



## **Erasmus + project “Language skills and intercultural issues in the hospitality industry: Unity in Diversity in the EU labour market”**

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### **Project A2/B1 and B2/C1 Course Piloting Report**

Author:

Hilarija Lozančić Benić

Project manager of TUSDU, Croatia

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### **Contributors:**

Hilarija Lozančić Benić (Croatia, TUSDU)

Dobrijela Deranja (Croatia, TUSDU)

Dr.paed., prof. Ineta Luka (Latvia, Turība University)

Anda Komarovska (Latvia, Turība University)

Sundars Vaidesvarans (Latvia, Turība University)

Vicente Navas Mesa (Latvia, Turība University)

Erna Vöröš (Slovenia, Ekonomska šola Murska Sobota)

Dr. Zsuzsanna Ajtony (Romania, Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania)

Pellizzari Simona (Italy, IPSSA Nino Bergese)

Vakaris Šaulys (Lithuania, Vilnius Business College)

Pavel Klüh (Czech Republic, VOŠ)

Özcan Turan (Turkey, KÜTAHYA İL MİLLÎ EĞİTİM MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ)

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## Introduction

The course piloting is essential for introducing any kind of new materials in order to see what works, what does not work, and what improvements have to be made. *The aim of the course piloting* was to see how students evaluated the Learning programme and the courses created and how to use them in practice with learners of different languages and different language levels, and suggest any improvements or additions to the content. The data were meant to be comparable. Course piloting was done in all education institutions as additional material to their regular study programmes or as an extra material for special groups. The course piloting included both parts of the course- A2/B1-the created materials in 16 languages and B2/C1the designed English modules. Depending on their target groups, each institution selected the languages for piloting. Additionally, the course was piloted with the industry representatives as well or technical issues that may be considered useful or necessary.

## Preparatory Work

1. Before piloting the project partners created the feedback questionnaire to be filled in by the students. The questionnaire was designed based on the questionnaire developed for the Erasmus+ project *Key Skills for the EU Hotel Staff* so that the data could be compared. But, the current questionnaire included additional questions to evaluate the *Intercultural module*, the *Country modules*, the case studies and Face-to-Face tasks created specifically during the current project. A common questionnaire was used so that the data of the 8 partner

countries could be compared. The UK had to pilot only the mobile apps created, not the language learning course created on the *Moodle Learning* platform.

2. Prof. Ineta Luka designed a common excel file for data collection that would be later used for data analysis so that a comparative analysis could be done to trace similarities, differences and their significance level and impact on the results gained. During the Časlav meeting in October 2017 Prof. Ineta Luka introduced the project partners with the excel file and how to fill it in.

The questionnaire included general information about the respondents as well as questions regarding the learning platform and A2/B1 and B2/C1 modules. The students were encouraged to fill in the general information about themselves and about the learning platform and general evaluation of A2/B1 and/or B2/C1 modules. Then they filled in detailed questions on the modules they had done. In such a way it was possible to get valid results as students had evaluated only those parts which they had really done. This would help making reliable summary of the piloting results as well as see the benefits and drawbacks of the materials created and improve them at a later stage.

3. Another preparatory work involved a short formal meeting with the teachers in all partner organizations involved in the project and longer informal meetings with each of them. The purpose of the short formal meeting was to introduce the colleagues with the platform, its technical operation and the tasks created. The purpose of the individual meetings was to define the classes, the topics and the lessons.

## The Main Results

Altogether 676 respondents participated in piloting which was carried out at all partners' organizations. There were 28 teachers involved in piloting. During the piloting process, they were provided an opportunity to address their language teacher whenever necessary and get the help they required.

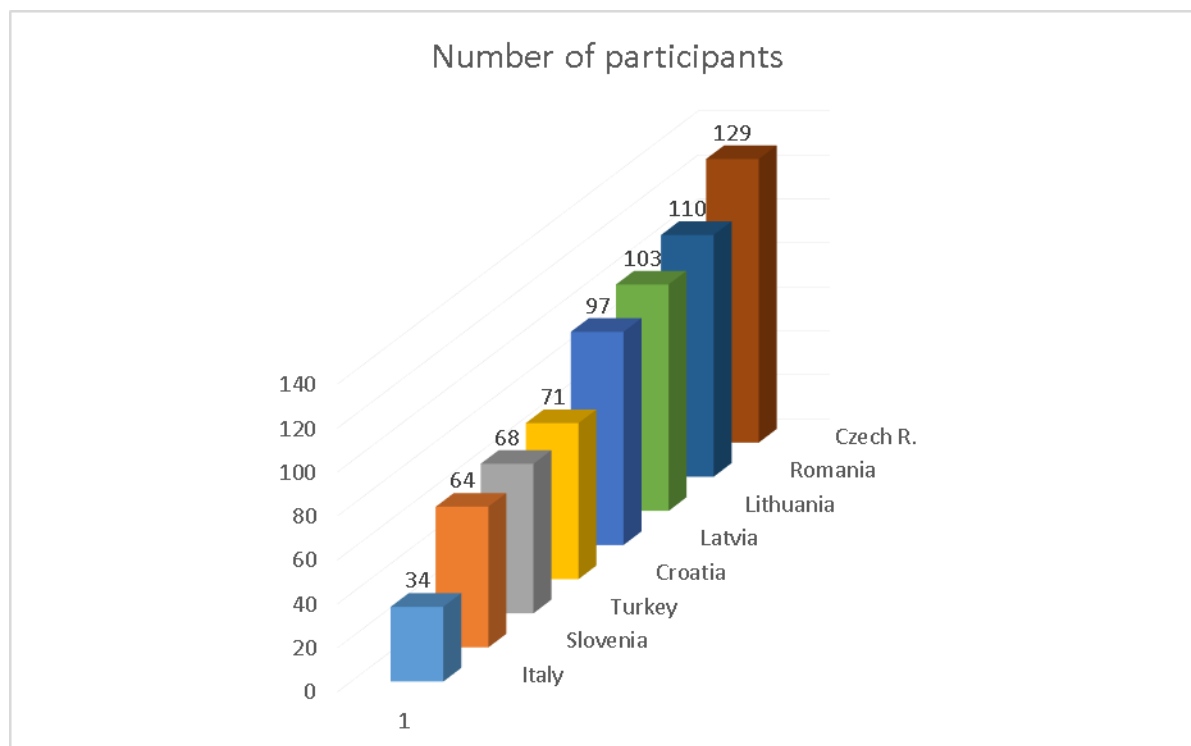


Figure 1. Number of participants by partner organization

28 language teachers took a part in a piloting. During the piloting process, students were provided an opportunity to address their language teacher whenever necessary and get the help they required.

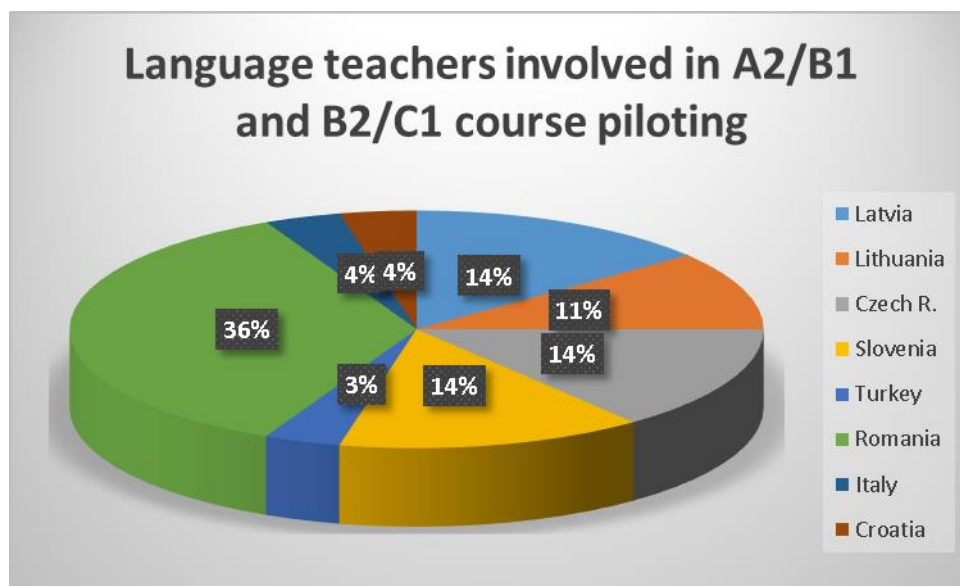


Figure.2 Teachers involved in a piloting

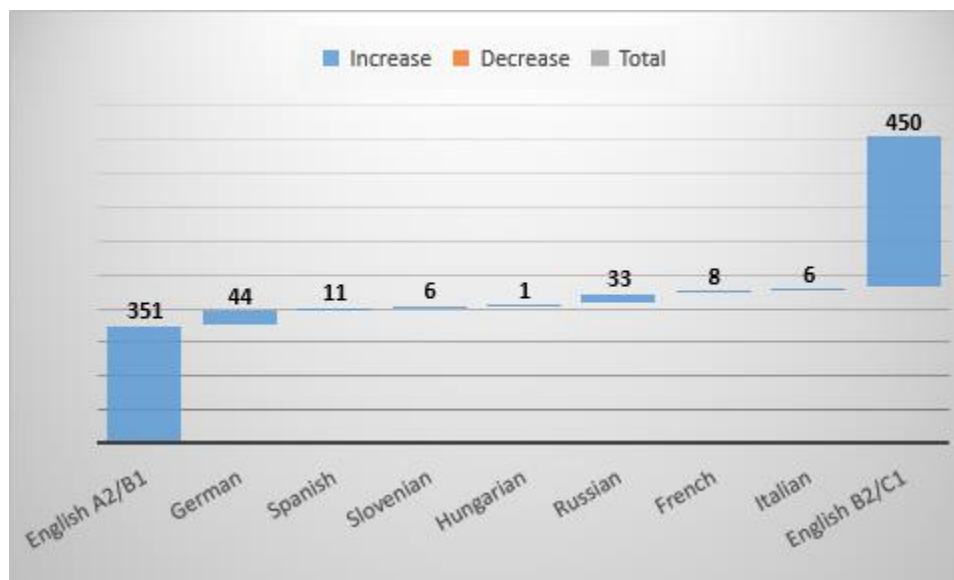
The students' English language competence level (see *Table 1*) and the years they have studied a language vary.

The Level	The Number of Students	
	<b>C2</b>	n
	%	4
<b>C1</b>	n	120
	%	18
<b>B2</b>	n	260
	%	38
<b>B1</b>	n	205
	%	30
<b>A2</b>	n	48
	%	7
<b>A1</b>	n	9
	%	1

Table 1. Respondents' English Language Competence Level

Thus, it is evident that most students' English language competence is of B1/B2 level and which is the English language competence level to be attained when graduating from secondary school. Concerning the length of studying English, the answers varied from one year to 37 years.

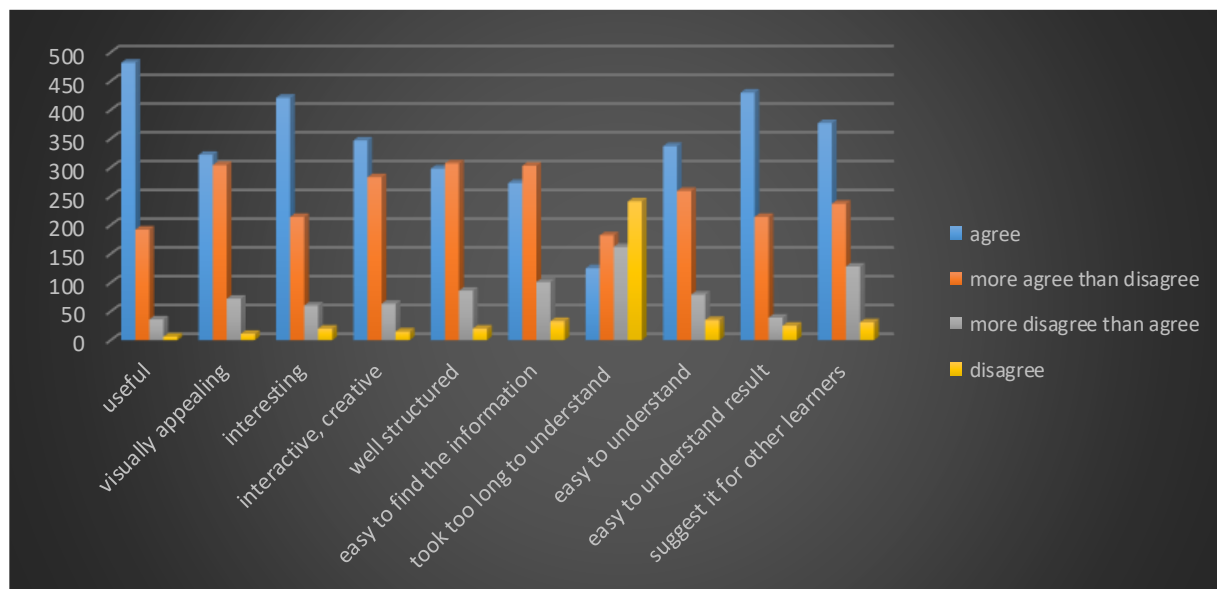




**Figure 3. A2/B1 Piloting course in 15 languages and B2/C1 English course**

Concerning the number of respondents piloting A2/B1 course and B2/C1 English course, it can be seen that respondents (52%) did at least one module of A2/B1 English course and 450 respondents (66%) had done B2/C1 English course (see Figure 3). Some students had piloted the course in several languages or different levels.

## Overall Evaluation of the Learning Platform



**Figure 4. Information about the Learning Platform**

As *Figure 4.* shows, we have mostly positive feedback from the respondents:

- most students find the Learning Platform useful: 482 agree and 192 more agree than disagree,
- most students find it visually appealing: 322 agree and 304 more agree than disagree,
- most students find it interesting: 421 agree and 214 more agree than disagree,
- most students consider that it was easy to understand to do the tasks: 337 agree and 259 more agree than disagree,
- most students also consider that it was easy to understand their result: 430 agree and 214 more agree than disagree.

Positively, respondents would also suggest the Learning platform for other learners.

Students' feedback left in the comments also shows their satisfaction with the learning platform:

- 'It was interesting.'
- 'I liked the games.'
- 'I liked the different topics.'
- 'I liked that I learned something new.'
- 'I liked everything.'
- 'It was good for refreshing language skills.'
- 'It was very useful and easy to find out how things work.'
- 'Thumb up! Keep going! Thanks for new experience.'
- 'I liked especially the case study.'
- 'It is enrichment of English classes.'
- 'I liked it very much. It was interesting.'
- 'This is structured very good and useful for the students in this field.'
- 'I liked the creativity of the tasks. Right now I do not have anything which I did not like.'
- 'It was a really good experience for me and it is useful for the students of Tourism and Hospitality field.'
- 'I liked this project, it is easy to understand and students can take useful knowledge from this project.'
- 'I liked this learning platform. Now I know the level of my knowledge. I want to use this platform again and again. It showed my mistakes truly, and I checked my results immediately.'

- 'Everything was clear, easy to understand and really useful.'
- 'I learnt some vocabulary and improved my reading and speaking skills. I liked an interface of this quiz.'
- 'I liked this project, it is easy to understand and students can get useful knowledge from this project.'
- 'I like it, it was very interesting and creative.'
- 'I liked it because it was hard and taught me a lot.'
- 'I liked it, it was easy to understand it.'
- 'I like program of studying in the school.'
- 'Excellent application.'

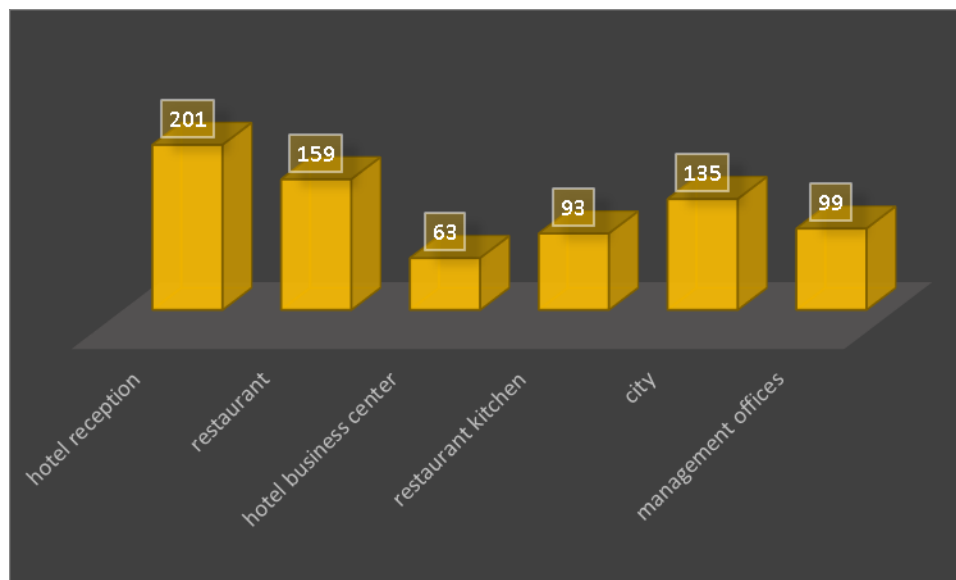
Apart from only positive comments we got also some comments wherein students indicated the issues that did not work well or even the mistakes they found. This feedback is very significant for us to eliminate the flaws:

- 'I liked it but I would prefer more pictures.'
- 'It was good but little bit difficult to use.'
- 'I liked the creativity of the tasks. But there are no pictures.'
- 'I liked it so much. The activities are very useful. It improves vocabulary. As I opened the Management Offices the audio automatically started playing - I disliked it.'
- 'It was good but little bit hard to use.'
- 'I liked it how easy it was but disliked only because I did not find it useful.'
- 'Great opportunity to review vocabulary but some tasks are rather time-consuming.'

- 'Liked the case study and tasks, unintelligible audio.'
- 'Listening impossible without earphones.'

### The Findings: Evaluation of the A2/B1 English Course

It is interesting to see which modules the students have done. *Figure 5* provides the summary of the A2/B1 level all modules piloted.



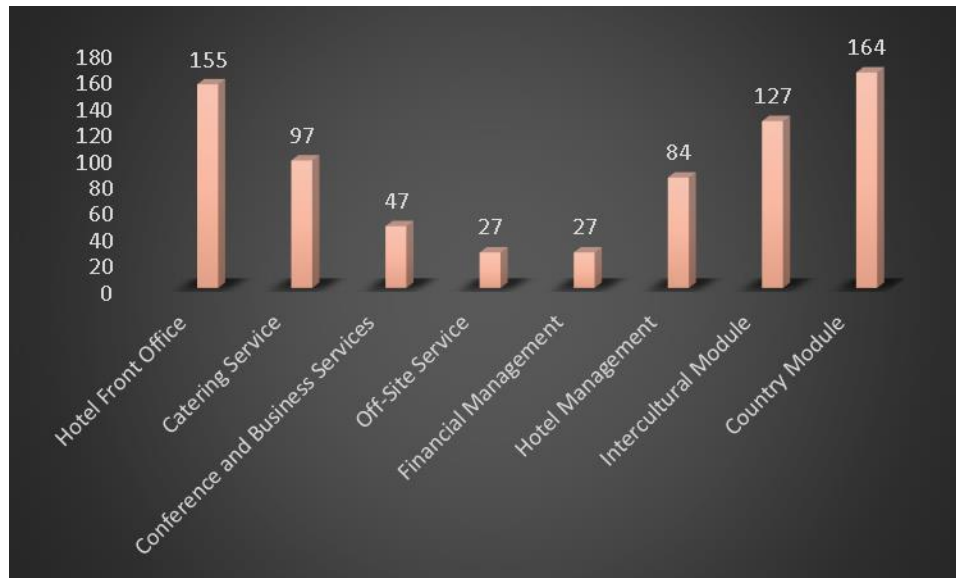
**Figure 5. A2/B1 Modules Piloted**

As figure 5. shows module Hotel management was done by 30% of participants, Restaurant by 18%, Hotel business center by 9%, Restaurant kitchen by 14%, City by 20% and Management office by 15%.

No	Variables for evaluation	agree		more agree than disagree		more disagree than agree		disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	I found the tasks useful	268	61,8	126	29	22	5	6	1
2	I found the tasks easy to understand	248	57	128	29,5	35	8	14	3
3	I found the tasks interesting	224	51,7	144	33,2	39	9	14	3
4	I found the tasks interactive, creative	222	51	146	34	43	10	18	4
5	The tasks took too long to answer	98	22,6	147	34	96	22	81	18,7
6	I had to go back to the text to find the answer	133	31	149	34	79	18	60	14
7	The information learnt increased my knowledge on the topic	138	32	179	41	71	16	25	6
8	I learnt some vocabulary on the topic	180	42	149	34	65	15	29	7
9	I developed my listening skills	122	28	126	29	86	20	78	18
10	I developed my reading skills	177	41	155	36	53	12	35	8
11	I developed my grammar habits	145	33	153	35	70	16	49	11

**Table 2. Evaluation of A1/B2 English Course (n=433; %)**

To sum up, students recognised the usefulness and creativity of the tasks.



**Figure 6. B2/C1 Modules Piloted**

As Figure 6. shows Hotel Front Offices was done by 23% participants, Catering Service by 14%, Conference and Business Services by 7%, Off-Site Service and financial

Management by 4%, Hotel Management by 12%, Intercultural Module by 19% and Country Moodle by 24%.

### The Findings: Evaluation of the B2/C1 English Course

No	Variables for evaluation	agree		more agree than disagree		More disagree than agree		disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	I found the online tasks useful	333	61	125	23	21	4	6	1
2	I found the online tasks easy to understand	255	47	198	36	39	7	6	1
3	I found the online tasks interesting	272	50	175	32	40	7	11	2
4	I found the online tasks interactive, creative	262	48	184	33	36	6	16	3
5	The online tasks took too long to answer	125	23	146	27	136	25	89	16
6	I had to go back to the text to find the answer	151	28	161	29	102	19	81	15
7	The information obtained has increased my knowledge on the topic	229	42	195	36	52	9	18	3
8	I learnt some vocabulary on the topic	250	46	178	33	51	9	15	3
9	I developed my listening skills	186	34	156	28	66	12	79	14
10	I developed my reading skills	227	42	186	34	57	10	23	4
11	I developed my grammar habits	195	36	186	34	76	14	36	6
12	I found the case studies useful	206	38	196	36	35	6	10	2
13	I found the case studies interesting	204	37	194	35	41	7	9	2
14	I found the case studies creative	199	36	172	31	64	12	12	2
15	I found face-to-face tasks useful	174	32	188	34	45	8	21	4
16	I found face-to-face tasks interesting	163	30	187	34	56	10	23	4
17	I found face-to-face tasks creative	165	30	179	33	58	11	27	5

**Table 3. Evaluation of B2/C1 English Course (n=546; %)**

Comparing the results, it can be seen that the answers *agree* and *more agree than disagree* prevail which points to the high evaluation of the B2/C1 course. The reverse question 'The online tasks took too long to answer' also got quite a high evaluation, this result may be explained by the fact that most of the reading texts for B2/C1 English course were long and contained specific complicated professional lexis which might require a longer time to understand them as well as 'to go back to the text to find the answer'. This means that some students perceived the tasks as difficult or complicated.

Students' comments in the open questions are also very significant in order to improve the course. Several students pointed out that the course is useful but not interesting enough, for example:

- 'I found the online tasks useful and easy to use. The platform is interactive and creative.'
- 'I think that these online tasks were really interesting and useful. I liked them and I suggest to everyone to do them. I developed my reading and listening and reading skills.'
- 'This project is very creative and interesting. It helps to improve IT skills also not only English.'
- 'I found the online tasks useful, but not enough interesting. The platform is interactive and creative. Simple questions but sometimes there are some mistakes. Design is interesting and looks easy to operate.'

On the contrary, concerning usefulness and creativity of the tasks, we received mostly positive comments in students' feedback, such as:



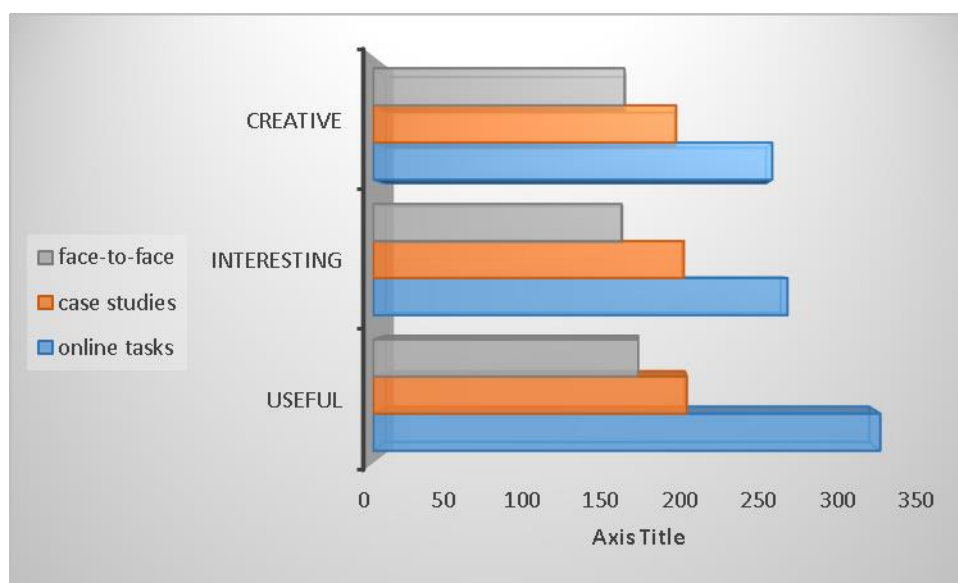
- 'These modules are very interesting and creative.'
- 'I think that these online tasks were really interesting and useful. I liked them and I suggest to everyone to do them. I developed my reading and listening skills as well as my grammar.'
- 'I liked video in topics about different cultures. It was not only funny but also useful. I improved my vocabulary not only in English but also in other languages.'
- 'I liked that there are a lot of kinds of tasks, including information about countries, cultures.'
- 'I learned how to behave in face-to-face interview and also I took many useful things from this platform. I learned new words as well. I will use this platform in the future.'
- 'This project is very creative and interesting. I think student can take enough knowledge via this project. It helps to improve IT skills also not only English. Thank you!'

Some technical problems were discovered that we have to discuss with the technician if it is possible to solve these problems technically:

- 'The video didn't play properly. I had to copy the site and go to a different tab to watch it.'
- 'It was a bit difficult to navigate from task to task, since I was thrown back to the beginning, so I had to search my tasks again many times, so that should be improved. I found it useful, although I am not enjoying doing tasks online. I prefer doing them on the printed paper.'

- 'I liked the warm-up exercise where I matched the words with right definitions. Some words were unknown, so it was interesting. Reading tasks were too long for me. It need to be improved that when you open one task and then you want to quit it and go to another exercise, then come back to it later, you need to fill all exercises, otherwise your score and level will be 0. But all tasks for me were interesting.'
- 'I liked that there are a lot of kinds of tasks, including information about countries, cultures. Dislike was about technical field. Sometimes the audition doesn't work. About improvement I would say that there could be more colourful design than just blue. Thanks.'
- 'It would be a good platform for the students, but some answers are too long and difficult to understand.'
- 'I would suggest giving the headings on the task, like what to do.'
- 'There was interesting system with good design. But there are lots of mistakes such as grammar and system mistakes. Listening exercises were not so professional. I suggest improving system work, grammar in tasks.'

As B2/C1 English course has been supplemented with case studies and face-to-face tasks it is essential to compare the results according to the 3 categories: on-line learning tasks, case-studies and face-to-face tasks. *Figure 7* depicts their comparison according to 3 parameters: the usefulness of the tasks, how interesting the tasks are and their creativity.



**Figure 7. Comparison of online tasks, case studies and face-to-face tasks by their usefulness, how interesting they are and creativity**

As it can be seen from *Figure 7* there is significant difference seen between the case studies and online tasks but for face-to-face tasks, disregarding the fact that we have added lots of innovative elements to the course, such as webquests, project work applying Internet-based research and fieldwork, the mean is comparatively lower than

for online tasks and case studies. This might be a stimulus for further project ideas on working on more creative, interesting and useful face-to-face tasks.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, students acknowledged having learnt professional lexis and developed their language skills. The majority of them found the tasks useful, interesting and easy to understand. Although the students denied lots of time needed for doing the tasks, the teachers' observations showed that the students disliked reading the long, demanding texts as they are used to reading short texts very fast. On the second thoughts, exactly these texts provided them with additional professional knowledge in the field which the students highly evaluated.

The respondents found the Learning program useful, interesting and attractive. Most of them would be glad to use it for their independent studies and improving their language competence as well as recommend it to others. The students pointed to certain issues that still have to be improved in the course. Their feedback is very significant for improving the course. The piloting results are also helpful in other future projects in the language teaching/learning field.