



SLEZSKÁ  
UNIVERZITA  
FILOZOFICKO-  
PŘÍRODOVĚDECKÁ  
FAKULTA V OPAVĚ

## **Hodnoticí zpráva**

k provedení hodnocení tvůrčí činnosti jednotlivých pracovišť  
Filozoficko-přírodovědecké fakulty v Opavě

**NÁZEV OBLASTI VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ:** Filologie

**HODNOCENÁ PRACOVIŠTĚ:** Ústav cizích jazyků

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## HEAD OF THE COMMISSION

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## MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

Name and surname	University	Signature
Prof. Dr. Ilka Mindt	Paderborn University, Germany	
Doc. PhDr. Jan Radimský, Ph.D.	University of South Bohemia, Czech Republic	
Elzbieta Szymańska-Czaplak, Ph.D.	University of Opole, Poland	

Date: 24. 08. 2020

  
(Head of the Commission)

# **Report of the evaluation committee on the scholarly activity of the Institute of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Philosophy and Science, Silesian University in Opava for the period 2015-2019**

## **Evaluation committee:**

The evaluation committee consisted of the following three persons:

### **Chair:**

Prof. Dr. Ilka Mindt (expert in English corpus linguistics; Paderborn University, Germany)

### **Members:**

doc. PhDr. Jan Radimský, Ph.D. (expert in Italian, University of South Bohemia/Czech Republic)  
Elżbieta Szymańska-Czaplak, Ph.D. (expert in English, dean of the Faculty of Philology,  
University of Opole/Poland)

## **Scope of the evaluation:**

The evaluation applies to five different areas:

1. The Institute's conception of their research activity in general and to their research focus, quality, projects and internal research evaluation in particular;
2. Connection between research and study programs;
3. Staff;
4. National and international co-operation; public outreach, and
5. Administrative work.

## **Evaluation method:**

The evaluation is based on the self-assessment report of the Institute of Foreign Languages as well as on the three different evaluation reports by the members of the evaluation committee.

## **0. Preamble**

The institute consists of three different departments which are different in staff membership, research orientation as well as in the areas of their study programs. However, as all three departments work in the area of foreign languages, they have common denominators which are clearly made explicit in the area of linguistics in particular.

## **1. Research**

### **Research focus, quantity and quality**

All three departments did research in the areas of literature and linguistics and – in the German department – in didactic/foreign language acquisition. In the field of **literary studies**, the focus of the English department has been on post-colonial literature, on Irish poetry, on American Jewish fiction, and on issues of gender. The Italian department has had a strong interest in the reception of contemporary Italian literature as well as in inter-cultural questions. In the German department, the focus has been on the relation between literature and culture to reflect the complex development of the Czech-German neighborhood and on German-language fiction.



The connection among the different languages is further fostered in **linguistics** as the research foci have either been on single languages (English: semantics, vocabulary of specific areas, discourse analysis; German: text analysis, participles, center and periphery; Italian: sentence modality and information structure, diachronic dialectology;) or on contrastive and inter-language research combining (contrastive) studies on Czech, English, German, and Italian. This has been in particular visible in the corpus-linguistics approaches which are very prominent at the Institute as a whole and especially prominent in the German department.

**Didactics and foreign language acquisition** has been a unique feature of the German department, where the focus is on the teacher's personality and on how to teach the German language to different age groups. Connected to this has been the analysis of German language textbooks (*Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (DaF)).

All staff members have published their research results on a national and international level. Publications appeared as monographs (3), editorial works/edited monographs (13; several as a joint edited works of one member of the English and one member of the German department), research articles in journals or books (79), conference proceedings (11), proceedings on Web of Science (13), conference lectures (71) and translations (5).

Outstanding research publications from the **English department** are documented for example in the monograph by Jan Chovanec on "The Discourse of Online Sportscasting: Constructing Meaning and Interaction in Live Text Commentary" which has been published by John Benjamins (Amsterdam) in the series "Pragmatics & Beyond New Series" in 2018. The international scope of publications from the English department is also documented by the book chapter by Michaela Weiss on "Multilingualism in American Jewish Literature: Irena Klepfisz's Yiddish Revival" which appeared 2017 in an edited volume on "Cross-Cultural Perspectives in Literature and Language".

The academic achievements of the **German department** are represented by the monograph by Gabriela Rykalová on "Das Partizip im Deutschen" published in 2017. A range of contributions to an edited volume (book chapters) by Martin Maurach on "Der Engländer" (Lenz), "Die Freunde machen den Philosophen" (Lenz), "Die Soldaten" (Lenz), "Etwas von und über Musik fürs Jahr 1777" (Kraus), "Über die Soldatenehen" (Lenz), "Zerbin oder die neuere Philosophie" (Lenz) und "Kraus, Joseph Martin" all appeared in "Handbuch Sturm und Drang" published in 2017 by de Gruyter (Berlin/Boston) is also proof of the outstanding publication record. Additionally, a wide-ranging international conference of the "Germanistenverband der Tschechischen Republik" with about 90 participants from nine different countries resulted in three monographs that have been published as "Zentrum und Peripherie. Aus sprachwissenschaftlicher Sicht", "Zentrum und Peripherie. Aus literarischer Sicht" and "Zentrum und Peripherie. Aus fremdsprachendidaktischer Sicht". These three publications indicate the connectedness not only between the different branches of literature, linguistics and didactics but they also act as a publication record of research connected to the German department.

The book chapter on "Friulano, veneto e toscano nella storia del Friuli" by Giorgio Cadorini is a contribution to the edited volume "Manuale di linguistica friulana" which has been published in 2015 by de Gruyter (Berlin/Boston). Another excellent publication from the **Italian department** is the translation "Historie života Albrechta z Valdštejna vévody frýdlantského od Gualda Priorata [Historia della vita d'Alberto Valstain Duca di Fritland del conte Gualdo Priorato]" (with the introduction by Alessandro Catalano), published in 2016 by Eva Klímová.

Although being just a small selection from the wide range of publications from all three departments, this outline demonstrates overwhelmingly the research activities of the members of staff. The fact that the publications of the Institute of Foreign languages are submitted in the languages of study

(English, German, Italian) is a cornerstone for increasing international visibility and promoting international exchange on research as well as helping to establish, extend and deepen international contacts within the scientific community. Many of the publications mentioned above have been published in internationally well-known publishing houses (e.g. John Benjamins, de Gruyter), which is a definitive proof of the high quality of the research as these publications are typically peer-reviewed on an international level. The impact of the research activities of the members of staff need also to be seen in connection to other points addressed in this evaluation such as research projects, connection between research and study programs, national and international co-operations as well as public outreach.

All three departments have been very active in supporting the career of researchers. In the English department, one member of staff has completed their Habilitation and two members of the department have successfully completed their doctoral studies. Two members of the German department have finished their Habilitation in the period under evaluation and were appointed associate professors; two assistant professors are working towards their Habilitation.

Some staff members are outstanding in relation to their research quantity, others perform well, and some acceptable. With regard to the ratio of staff to number of publications, the German department is clearly in the lead, with the English department to follow and the Italian department coming last. However, the Italian department is the smallest in terms of staff and therefore their lower quantitative research output is also a consequence of the number of staff members.

### **Research projects**

The members of the Institute have been participating successfully in various research projects. The Institute has regularly organized the international conference Silesian Studies in English and publishes conference proceedings (included in the Web of Science database).

In the English department, staff members participated in international projects (e.g. in the field of corpus linguistics with the University of Würzburg, Germany, in the field of literary studies with Carleton College, Minnesota, USA), submitted new project applications (e.g. to the Czech Science Foundation) and worked out new fields of cooperation (e.g. a new project under construction with the University of Limerick, Ireland).

The members of the German department have been participating successfully in various research projects. Two projects have been funded by the DAAD and have enabled visits of staff and students (ingoing as well as outgoing between Würzburg, Samara, Baku and Sarajevo) as well as grants for books for the university library in Opava.

In another project running between 2017 and 2022 the department has developed its new study programmes which involved a detailed monitoring and evaluation of the labour market, the language needs and resulted in the development of the new study programmes to start in the near future.

Three other projects funded by the Slezská univerzita to support PhD-students and Master students have been successful between 2015 and 2019. Four additional projects which have been funded by the Slezská univerzita cover the areas of foreign language teaching and conferences and took effect between 2016 and 2020. Three projects for national funding have been written or are in the planning phase; two have been rejected, one is pending.

The "Troppauer Schule der sprachwissenschaftlichen Textanalyse" (TSST) which was founded in February 2011 has played a very active part in and research activities as well as in national and international co-operations. The TSST has functioned as an umbrella of corpus-linguistic work in textual analysis but has also connected literary and linguistic studies.



### **Internal research evaluation**

Based on annual reports submitted by the staff, the research activity has been evaluated. Research activities included publications, projects, citations, popular lectures and other activities. The process of the evaluation of research activities has run smoothly. The fulfillment of the criteria and the academic plans have been evaluated internally. The results of the evaluation have been used for supporting staff with salary bonuses, internal grants for international conference participation, research stays abroad and access to electronic databases.

To conclude, the three departments have performed on a very good level in terms of their research on a national and slightly less on an international level. Each of the three departments has members of staff who perform on an excellent level while others could strengthen their research output.

## **2. Connection between research and study programs**

The study programs offered have all been deeply rooted in research, as the prime aim of teaching has been fostered by research. A very close link between the study programs and the research has been and is very prominent in the doctoral study program "Corpus linguistics with a focus on a specific langue group (English, German)". This program has been offering study programs in the Cotutelle regime in co-operation with the University of Würzburg.

The institute has offered various study programs on the BA and MA level, which is focusing on one or more of the respective philologies. All of these programs are research-based. BA as well as MA students at the Institute who want to get involved in research activities can apply for Student Grant competitions, in order to participate in conferences and publish their research results. In the time span under evaluation, 14 presentations have been given at conferences and 20 publications appeared in edited works.

All three departments have organized conferences, talks, seminars and workshops to acquaint their students with the latest research and teaching material. Students are encouraged to apply for Erasmus+ schemes, for scholarships from the *Studienbörse Germanistik*, or the DAAD scholarship program.

To conclude, the current teacher-centered and philology-oriented BA, MA and PhD-programs are all very clearly based on current research. Plans for a new study program that has involved a detailed monitoring and evaluation of the labor market and its language needs are under development and will start in the near future.

## **3. Staff**

The situation of employment at the Institute is very different in the three departments. In the department of English and American studies, 10 full-time academic employees and 4 part-time employees are working of which 4 have the status of associate professor ("docents" – after their Habilitation) and seven are assistant professors with the degree of a Ph.D. or equivalent. In the German department, one member of staff was a professor. The employment terminated during the period under evaluation. Currently, two associate professors, two assistant professors and one assistant work at the German department. The Italian department consists of four members of staff: one associate professor, two assistant professor and one lecturer. The number of teachers fully corresponds to a BA three-year study programme carried out by the Italian department. Since BA programmes in the Czech Republic require the presence of an

associate/full professor, the educational activity is at risk when the only associate prof. from the Italian department retires. Career advancement of assistant professors would be necessary if further development of Italian studies were planned. In all three departments, some members of staff are native speakers of the language under consideration.

To actively encourage students to perform research, all departments should have young researchers heading for a PhD. In order to be able to fully support these PhD students, each department (and ideally again in each area) should have at least one person on the level of assistant professor. In order to better promote and co-ordinate research activities it is advisable to consider installing the position of a professorship, uniting the strengths of the three departments.

The committee considers the PhD programs as very good. The Institute has also been very successful in the completion of Habilitations and PhDs in the period evaluated here. This is clearly proof of very vivid and vibrant research activities.

#### **4. National and international co-operation; public outreach**

The Institute is very active in international co-operations. Many of them have been successfully running for a very long time. The most prominent co-operation is with Julius-Maximilians-Universität in Würzburg. This co-operation is in the field of corpus linguistics and involves in particular a doctoral study program, but also includes staff and student exchanges between Opava and Würzburg taking place on a regular basis. The German and the English department are involved in this exchange program. Another international project is located in the English literary studies with Carleton College, Minnesota, USA.

Other international co-operations have been run within the Erasmus agreement and include the following countries: Austria, Ireland, Italy, Germany, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom. Staff and students apply for grants and scholarships provided by the DAAD and the Fulbright Foundation.

At the Institute, thematic lectures, seminars, workshops and talks have been hosted by experts from those universities with co-operations and Opava's academic staff has lectured at their partner universities. Projects with public institutions in the form of professional seminars have been offered in particular in the area of teacher training and teacher programs and foreign language teaching, in particular by the German and the Italian department. Very locally, the organization of tourist events, of popularizing research results and informing the public about these, film clubs, activities for students, literary discussions, competitions organized for pupils at schools in the region (e.g. *Deutsch ist super*), have been activities hosted by the Institute.

The academic staff are represented in editorial boards and advisory boards of scientific journals and work as reviewers for professional peer-reviewed journal. Additionally, the Institute has recently tried to take advantage of collaborations with employers to reflect the need in terms of foreign languages for the labor market.

## **5. Administrative work**

A third line of work (apart from research and teaching) is administration. Administrative duties become relevant when an Institute grows, attracts students and is involved in international activities. Administration involves the commitment to administrative duties within the university as well as duties related to advice for staff and students in relation to internationalization.

Two members of staff in particular are involved in administrative duties: Mgr. Marie Chrová, Ph.D., M.A. worked as Vice-Dean for Science and International Relations at the Faculty of Philosophy and Science from 2016-2019. Since 2019, doc. PhDr. Gabriela Rykalová, Ph.D. works as a Vice-Dean for Science and International Relations at the Faculty of Philosophy and Science.

All three departments offer help and advice for staff and students considering the Student Grant competition, a stay abroad, or the projects focusing on public outreach. Providing help and advice is very important in order to help staff and students to be successful. However, it is a time-consuming task which is added as a third line of work to research and teaching. The Institute seems to have been very successful in covering these administrative duties when considering the regular exchanges with partner universities and the commitment of the MA and PhD students in their research and Grant activities as well as in their internationalisation activities.