

**B01** Agata / Poland / Foreign Languages in Adult Education

Interaction partner(s):	German lecturers
Moment of enquiry:	SS 08
Experience of difference:	Conventions between students and lecturers when addressing each other

Agata, a Polish student, learned in her German class that only people who are the same age or of the same social rank use “hello” or “bye-bye”. So during her stay in Germany, she is surprised to learn that lecturers and students alike say “hello” and “bye-bye” to each other, despite their difference in age or rank. Agata finds this highly inappropriate and disrespectful towards the lecturer. She would never use the Polish equivalents of those expressions when dealing with older or higher-ranking people. For this reason, she always greets the German lecturers with “Good morning” or “Good day”, even if the lecturers respond with a casual “hello”. Slowly, however, she feels her way of greeting draws attention and comes across as old-fashioned. It makes her feel uncomfortable, but she cannot bring herself to greet a lecturer with a “hello”.

1. What does the Polish student associate with the different greetings? Why is it hard for her to use a less formal greeting?
2. What type of greeting is customary at German universities?