods. First, the costs are lower because there are no expenses on postage, questioners, printing, etc. Second, electronic surveys are flexible; they are easy to correct or adjust. Last, the responses get to questioner much faster when compared the written survey, and so the company can act faster as well. (Infosurv 2009)

#### 2.4.2 Questionnaire

Questionnaire is the most frequently used tool for collecting data during marketing research. Not only it acquires information from respondents, it also gives a structure of interview, provides standardized answers and makes data processing much easier. There are two different approaches towards construction of questionnaire – sociological and economical. The aim of sociological approach is to go through as many areas and consequences as possible. Therefore, sociological questionnaires are extensive and costly. On the contrary, the economical approach has a clear and brief form. Such questionnaire has to be well-understandable. The length varies according to themes and type of questioning. Each questionnaire has certain logical structure which supports the fluency, it starts with introduction followed by questions and finished with conclusion and acknowledgements. The questions should form a logical unit, as well. (Kozel 2006)

#### Composition of Questionnaire

Before the construction itself, it is necessary to state the objectives that are to be achieved and decide who will be the respondents. Based on the structure, there are two types of questionnaire: structured and semi-structured. The structured questionnaire has a fixed form that has to be followed. It usually contains of close-end questions with multiple choice of answers. This fact has negative influence on the value of information because respondents cannot express their opinion, if it is not included in the list. Positive aspect of structured questionnaire is that it is quick and easy to analyze and interpret. The semi-structured questionnaire might include also open and open-ended questions which provide for deeper and individual opinions and information.

Whether the questionnaire is or is not logical depends mainly on the order of questions. Each question influences both the answer and following question, therefore, it is important to order them well, so that they do not influence each other in a negative way. As first there are introductory questions. These should be easy, friendly and interesting so that they catch respondents' attention. Next there are filtration question which provide for logical structure and answers of certain respondents. General and specific questions go hand in hand – first, general questions refresh memory and then they make it easier for respondents to answer specific question. As last, there are identification question which ask for information about respondent, such as gender, age, etc.

It is generally known that by the end of questioning the concentration of respondents is decreasing. For that reason, it is advisable to place the most difficult questions in the middle of the questionnaire. On the contrary, questions which can cause a responders' negative attitude as well as more intimate questions should be placed in the final part. In that stage, respondents feel responsible for finishing what they have already started. (Kozel 2006)

#### Construction of Questions

The basic principles of well-constructed questions are explicitness and intelligibility. Questions should provide for information that they are looking for. Therefore, questioners do not ask questions to which the answers is not needed or those that cannot be answered for other reasons. Questions about respondents' future behavior and wishes do not have a value as well. We can ask about past and present, but not about future. Badly-formulated questions have negative influence on the value of information and should be eliminated. That can be done easily by following basic rules such as (Kozel 2006):

- using short and direct questions,
- using appropriate vocabulary,
- eliminating negative, inconvenient and misleading questions.

#### Types of Questions

There are two basic types of questions in marketing questionnaire: closed-end and openend questions and one special type - scales. (Kotler et al. 1999)

#### Close-end Question

In closed-end questions, multiple choices of answers are given and respondents choose among them. Such given answers help the respondents form their opinion and are easily processed. However, attention has to be paid to the scale of possible answers and to covering them to minimize the biggest disadvantage of this type of questions, which is the limitation of respondents' decision. (Kotler et al. 1999) Zikmund divides the closed-end questions into following categories (Zikmund 2003):

- *The simple-dichotomy questions* questions offering only two answer choices requiring respondents to choose only one of them;
- The multiple-choice questions questions offering three and more choices requiring respondents to choose only one of them;

- The checklist questions questions offering multiple choices and allowing respondent to choose more of them;
- The attitude rating scales the most commonly used method to measure customers' attitude; there are several types of scales, some of them will be described below;
- *The Likert Scale* a statement with which the respondent shows the amount of agreement or disagreement with certain statement;
- Semantic differential a scale is inscribed between two bipolar words, and the respondent selects the point that represents the direction and intensity of his/her feelings;
- *Importance scale* a scale that rates the importance of some attribute from 'not at all important' to 'extremely important',
- *Rating scale* a scale that rates some attribute from 'poor' to 'excellent'. (Zikmund 2003)

#### • Open-end Questions

Open-end questions, on the contrary, allow respondents to answer in their own words. When there is no limitation concerning the answer, we can obtain deeper, wider and even unanticipated information.

For these questions, respondents' memory and ability to express themselves' correctly and clearly are necessary. Moreover, processing and analyzing of these data is much more problematic than with close-end questions. Open-end questions are usually used during the preparatory stage of marketing research or when the exploratory research is conducted. In questionnaires they are used as contact questions and quite often, they are not analyzed. (Kozel 2006, Zikmund 2003)

# 3 SUMMARY OF THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE

As first, it was defined who is a satisfied customer. The importance and role of customers in a company have been explained as well. Based on development of marketing strategies over the years, the change in perception of customers - from not being in focus at all to being in the centre of attention - was pointed out.

As second, the marketing research was in focus. Its procedure and types were described. Within this part, special attention was also paid to questioning and structure of questionnaire, which is the most widely used mean of acquiring information within the marketing research, and moreover, questionnaire will be one of the essential sources for the analytical part of the thesis.

II. ANALYSIS

# 4 INTRODUCING THE LANGUAGE SCHOOL WITH THE RIGHT OF STATE EXAMINATION HRADEC KRÁLOVÉ, V LIPKÁCH 692

# 4.1 Brief History

The Language School with the Right of State Examination Hradec Králové, V Lipkách 692 was founded in 1964 along the Business Academy. As first, it provided courses of Russian and German, and couple of years later also courses of English were added. As it was one of the first proper language schools in Hradec Králové, it did not have problems with lack of students; the only problem the school had been facing for many years was lack of space. The most prosperous years came obviously after the Velvet Revolution. The possibility to travel and do business abroad goes hand in hand with people's desire and necessity to speak foreign languages. At that time, people of all generations attended the courses, ranging from primary school children to seniors. During these years, the language school has earned excellent reputation. Due to high demand, French courses were added; the interest in Russian courses, on the other hand, was declining sharply and by the year 1991 it had already disappeared from the offered courses. In the past few years, there has been demand for Italian and Spanish courses, however these courses were running only 6 years and nowadays had to be closed due to lack of students. Last year both the Language School and the Business Academy moved to larger and more suitable building, which enables all courses to take place under one roof. (Langová 2010)

#### 4.2 Structure

Current director of the language school is *Mgr. Robert Toman* and the statutory representative is *Mgr. Eva Vachatová*. At the moment, the language school employs six teachers; four of them teach English and one is a teacher of French.

#### English teachers:

Following description of teachers is based on author's own experience with them; she was a student of the one-year intensive course in 2006/2007 and was also present to their lessons during April 2010.

First Czech teacher studied pedagogical faculty in Russia, therefore, she has been teaching Russian and English courses. She has more than 30 years of experience in teaching languages and among students she is one of the most favorite teachers. Her style

of teaching is being strict and tough but fair. From what the author could see, she is very helpful and her lessons are always enriching. Second teacher is originally from New Zealand but has been living and teaching in Czech Republic for 5 years now. He is not a professional teacher; however, he is a native speaker, which is a big advantage. He has a friendly attitude towards students and the atmosphere in his classes is very positive most of the time. Another foreign teacher is American and before settling in Czech Republic he had been teaching for many years in countries such as Japan, Italy or France. From her own experience, the author can say that he is extremely friendly, which unfortunately allows students do whatever they want. Last teacher of English is Czech; he is young teacher and this is his first year in the language school. He brings fresh air and has built a respect and admiration among students, even though his attitude towards them is friendly as well.

#### • Other teachers:

Last two teachers are in charge of French respectively Czech Language. Both of them are experienced and strict with students, when compared with the foreign teachers.

At the same time, the teachers are teaching at the Business Academy and in case new courses are opened, the director first offers the place to teachers from the academy. There are other ten teachers of English, Spanish, Russian, German and French, who are willing to join the language school if necessary.

#### 4.3 Courses and Exams Offered

The language school offers variety of courses and languages. Students might choose among afternoon courses, summer English course, one-year intensive course, course of Czech language for foreigners, company courses and courses of technical English and German for doctors and lawyers.

As for the exam, there are only two language schools with the right of State examination in Hradec Králové. It is definitely an advantage because in Czech Republic this examination is still preferred to other international exams and certificates; due to this fact many people still apply for it. The language school also provides City&Guild's exams, FCE, DELF, DALF and Zertifikat Deutsch. (Obchodní akademie a Jazyková škola s právem státní jazykové zkoušky Hradec Králové)

#### • Afternoon Courses

The afternoon courses are offered in English, Spanish, French, Italian, Russian and German, and are divided into 6 categories according to Common European Framework of

Reference for Languages. The categories are: A Basic Speaker (A1, A2); B Independent Speaker (B1, B2) and C Proficient Speaker (C1, C2) (Council of Europe 2010). This level division also corresponds with the levels of international exams, and thanks to that students do not have troubles deciding what level of exam they should take. To move to the next level (year) students have to pass a test at the end of each year.

Each course aims at gaining the knowledge appropriate for its level and prepares student for corresponding exam. The students can sign up for two, three or four lessons per week. The minimal number of people necessary for opening the course is six, while maximum for one group is eighteen. The price differs according to both number of lessons and people in group. See in the tables below:

Table 2. Price of Courses

Courses with 6-9 students							
Number of lessons	2	3	4				
Price (CZK)	7000	9800	11000				
Courses with 10-18 students							
Number of lessons	2	3	4				
Price (CZK)	5000	7000	8000				

Source: Obchodní akademie a Jazyková škola s právem státní jazykové zkoušky Hradec Králové.

#### • Czech Language for Foreigners

This course has been running for past two years and is becoming more and more popular. It prepares foreigners for A1 exam, which is necessary for them to receive permanent residence. The course is realizes on both A1 and A2 levels.

#### • Summer English Course

Summer English course usually takes place in August and lasts for 6 days. Every day, students have 7 lessons of English with both Czech and foreign teachers. The free time is filled with various sport activities. Last day, students have an opportunity to try the City & Guilds exam.

#### One-year intensive language course

This course runs during the whole school-year and consists of 20 hours per week; its price is CZK 24,000. It is available both in English and German and is divided into following subjects: Use of English, Grammar, Listening, Reading, Conversation and Writing. These subjects are formed to prepare students either for FCE or for university entrance exams. The course is accepting only those students who graduated from high

school the previous year; the advantage of being it this course is that students are still having the "high school-student" status. Thanks to that, they do not have to pay health and social insurance. (Obchodní akademie a Jazyková škola s právem státní jazykové zkoušky Hradec Králové)

There are other optional seminars that students can attend as well. These seminars are constructed as an extended preparation for university exams or for practical skills. Students can choose from IT, accountancy, history, mathematics, chemistry or biology. The price of each seminar is CZK 2,500 per school-year.

From author's point of view, the biggest weakness of the one-year course is in its organization – the students are not divided into groups according to their skills and that causes difficulties both for teachers and students. For teachers it is impossible to satisfy all the students and organize the lesson in class where there are both almost fluent speaker and beginners. From the students' point of view, those with higher level of knowledge might feel like loosing time and money, if the teachers focus on something they already know. Therefore many people preferred the Private Language School in the past, as it made more groups according to level of knowledge.

Author's own experience with this course was rather negative due to reasons mentioned above; as highlights, she considered the lessons of grammar and use of language, which very effective and enriching for her. Nevertheless, the course could have been incomparably more effective if students were placed in groups according to their knowledge. Moreover, there was also problem with the native speakers, who instead of teaching preferred to play various games bringing no enrichment.

Company courses and courses of technical English and German for doctors and lawyers are not running at this moment due to lack of students.

# 4.4 The Main Competitors

The main competitors were identified after consultation with the teachers of the Language School with the Right of State Examination Hradec Králové and comparison of size, languages and courses offered by each. The prices of courses are set for school-year in each language school.

#### • Private Language School Jana

First competitor of our language school has a long tradition – it was founded almost 20 years ago. In recent years, there has been a great expansion of provided courses. Students

can choose among afternoon courses in English, Spanish, French, Russian, German, Italian and Czech for foreigners or one-year intensive course, summer language course and company courses. In addition, Language School Jana offers courses for businessman and individual and weekend courses. The prices are comparable – 4 lesson per week cost CZK 8,500 and 2 lessons per week cost CZK 4,300; and so is the number of students in groups – 7-15. The one-year intensive course is possible in English and German and it costs CZK 24,500, lasting 20 hours per week. They also provide wider range of courses preparing for certificates and internationally acknowledged exams. However, they do not have a license for the State exam.

The language school Jana is situated in the city centre and is well approachable. The reviews are mostly positive. (Soukromá jazyková škola JANA) The author noticed that this language school has the biggest promotion of all language schools in Hradec. There are leaflets and posters on almost every second bus stop. Their web page is also very attractive and nicely organized.

#### • European Educational Centre-Language School

Another competitor – offers courses in English, German, Spanish, Italian, French and Czech for foreigners. It also offers one-year intensive English course, company courses, individual courses and courses for children. They provide wide range of internationally valid certificates, not only from English but also German, Spanish, French and Italian. However, their web page is not very well-organized and the prices differ from course to course; for lower levels the price is usually CZK 2,990, for levels B2 and higher it is 3, CZK 990 for 1 lesson a week. Price of the one-year intensive English course is CZK 20,990 and it takes 3hours/5 days in week. On the contrary, they have many native speakers, at least one for each language, which is a big advantage. This language school is quite new, therefore if does not have any stable reputation and tradition. It offers lower prices, but for less hours. (Evropské vzdělávací centrum)

Author's personal opinion about this school is rather negative as it is trying to mystify people with the seemingly lower prices that are in reality the highest among all language schools mentioned here.

#### • Private Language School Hradec Králové, s.r.o.

This language school used to be the most serious competitor in the past, but nowadays it competes with our language school only when the offer of one-year intensive courses is concerned. On their web page, they offer the course in English, German, French or

Russian, which is unique as well as the price, which is CZK 20,000 for 20 hours a week. The major disadvantages are that this school does not offer any international exams but only the State exam and that it does not provide any other courses. (Soukromá jazyková škola Hradec Králové s.r.o.)

# 5 THE ANALYSIS OF CUSTOMERS' SATISFACTION

# 5.1 The Goal of the Analysis

The aim of the analysis is to find out whether the customers of the Language School with the Right of State Examination Hradec Králové are satisfied or not and in what areas specifically. The customers' satisfaction is being in focus as their number has been dramatically decreasing during the last three years. See the figure of its development below:

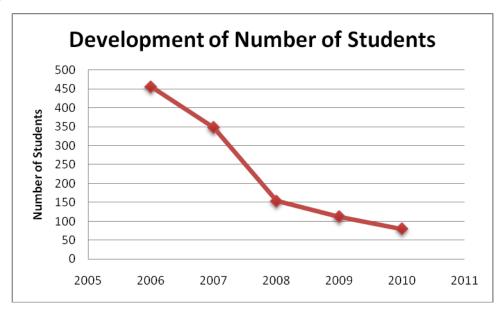


Figure 2. Development of Number of Students, 2006-2010 (*Výroční zpráva za školní rok 2006/2007, 2007/2008, 2008/2009*)

It is undiscutable that the language school is facing a serious problem. While in year 2006 there were 30 courses with 456 students, nowadays there are only 6 courses with 72 students. The author will search for the possible causes of current situation. As the amount of lost customers is so high, author suggest that external factors play an important role as well. Therefore, the second goal of the analysis is to find out, whether the language schools identified as the major competitors are also facing the same problem.

# 5.2 Methods and Materials Used for Acquiring Information

• Internal materials of the language school

For information concerning school's earnings, numbers of students or prices of courses the author was provided with annual reports from last four years.

#### Interviewing

Author interviewed teachers of the language school to gain information about their experience, attitudes and about the language school itself. Next, she interviewed the contact persons of language schools identified as the biggest competitors. The questions aimed at finding out whether they have been experiencing decrease in number of students and courses in recent years as well. The interviewing was conducted either in person or via telephone and e-mail. All teachers and schools answered except for the European Educational Centre, which was not willing to share any information.

#### • Observation and personal experience

Author draws information from her own experience with the one-year intensive course. She attended this course in year 2006/2007. For more information about the afternoon courses, author was present to four lessons during the first week of April, 2010.

#### • Questionnaire

The questionnaire was created by the author and its goal is to find out students' satisfaction with the course they attend. The questionnaire comprises of 23 questions, which aim at three main areas – satisfaction with the content of lessons, satisfaction with the teachers and students' overall opinion about course. In the beginning, there are also three categorizing questions necessary for further evaluation. For most questions, Likert Scale was used and for deeper opinions and information the author used opened questions as well.

The questionnaire was given to 54 students (82 %), who were present during the first week of April, 2010. Out of the 54 questionnaires, 47 were returned and filled in completely and correctly; the return rate was 87 %. As the course of Czech language for foreigners is not lacking students and is relatively new, its students were not included in the survey.

# 5.3 Analytical Findings

#### 5.3.1 Current Situation of the Language School with the Right of State Examination

As the past few years were not very successful, there are only English and French courses and course of Czech language for foreigners running today. Since 2006, the number of courses decreased immensely; Russian, Spanish and Italian disappeared totally and French and German courses are available only in C1 respectively A1 level. The range of English

courses decreased as well; customers can choose only among A1, A2 and B2 level, while four years ago there was at least one course of each level. Due to this fact, students who want to prepare themselves for exams of higher level have to search for other language schools.

Today the language school is running 6 courses with 72 students – 1 one-year intensive English course with 18 students, 3 English courses with 15/15/10 students, 1 French course with 8 students and course of Czech for foreigners with 6 students.

To this day, the language school does not have any promotion and the web page is not exactly up-to-date and catching attention. The leaders have been anticipating existence of certain problems but have not done any survey nor have they tried to solve any of the problems. (Langová 2010)

According to the annual reports, the income in year 2007/2008 was 3,028,000Czk, while in 2008/2009 it was only 1,602,500Czk. Even though the price of courses increased, the income lowered more than twice due to smaller number of customers.

#### **5.3.2** Current Situation of Competitors

Language School Jana is also facing the loss of customers, however not in such scale; compared with the previous year the language school has lost roughly 30% of customers. (Vacková 2010) The situation of the *Private Language School Hradec Králové*, s.r.o. is much worse. In reality, none of the courses is running due to lack of students. (Hampl 2010)

The European Educational Centre was not willing to share any information about the number of students; nevertheless, it is visible that also the competing schools are experiencing lack of customers.

#### **5.3.3** Results of the Questionnaire

As first, there are three categorizing question, which will show who the students are, how long they study at this language school and what course they attend. The results will serve for more exact interpretation of further questions.

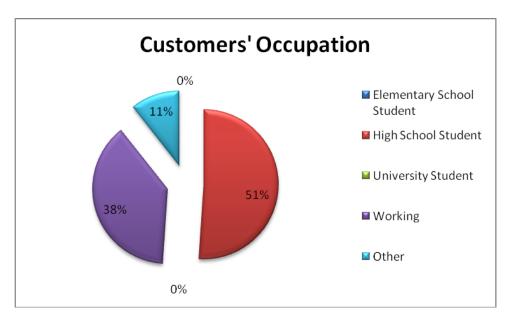


Figure 3. 1. Customers' Occupation (Own source)

This graph is important for realizing what age-group creates the majority of customers. According to the answers, it is high school students with 51 %, followed by working people – 38 %. The 11 % left are made up by seniors, unemployed people and women on maternity leave.

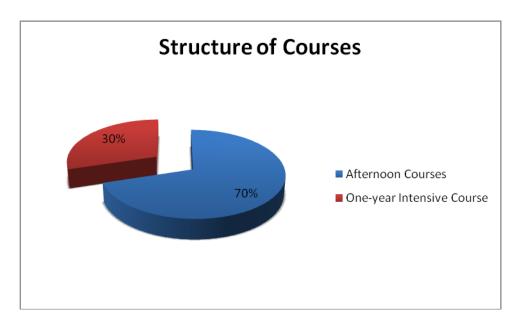


Figure 3. 2. Structure of Courses (Own source)

Out of 47 respondents 70 % (33 students) attend the afternoon courses and 30 % (14 students) attend the one-year intensive course.

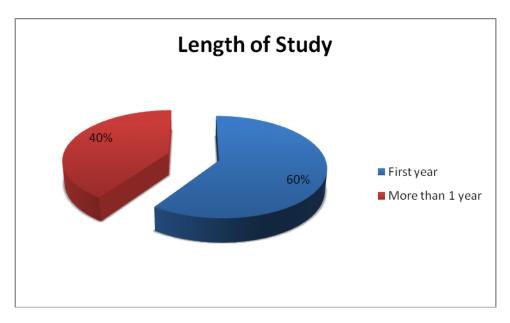


Figure 3. 3. Length of Study (Own source)

As the afternoon courses are divided into 6 levels, and one level equeals one year, it should be one of the main interests of the school to impress the students in a way that will make them continue in studies in following years. The graph shows that 60 % of students are new, which signalls that the impression could be better. On the other hand, 50 % of new students are those from the one-year intensive course; it means that out of 33 students in the afternoon courses 14 are new.

The following questions aim at gaining information about satisfaction with lessons in general and its organization.



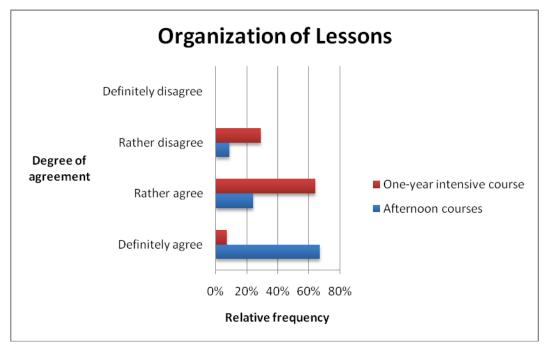
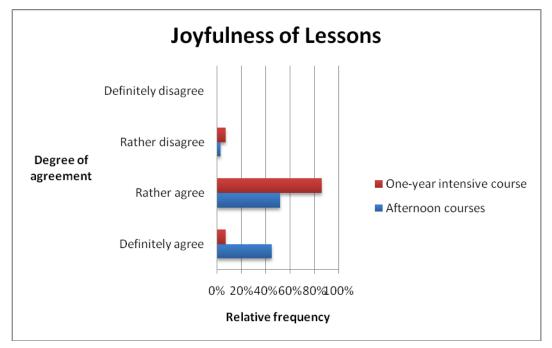


Figure 3. 4 Organization of Lessons (Own source)

System in organization of lessons is very important for effectiveness of teaching and for students as well. Majority of afternoon course students - 91 % - finds the organization of lessons systematic. Within the one-year intensive course 78 % agree with that statement, too, however, 22 % dissagree.

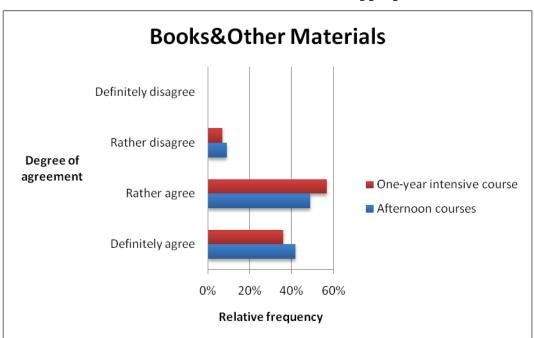
From author's experience, it can be said that within the one-year intensive course the lessons were not organized well; it often happened that two teachers explained the same thing and none of them had enough time then to go through other important tasks. As the author observed the organization of afternoon courses she did not come across any problem and consider it as very systematic and clear.



## Question 5: Lessons are enjoyable:

Figure 3. 5. Joyfulness of Lessons (Own source)

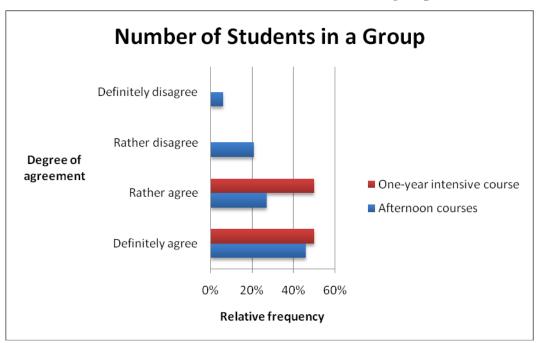
Majority of students in both courses agree that the lessons are enjoyable, which is a positive result. Author suggests that when students have fun during the lessons they are more tolerant towards possible mistakes or other negatives.



Question 6: The books and other materials we use seem appropriate to me:

Figure 3. 6. Books and Other Material Used (Own source)

91 % of afternoon course students and 93 % of one-year intensive course students find the books and other studying materials appropriate. Knowing that the language school uses Oxford and Cambridge books, author supports this result.



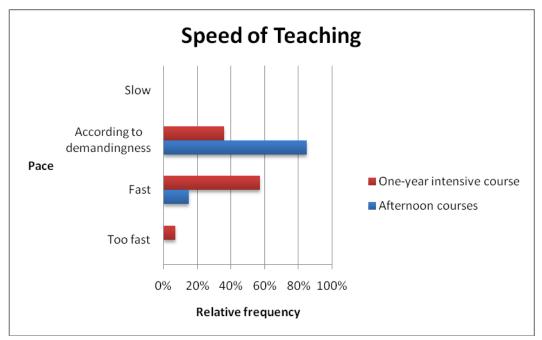
Question 7: I am satisfied with the number of students in our group:

Figure 3. 7. Number of Students in a Group (Own source)

Answers of one-year course student are 100 % positive; they are all satisfied with the number of students in their group. Within the afternoon course, certain amount of dissagreement emerges, exactly it is 27 %, which should not be left without attention. Author thinks the dissagreemant is justifiable as two groups consists of 15 students. Within the afternoon courses the time is very limited and when the groups are so big, students might not be given as much space as they would need. About the numer of students in language courses specialists usually say that the less the better.

# Question 8: If your previous answer was negative, what number of students in one group would you find appropriate?

All respondents who are not satisfied with the number of students in their group answered this question. Six of them suggest that maximum of students in one group should be 10, three would be satisfied with 8.



Question 9: We go through new curriculum:

Figure 3. 8. Speech of Teaching (Own source)

The majority of students from the afternoon courses, exactly 28, claim that the speed of teaching corresponds with demandingness of certain features/grammar, etc. Within the one-year intensive course, the opinions differ. Only 5 students find the speed corresponding with demandingness, 8 students consider it to be quick and 1 student answered that they go through new curriculum too quickly.

The reason of the variation is the fact, that in this course, students are not divided into groups according to their knowledge. Therefore, advanced or intermediate student may find the speed adequate while for beginners it can be too fast.

Question 10: I think the course will successfully prepare me for State Exams / FCE / CAE / City&Guilds/ University Exams, etc.:

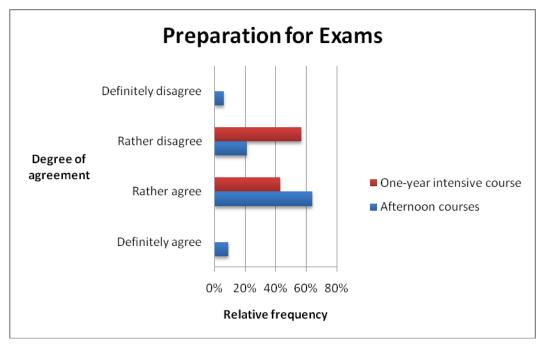
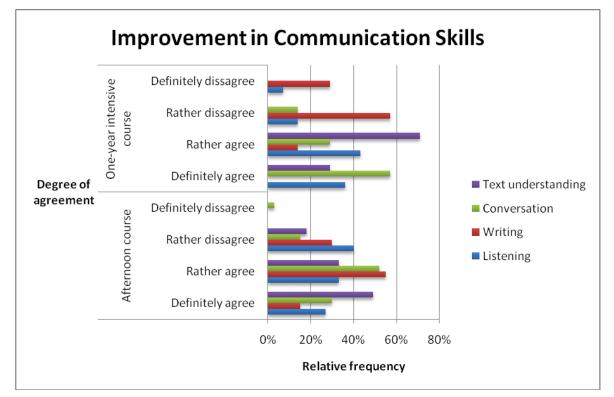


Figure 3. 9. Preparation for Exams (Own source)

At the end of every course, students should be prepared to pass an exam corresponding with their level of knowledge. In the afternoon courses, 73 % of students consider their course to be sufficient preparation for exams and 27 % rather dissagree. The opinion of one-year intensive course students is different – 57 % of students do not consider the course a sifficient preparation and 43 % of them do.

In author's opinion, the number of positive responses should be higher, especially within the one-year intensive course, which is constructed to prepare students especially for FCE, City&Guilds or university exams.



Question 11: I feel improvement in my communication skills:

Figure 3. 10. Improvement in Communication Skills (Own source)

As both courses are said to be complex, students should feel improvement in the main aspects of language use. Regarding the afternoon courses, 61 % of students agree that they feel improvement in *listening*, while 38 % rather dissagree with this statement; 70 % also improved in *writing* and 82 % of them got better in *conversation*; at last, only 48 % feel improvement in *text undrestanding*. According to the results, the most critical factors are *text understanding* and *listening*. I think that this problem can be managed easily if teachers will focus on it closely.

As for the one-year intensive course, 79 % of students feel improvement in *listening*, while 86% claim to feel no improvement in *writing*. Concerning *conversation*, 86 % think they have improved and all 100% feel improvement in *text understanding*. I see a serious problem of one-year intensive course in *writing* - 86 % of students claiming that they did not improve in it. From my own experience I can only agree with them. During that lessons, students usually play various games in class or outside but they almost never do writing.

The different opinions among the courses about improvement in text understanding and listening author attributes to different amount of lessons – while one-year course

students have 4 lessons a week, those from afternoon courses only have one lesson a week and that definitely makes difference.

Following questions concern qualitites and attitude of teachers.

Question 12: **Teacher are always prepared for lessons:** 

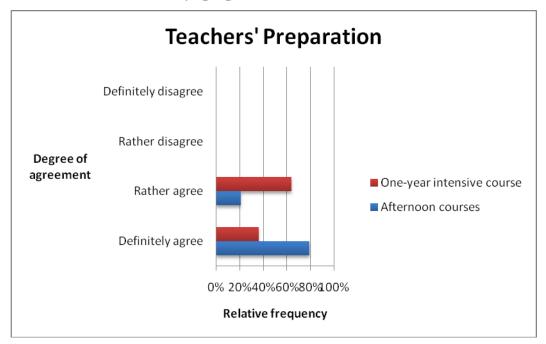


Figure 3. 11. Teachers' Preparation (Own source)

All students from both courses agree that teachers are always prepared for lessons. Author agrees with this result, during her observation and studies, teachers were usually well prepared.

Question 13: **Teachers are willing to help and explain problematic features** repeatedly:

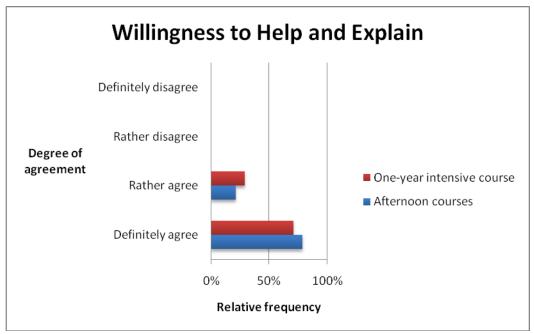


Figure 3. 12. Willingness to Help and Explain (Own source)

All students from all courses confirm that the teachers are willing to help and explain if it is neccessary. Author considers this result to be very positive. The way in which teachers behave towards students influences the whole students' perception of the course.

Question 14: In my opinion, qualification of Czech teachers is:

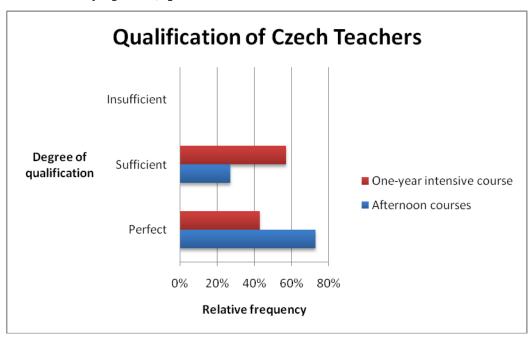


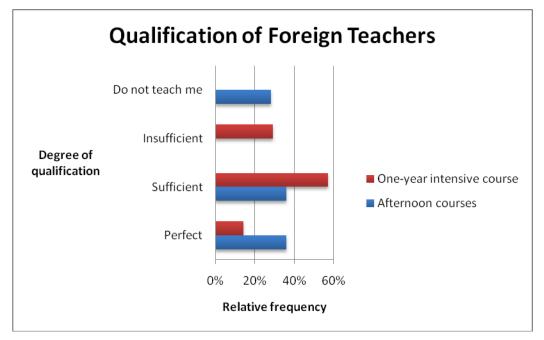
Figure 3. 13. Qualification of Czech Teachers (*Own source*)

All students find the qualifitcation of Czech teacher sufficient, at least. 24 students of afternoon courses and 6 of the one-year course marked it as perfect, while 9 respectively 8 marked it as sufficient. Though it is a good result, a slight difference between the courses is visible. While majority of afternoon course students chose "perfect", majority of the one-year course chose "sufficient". During her observation, author noticed that teachers seem to be more diligent and more interested in the afternoon courses; this could be a cause of the varying results.

### Question 15: What would you recommend to Czech teachers to improve?

19 out of 33 students from the afternoon courses answered this question. Most of the students claim that thez are satisfied with their teachers and do not see anything to improve. Five students would welcome more time dedicated to conversation, and listening. Four student suggest that teachers should focus on pronunciation and motivate students to speak more; and while students are speaking, teachers should correct them.

Regarding the one-year intensive course, almost all students answered. The most common recommendations were to focus more on difficult gramatical features and explain them more effectively, to slow down while going through new curriculum and to correct students' pronunciation. A surprising recommendation was that the teachers should improve their pronunciation. This recommendation appeared four times, which is quite a lot considering the total number of students in course. During my observation, also I have noticed certain incorrectness in pronunciation of two teachers, however their other qualities overweigh this slight defect. It is also questionable, whether those four students do not have any personal problem with the teachers. If their pronunciation would be so incorrect, students from afternoon courses would have pointed that out as well.



Question 16: In my opinion, qualification of foreign teachers is:

Figure 3. 14. Qualification of Foreign Teachers (Own source)

Concerning the afternoon courses, 9 (27 %) respondents do not have any lesson taught by foreign teacher. Twelve students (36 %) marked the qualification as sufficient and twelve as perfect. The opinions of one-year intensive course students are disparate; 2 students consider teachers qualification perfect, 8 students find it sufficient and 4 students think it is insufficient. The reasons will be unveiled in the following question.

### Question 17: What would you recommend to foreign teachers to improve?

The recommendations of the afternoon and one-year courses differ again. Within the afternoon courses, students recommend foreign teachers to conversate more and if students are taking turns in speaking, make a time limit for each. While observing a conversation lesson, author noticed that the first five people were talking more than 3 minutes, while the last ones had space to say only few sentences. The time limit for everyone would solve this problem.

As for the one-year intensive course, most of the students complain about subject *Writing*, where instead of developing writing skills they play games or watch movies. The author used to be student of this course and she can confirm these fact, though it shocks her that the situation has not changed yet. Half of the one-year intensive course students also recommend better organization and preparation for lessons; and six students would

welcome, if foreign teachers included some history, literature and geography in their lessons, as knowledge of these if required for most of university entrance exams.

The following questions aim at acquiring information about students' overall opinion about their course.

#### Question 18: What are the strengths of the course in your opinion?

According to afternoon course students, the strenghts are: widening the vocabulary (13 students), communication with foreign teachers (9 students), motivation to study also at home (4 students), and strengthening and practicing grammar and conversation (4 students).

One-year intensive course students see the strengths in: communication with foreign teachers (6 students), amount of lessons (5 students), subjects Grammar and Use of English and widening vocabulary.

#### Question 19: What are the weaknesses of the course in your opinion?

The afternoon course students see weaknesses in the number of students in group (10 students), length of lessons, which if 45 minutes (5 students) and - on the oposite- time consumption (4 students). As author has already mentioned before, the number of students in groups is really high and so the teachers cannot go through all problems and questions that emerge. There is also a time-press; not much can be done in 45 minutes. Nevertheless, extension of lessons would reflect in price and that could cause further loss of customers, therefore it is very unlikely to happen.

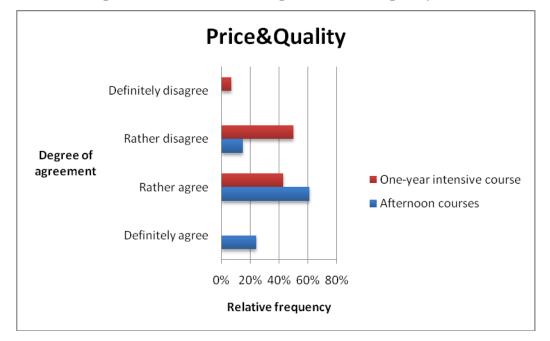
Students of one-year intensive course, who answered this question, agreed on three weaknesses: attitude of foreign teachers and not obeying the curriculum (7 students), too quick explanation of grammar (4 students) and insufficient preparation for exams (4 students). The reappearing dissatisfaction with attitude of foreign teachers seems to be the most critical factor. As the teachers have not been asking for students' opinions before, it is possible they are not aware of this problem. Author thinks that reparation can be expected when they will know students' opinion. would also check whether they are aware of the curriculum and urge them to obey it. Concerning the opinion that course is not a sufficient preparation for exams, author cannot express agreement nor dissagreement, first the course is constructed to prepare students for exams, so by the end of the course they should feel

prepared; secondly, the students cannot expect to learn everything during the lessons, it is clear that some individual practising is necessary as well.

#### Question 20: What changes would you suggest or welcome?

Only few students from afternoon course commented on this question, however, those who did, agreed on dividing the groups into smaller ones (6 students) and 3 students suggest that teachers could announce the themes of conversation in advance so that they can prepare for it and the lessons would be more effective.

The one-year intensive course students suggest introduction of entrance test which applicants have to pass in order to be allowed to sign into the course (5 students). Others suggested that teachers could have higher requirements on students, who apply for language exam or university (3 students). Last reappearing suggestion was to widen the curriculum with other useful subject, such as geography, literature and history of English speaking countries, that are necessary for exams. Author thinks the last suggestion is a nice idea and it would be both enriching and interesting for students. On the other hand, having different requirement on certain students could discourage and demotivate the weaker ones. Author would agree with the entrance test due to difficulties caused by such variety of knowledge levels; she suggests, the lessons would be more effective, teachers would not stuck on explaining the basic features and students might find it more motivating as they would all be on similar level. It is questionable though, whether there would be enough students who pass the test.



Question 21: The price of the course correspondes with its quality:

Figure 3. 15. Price&Quality (Own source)

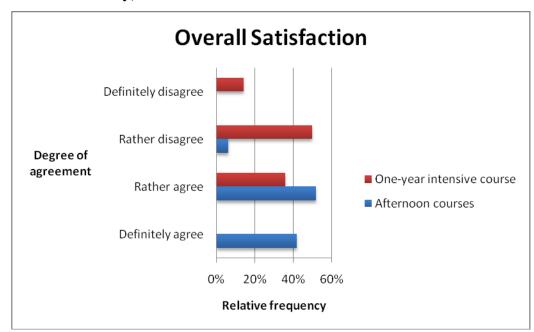
The answers of afternoon course students are extremely different from those of one-year course students. Regarding the afternoon courses, 28 out of 33 students claims that the price correspondes with quality of the course. On the opposite, 9 out of 14 students from the one-year intensive course dissagree with this statement. As the teachers are the same for both courses, it is neccesary to look closer to this problem. The bad experience is spreading among people much faster than the good one, therefore this situation should be improved very quickly. However, this results are not surprising when the answers from previous questions are taken into consideration.

As for the afternoon courses, only 5 students (15 %) show disagreement with quality&price relation. Author would not think about changing the price as the amount of disagreement is not so high and moreover, there will always be someone, who will not be satisfied.

# Question 22: If your previous answer was negative, what price would seem adequate to you?

None of afternoon course students answered this question. The most common answer of the one-year intensive course students was CZK 15,000; roughly half of dissatisfied students responded. One student suggested that the corresponding price would be CZK 20,000 and two students said CZK 10,000. The price CZK 10,000 for the course is

definitely inadequate and so is CZK 15,000. According to author, price should range from CZK 20,000 to 25,000; it seems reasonable to her when she considers just how many lessons it consists of.



Question 23: Generally, I am satisfied with this course:

Figure 3. 16. Overall Satisfaction (Own source)

At last, author wanted the students to evaluate the course in general. It showed up that 31 (94 %) students from afternoon courses are satisfied with their course. On the contrary, 9 (64 %) students from one-year intensive dissagree with the statement. Based on the answers of previous questions, this result was expectable.

# 5.4 Summary of Analytical Findings

In this part, the author will summarize the results of questionnaire. The summary will be divided according to type of questions.

Questions considering organization and curriculum of lessons

Generally, students are satisfied with the atmosphere within the class and studying materials. Within the afternoon courses, dissatisfaction with number of students in group and no improvement in listening and text understanding emerged. Regarding the one-year intensive course, students are not really satisfied with organization of lessons and speed of teaching. More than half of them do not consider the course to be sufficient preparation for exams and majority of them feel no improvement in writing.

## Questions considering teachers' attitude and qualities

All students are satisfied with teachers' preparation for lessons and their willingness to help. They are satisfied with qualification of Czech teachers, too. Certain number of students from one-year intensive course complains about not obeying the curriculum and about attitude of foreign teachers.

#### • Questions about overall satisfaction with the course

It showed up that students from afternoon courses are satisfied, in general. On the opposite, more than half of the students from one-year intensive course are not satisfied and claim that the price of their course is not corresponding with its quality.

Author's expectations proved valid – based on the questionnaire, overall satisfaction of customers is not very high and many complaints were expressed; and based on telephonic and personal interviewing, the author found out that other language school are also experiencing loss of customers (see chapter 4.4.2.). Author suggests that this situation can be partly attributed to economic crisis and to the fact that during last 10 years language lessons have been incorporated to all types of schools, therefore, many people find the lessons at school sufficient and do not feel need to take extra courses.

#### 6 PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

In this part, the author will propose recommendations on improvement of current situation and solving certain problems, which emerged from the analytical findings.

# 6.1 Recommendations Based on Findings from Questionnaire

These recommendations concern students' complaints and suggestions. Most of them are not financially demanding, but if realized properly, they can make a significant change in students' satisfaction.

Recommendations concerning the afternoon courses:

#### Conversation

During conversation lessons, author recommends to teachers to set a time-limit for each student's speech, so that all students get space to talk; also correct the students if they make mistakes. It will also make the lessons more effective if teachers announce the topics of conversation in advance, therefore students can prepare for it.

#### Listening and reading

Significant part of students does not feel improvement in listening and text understanding and the author suggests that teachers will focus more closely on these two points and add more listening exercises to the lessons and reading either in lessons or as homework.

#### Number of students in groups

Author's last and the most organizationally-demanding recommendation for afternoon courses is to make the groups smaller. Author suggests the maximum number of students in one group will be 10 and the higher price will remain the same – CZK 11,000/school-year for 4 lessons per week. Using the current number of students in English afternoon courses (40), this will increase the income of CZK 120,000; as for the cost, teachers' average hourly gross salary is CZK 180 and the employer has to pay 34% tax on health and social insurance. The school is in their own building, therefore there will be only insignificant increase in costs on energy and administration. Based on that, the costs will increase roughly of CZK 45,000. Concerning teachers, if the current ones would not be willing to teach more lessons, there are still another ten teachers within the Business academy, who claim, they would take the classes. This fact makes the situation easier, as the language school will not need to search for new teachers.

In longer time span, this division will bring significantly increased profit and more satisfied customers.

It might seem risky to stay at the higher price but even nowadays, when customers are applying for the courses, they do not know the number of students in advance, so they have to count with the higher price anyway. Moreover, the smaller groups will become a competitive advantage and might push the language school ahead of competition.

See effects of this suggestion in the table below:

Table 3. Proposed Change in Structure of Courses

Current income	40*8000	CZK 320,000	
Proposed income	40*11000	CZK 440,000	
Income increases of	CZK 120,000		
Cost on salary	180*40*4	CZK 28,800	
Health insurance (9%)	288*9%	CZK 2,592	
Social insurance (25%)	288*25%	CZK 7,200	
Cost on energy and administration	Roughly CZK 6,000		
Total Costs increases of	CZK 44,592		
Profit:	CZK 75,408		

Source: Own source

#### Recommendations concerning the one-year intensive course:

#### Communication among teachers

First, the author recommends to teachers to improve communication between each other and make sure that they teach what they are supposed to. It will make the courses more systematic and students will orient and understand better. Second, author suggests that teachers will explain demanding grammatical features more profoundly and slowly so that even weaker students can understand it.

#### Foreign teachers' attitude

The students are not very satisfied with the performance of foreign teachers; therefore, this recommendation will concern them. They should prepare better for lessons and obey the study-plan instead of playing games or watching movies that bring no enrichment. They should realize that students are paying for being taught English. The author suggests that the director takes initiative in this issue.

#### Preparation for exams

More than half of students from one-year intensive course claim the course is not preparing them efficiently for exams; the author recommends incorporating themes such as history, geography or literature of English speaking countries into the curriculum. This can be realized within the subject "Writing" in form of seminar works and following presentations. Students will choose from list of topics, write a seminar work and then present their topic to others. They will practice text understanding while searching for the information, then writing and also speaking at the end. To make other students pay attention while others are presenting, I recommend teachers to introduce short quizzes about the topics.

#### Entrance test

Last major problem within the one-year intensive course is big difference in students' language skills. As the course is constructed especially for students who apply for universities or language exams, beginner should not be allowed to this course. The author recommends implementation of entrance test on level B1; students will have to pass the test in order to be accepted. This would diminish the difficulties caused by inconsistency of students' knowledge.

On one hand, this approach can attract ambitious students and those who are really interested in studying a language; on the other hand, it can discourage those who do not have enough confidence.

#### General recommendations

#### Continuous visitation of classes

Author suggests implementation of continuous visitations of classes in order to check whether the teachers do what they are supposed to. As for now, there are no visitations from the director or other superior person. This should change definitely; the author suggests that the visitations would take place at least three times during a school-year, and they would not be announced to teachers in advance. Only knowing that this kind of control can occur whenever would make teachers obey the curriculum and try harder.

#### Continuous evaluation

To improve students' satisfaction and to learn about the weaknesses in longer time span, a continuous evaluation of both teachers and courses themselves should be implemented by the director. As there is no such evaluation implemented nowadays, the language school is not aware of students' opinion, which is a crucial point when trying to

satisfy them. Therefore, the author suggests that the evaluation will be implemented a take place at the end of each school-year, at least. Based on the results, the director should draw consequences either in positive and negative way. For good results, teachers would be awarded in form of remuneration or non-financial bonus; for bad results obviously caused by teachers, they would be given penalty or reprimand.

## 6.2 Recommendations Based on Comparison with Competition

#### Advertisement

As the language school does not have any advertisement, the author recommends to introduce one as it is needs to attract more customers. The author suggests that promotional leaflets will be made and spread in high schools, universities, companies and other public places. The school employs one IT person, so the leaflet can be designed by him and the cost will be only on print. The author also recommends to create two designs of the leaflet; one suited for schools, one for companies. The leaflet would be in A6 format and will include the important information such as the name of the school, address, e-mail address, offer of courses and price.

To spread the leaflets, the school can employ two students who would pass the leaflets to high schools and other public places. The author suggests that it would take them 16 hours each and they would be rewarded with CZK 60 per hour; the total costs on salary are CZK 1,920. Considering the number of appropriate places, 1,000 leaflets should be made at least. The costs on print are roughly CZK 2,000. Therefore, the total costs would not exceed CZK 4,000.

The leaflets can attract new customers among students but also companies and working people. The school offers company courses but none is running due to lack of customers, it is likely that the leaflets will bring new customers. Moreover, thanks to these leaflets, the language school will again infiltrate into peoples' awareness.

#### Web Page

Consequently, the author recommends creating more attractive and functional web page. Its improved version will be well-organized, modern, up-to-date and will give information about teachers, detailed description of courses and exams, and references. To eliminate extra costs, this job can be given to the IT person again.

#### **CONCLUSION**

This thesis concerned customers' satisfaction in the Language School with the Right of State Examination, Hradec Králové. The author and the director of the language agreed on this theme as the school has been experiencing a significant loss in number of customer.

Before writing the thesis, the author searched for and collected information about customers and marketing research. Based on these pieces of information, the theoretical part was written. First, the customer was in the focus. It was stated, who is a satisfied customer and why is he/she important for company. Later in the theoretical part, attention was paid to marketing research, its types and process.

The practical part dealt with the analysis itself. Various methods were used for acquiring information; first the author was provided with internal documents such as annual reports or school rules; as second, the author interviewed teachers of the language school and the contact persons of other language schools that were identified as the main competitors. The author was also present to lessons and observed both the lesson itself and the teachers. Later, the questionnaire of customers' satisfaction created by the author was evaluated.

It was founded out that when compared with the competition the Language School with the Right of State Examination Hradec Králové has a strong weakness in promotion. Moreover, the students were not satisfied with their numbers in groups, foreign teachers and with the overall quality of one-year intensive course. The interviews with contact persons from other language schools showed that the loss of customers is threatening most of them, as well.

Based on all the analytical findings, the author suggested certain recommendations aiming at improvement of current situation. The recommendations were divided into those based on results of questionnaire and those based on comparison with the competition. Except for improving foreign teachers' attitude, the reduction of number of students in one group and implementing a promotion were suggested.

School's reaction to the recommendations was rather positive; they decided to implement the promotion in form of leaflets that will be spread to high schools and other public places. At the same time, they agreed on modernizing and actualizing their web page. The teachers were given the results of questionnaire and claimed to improve in future. The change in structure of groups will be considered for the next year later.

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# **APPENDICES**

# AP I Questionnaire

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jmenuji se Lucie Lišková a studuji třetím rokem na Univerzitě Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, na Fakultě humanitních studií obor Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi. Dotazník, který před Vámi leží, je anonymní a na základě jeho výsledků zpracuji doporučení pro Vaše vyučující, která povedou ke zkvalitnění výuky a zvýšení Vaší spokojenosti. Tento dotazník je stěžejní částí mé bakalářské práce, a proto Vás srdečně prosím o jeho vyplnění.

	tí mé bakalářské práce, a kuji za Váš čas a přeji Vá ová	-	-	rosím o jeho vy	vplnění.	
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	řípadě, že V	ás učí.)		výborná	dos	tačující	ned	ostačující
	řípadě, že V	ás učí.)		výborná	dos	tačující	ned	ostačujíci ———

15. Co byste českým vyučujícím doporučili pro zlepšení	výuky?		
<b>16</b> . Kvalifikace zahraničních vyučujících je podle mne: ( <i>Vyplňte pouze v případě, že Vás učí.</i> )	1 výborná	2 dostačující	3 nedostačující
17. Co byste zahraničním vyučujícím doporučili pro zle	pšení výuky?		
18. V čem spatřuji největší přednosti kurzu?			
20. Jaké změny/řešení bych navrhoval/a?			

21. Cena kurzu odpovídá jeho kvalitě:

1	2	3	4

22. Pokud jste na předchozí otázku odpověděl/a spíše ne nebo určitě ne, jaká cena by podle

Vás odpovídala stávající kvalitě? ......

**23.** Celkově jsem s tímto kurzem spokojený/á:

1	2	3	4

Ještě jednou Vám velice děkuji za vyplnění dotazníku a přeji mnoho úspěchů ve studiu i v životě!

Lucie Lišková