

Content language integrated learning as a driver for enhanced graduate employability

A cross-cultural study between Austria and the Czech Republic

Martina Gaisch, Victoria Rammer, Lenka Hrušková, Jana Krátká, Gabriela Mádlová

OVERVIEW

- Research Context
- Theoretical Framework
 - Cultural aspects in Austria and the Czech Republic
 - Employability in Higher Education
 - Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)
- Research Design
 - Objectives / Research questions
 - Methodology
- Empirical findings
- Conclusion

RESEARCH CONTEXT

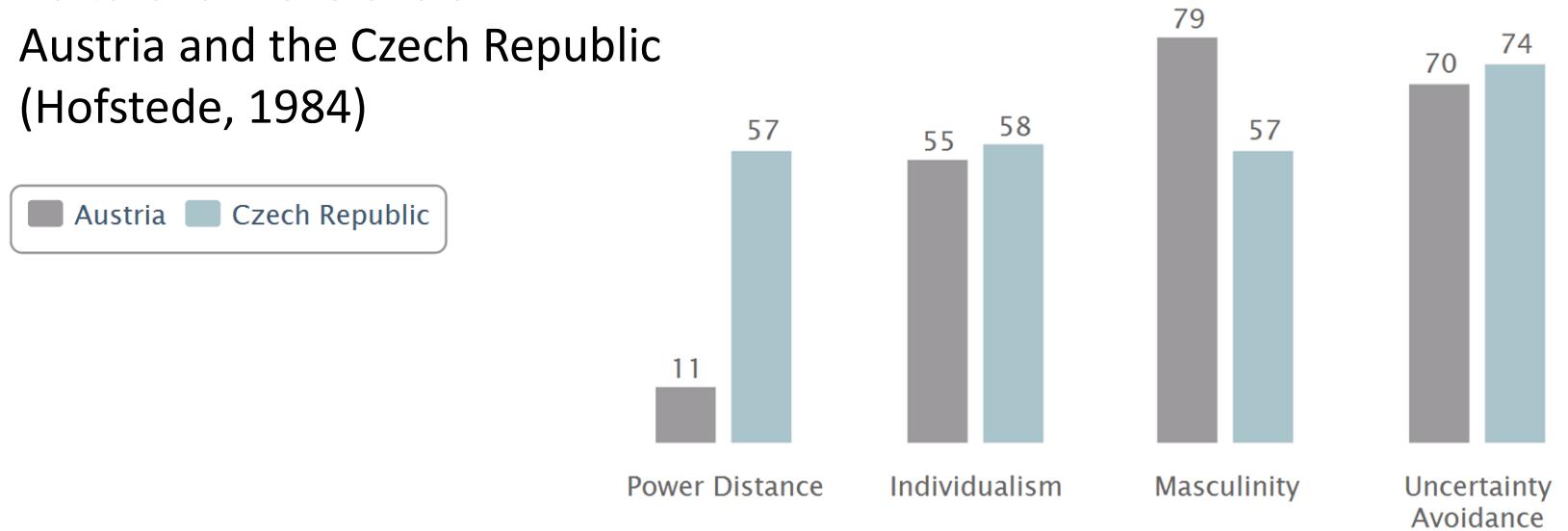
- Enhancement of graduate employability in technical degree programs (informatics, logistics, civil and mechanical engineering) of the Austrian-Czech border region through content language integrated learning (German, Czech and/or English)
- Qualitative Study
 - 14 Interviews
 - Employability requirements of the local industry in 4 disciplines (informatics, logistics, civil and mechanical engineering)
 - Importance of foreign language skills (German, Czech and/or English) in the local industry
 - Culture in Austria and the Czech Republic

An aerial photograph of a complex multi-level highway interchange in a city. The roads are filled with cars. Surrounding the highway are green trees, some with autumn-colored foliage, and various urban buildings, including a prominent white building with a flat roof. A semi-transparent grey rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the title text in white.

Cultural Aspects in Austria and the Czech Republic

CULTURAL ASPECTS

- Cultural dimensions of Austria and the Czech Republic (Hofstede, 1984)



CULTURAL ASPECTS

Austria

- Using hierarchy only for convenience
- Competition, achievement and success are important
- Working consecutively
- Rule-based control

Czech Republic

- More hierarchical society
- Operating more simultaneously
- Diffuse Culture = mingle work and private life
- Human-oriented control

Schroll-Machl Sylvia, Nový Ivan (2008, 2009)

CULTURAL ASPECTS

Austria

- Strong independence
- Preference for loosely social relationships
- Role-oriented
- Conflict avoidance

Czech Republic

- Strong independence
- Preference for loosely social relationships
- Role-oriented
- Conflict avoidance

Schroll-Machl Sylvia, Nový Ivan (2008, 2009)

A person wearing a dark blue suit jacket and a white shirt is sitting at a desk. They are using a laptop. A brown leather bag is on the desk next to them. The background is a blurred office setting with a plant and a window.

Employability in Higher Education

EMPLOYABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

“Employability means that students and graduates can discern, acquire, adapt and continually enhance the skills, understandings and personal attributes that make them more likely to find and create meaningful paid and unpaid work that benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy”

(Oliver, 2015)

EMPLOYABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- Equipping future graduates with an appropriate skillset that goes beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries e.g.
 - Intercultural competence
 - Foreign language skills
 - Communicative effectiveness
 - Global networking
 - etc.
- Embracing the capacity of graduates to optimally accomplish a job position

(Oellinger et al, 2014; Gaisch & Oellinger, 2014; Chydenius & Gaisch, 2016; Boeda et al., 2016)

The background of the slide is a photograph of a library. It shows several rows of books on wooden shelves. The books have various colored spines, and the pages are visible at the edges. The lighting is soft, and the focus is slightly blurred, giving a sense of a quiet, studious environment.

CLIL

Content and Language Integrated Learning

CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING

“CLIL can be defined as an educational approach where curricular content is taught through the medium of a foreign language, typically to students participating in some form of mainstream education at the primary, secondary, or tertiary level.” (Dalton-Puffer, 2011)

- Increase intercultural awareness and foster personal abilities of the learner
- Support the development regarding language usage, cognitive flexibility, communication competence and cross-cultural understanding of students

A top-down view of a wooden desk. On the left is a silver laptop with a black screen. To its right is a white mug filled with dark coffee. Below the mug are two pencils, one yellow and one green. To the right of the pencils is a yellow sticky note. On the left side of the desk, there are several crumpled pieces of yellow paper. A semi-transparent grey rectangle is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the title text.

Research Design Objectives and Methodology

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- May foreign language skills (German, Czech and/or English) in technical degree programs (informatics, logistics, civil and mechanical engineering) have the potential to increase graduate employability in the Austrian-Czech border region?
- May intercultural competence and linguistic diversity be an asset for the local industry of Upper Austria and the Czech Republic?
- How can technical study programs be enriched with elements of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and how may this didactical method be beneficial for both higher education institutions and enterprises that operate in this cross-border region?

RESEARCH DESIGN - METHODOLOGY

Age	Min Max	26 years 62 years
Gender	Male Female	11 3
Duration of the interview	Min Max	15 minutes 69 minutes
Countries	Austria Czech	5 people 9 people
Disciplines	Informatics Logistics Civil engineering Mechanical engineering Business representative *	2 people 2 people 2 people 2 people 6 people
Total participants		14 participants

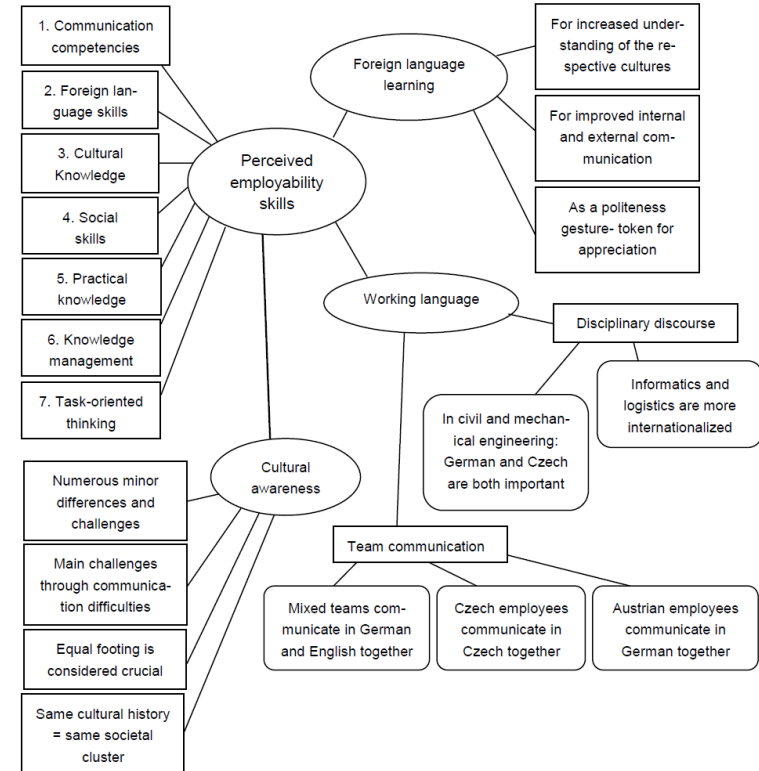
* Upper Austrian Chamber of Commerce, Institute for Economic Development (WIFI) and WIFI International, South Bohemian Chamber of Commerce



Empirical Findings

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

- Thematic map of the key findings
 - Perceived employability skills (ranked according to the priority)
 - Foreign language learning
 - Working language
 - Cultural awareness



EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

- Perceived employability skills
 - Communication competencies
 - Foreign language skills
 - Cultural knowledge
 - Social skills
 - Practical knowledge
 - Knowledge management
 - Task-oriented thinking

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

- Foreign language learning
 - For increased understanding of the respective cultures
 - For improved internal and external communication
 - As a politeness gesture – taken for appreciation

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

- Working language
 - Disciplinary discourse
 - In civil and mechanical engineering: German and Czech are both important
 - Informatics and logistics are more internationalized
 - Team communication
 - Mixed teams communicate in German and English together
 - Czech employees communicate in Czech together
 - Austrian employees communicate in German together

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

- Cultural awareness
 - Numerous minor differences and challenges
 - Main challenges through communication difficulties
 - Equal footing is considered crucial
 - Same cultural history = same societal cluster



Conclusion

CONCLUSION

- Cross-border region requires graduates that possess
 - disciplinary and transversal skills
 - a profound understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity

CONCLUSION

- The enrichment of technical study programs with CLIL-based elements was perceived to bring:
 - development of language proficiency
 - enhancement of intercultural awareness
- Improvement of the collaboration between internationalized companies at the Austrian-Czech cross-border region through
 - Language skills
 - Intercultural competencies
 - Respectful and appreciative communication

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