

Slide 1: Title

Guten Morgen/Tag meine sehr geehrten Damen und Herren

My name is Marion, I am Head receptionist at the grant arms hotel.

Someone told me to show either pictures of toddlers or puppies to become friends with the audience – I can show you both!

Slide 2: Children

Slide 3: Skye

Skye would like to learn a second language once he's grown up and apply for the new "Lion King".

Slide 4: Skye Dava Moor

I have been living in Scotland for 6 years. I am German and English is my second language.

Slide 5: me

I was born

in a small village in Germany,.

Slide 6: map of Germany

in the middle of Bavaria in the southern part of Germany

Slide 7: map of Bavaria

I started school in 1974

Slide 8: me as schoolgirl

My parents

Slide 9: Mum and Dad

Who are 74 and 76 years old, learnt English at school during the 1950ies. This was 60 years ago.

As they both could understand and also speak English (my mum better than my dad), they decided to spend our summer holidays 1976 in Cornwall.

Slide 10: Germany to Cornwall

I was 8 years old and when my school mates asked me where I would spend my summer holidays, I proudly answered “Cornwall”. None of them knew “Cornwall” and where it was. And I didn’t know either!

Slide 11: Me and Mrs Can (B&B landlady in Tintagel)

But my parents’ English knowledge made it possible to spend a holiday in a foreign country! We travelled all the way from South Germany to Tintagel, 836.5 miles away from home.

It was an adventure and it was the best holiday ever! My parents made the big mistake to tell me that there is a Queen in Great Britain. I was fascinated!! And excited – I would see a real Queen!

I only knew queens from my fairy tale books. As soon as we left home I started to annoy my parents: “Daddy, when shall I see the queen?” “Daddy, are you going to show me the queen?” “Can you show me the castle where she lives” and-so-on.

On our way back home from Cornwall to the ferry in Dover, my parents decided to make a detour to London and at least they would try to show me Buckingham Palace.

We entered London with its single traffic roads and roundabouts. After hours driving in circles, my parents were knackered and arguing, I was crying as I desperately wanted to see the Queen.

My dad had enough and stopped the car, told my mum to ask a taxi driver for directions to Buckingham Palace. We followed these directions and there it was!!

Slide 12: Buckingham Palace

My parents' ability to communicate in English made an 8 year old girl very happy and although I didn't see the queen, her "castle" was my highlight of the holiday!

In 1983 (I was 15) when I could speak a little English, my parents thought that another holiday in Great Britain would be great and would also encourage me to take my English lessons at school a bit more seriously.

Slide 13: Germany to Wales

We travelled to Wales, 900 miles away from home.

These two amazing holidays and my lack of mathematical talent (when mathematics started to be with letters rather than numbers, I realised that my career wasn't going to include maths!) made me want to learn foreign languages.

After school I started studying English and French and these languages opened the world to me. I had the opportunity to work for the company Siemens in New York but as I was only 19 I didn't feel confident enough. Don't forget – no internet, no mobile phones. America seemed to be as far away as the moon!

Slide 14: Binoculars/Swimwear

However, I worked as an assistant for the Manager of the Development and Research Department for a company producing high quality binoculars.

I didn't have a clue about binoculars, but it didn't matter – I could speak English and French and the knowledge I needed for this specific area, I could learn.

I went on to work for a company producing and selling sports- and swimwear.

I had the sole responsibility of the export department for America and the import department from South East Asia, South Europe and the former Eastern Bloc.

I was 22 years old. And again – I didn't know anything about this specific area, import and export customs requirements, etc., but I could speak English and French and I was willing to learn the rest.

I got married and became a proud Mum of two lovely children, now 24 and 21 years old.

Slide 15: Children

After maternity leave and once my children were older, I worked for the local primary school – also able to use my language skills when speaking to children and parents who moved to Germany from abroad.

I was promoted to be administrator for the local education authority, being involved in establishing English classes for primary school pupils and I also worked as a private English tutor for secondary school students.

As life went on, I got divorced, my children had grown up and I found myself at a “junction” – I had to decide what to do with the rest of my life. I went on a holiday and came to

Slide 16: Grantown on Spey

And immediately knew – that's where I want to be.

I thought about a move long and hard but “nothing ventured nothing gained”: I gathered all my courage and belongings, kissed my family “bye bye”, took a big step and started the last but most important chapter of my life.

I moved to Grantown on Spey and was lucky enough to become part of the staff family at the Grant Arms Hotel.

Slide 17: Grant Arms Hotel

I had never worked in a hotel before, didn't have any knowledge of hospitality, but I did know that I could speak German and English fluently.

I started as a part time receptionist but due to my language knowledge and general understanding of administration I became Head Receptionist just 2 years after I had moved to Scotland.

French got a bit lost on the way but I can still understand: Once we had a French group staying at the hotel. One of the French ladies had a problem with the room and came to reception. She started speaking French to me which I understood!

However, I couldn't response in French, so I replied in English which the French lady understood. It was probably the strangest conversation I have ever had: She was speaking French and I was speaking English but we both communicated and the problem with her room could be resolved!

Last year I passed a SVQ in Hospitality Management Skills. If I had the money and time I could go on and go to university to get a degree.

Slide 18: Certificate

You may say now: What is this woman talking about? We are British, we can speak English, the whole world speaks English!! But, ladies and gentlemen, that's not true

Slide 19: Languages spoken in the world

Don't you think that's a bit scary? Although an estimate of around 2 billion people will be learning English during the next decade, still TWO THIRDS will not be able to speak English.

There are more people speaking Spanish than English!

Slide 20: Map of languages (explain)

French, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian are so called romance languages. These languages originated from the language Latin which was spoken in the Roman Empire. If you learn one of these romance languages, you'll find it very easy to understand or learn one of the other romance languages as their origins are all the same.

Slide 21: Example schlafen

Don't think now that all romance languages are exactly the same – there are differences in those languages. This example is the very best I could find to demonstrate their similarity.

Sometimes you are a tourist in a foreign country, wouldn't it be nice to speak the language a little? Or tourists from abroad coming to Scotland – wouldn't it be nice to make them feel welcome by greeting them in their own language and to being able to understand little things like “thank you”, “you're welcome” and “Where are the ladies' toilets, please”?

Learning languages will open your world, you can work anywhere in the world and you can work in any area you want to and you will be the one who can welcome people in their native language and it will be you who represents Scotland as a multi lingual and welcoming country in the world.

I have 5 young women in my reception team: Three are British, one is from Hungary and also speaks English fluently and another one was born in Australia. One of my receptionists can speak Spanish fluently and another one is able to speak and understand Thai. We have staff members from France, Poland, Hungary, Germany, England and Scotland.

The ability to speak foreign languages attracted more guests from Spain and France. Not only does the hospitality industry require multi lingual staff members, but councils, hospitals and all companies trading worldwide do too. When our guests book with us they know

that some of our staff members are bilingual and this fact makes our guests more confident to travel to Scotland.

But also, our bilingual staff members stand out in the crowd which makes them more likely to find good jobs, a good career in high quality businesses than non-bilingual people.

I understand not everybody is into languages. Some of you are more talented in mathematics or maybe arts? But this doesn't matter. You are the future and you have to think about your life. What do you expect from life? Where and who would you like to be in 10 years time? Would you like to be abroad, would you like to be married and a Mum or Dad, would you like to be a Manager?

Languages are with you all your life, you can use them in your career, you can use them once your children start learning a second language and you definitely need them when you decide to live abroad.

I guess you will have to work at least 50 years until you can retire – get the best out of it! Try to take some time off the internet and facebook, think about yourself and your life, think about your talents and what you would like to do with your skills. If you are talented in maths, why don't you learn just the basics of a second language? This will make you more attractive for businesses than applicants without a second language.

Once you have decided, find out the requirements to get there, to get the job of your dreams.

It is your life and it is not only your parents' or teachers' responsibility to support you, all of us here have the responsibility and the possibility to give you a hand and if necessary to hold your hand for a while on your way into a career. But you are the main part of it because you must want it and you must work on your career.

I found my dream job in my dream country but only because I knew my talents, I asked for support, I was brave and a little mad.

Slide 28: Thank you