

THESES OF THE DOCTORAL (PhD) DISSERTATION

ORGANISATIONS' NEEDS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES

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1. BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1.1. Introduction

Globalisation and internationalisation have caused enormous changes in several fields of life worldwide with significant transitions in Hungary. The appearance of multinational companies and SSCs (Shared Service Centres) has affected the labour market internationally and domestically.

These companies increasingly require intercultural communication competencies and a high level of foreign language skills from graduate entrants. Considering the predominantly culturally diverse environment of multinational companies where employees can only complete their jobs effectively and successfully if they possess the necessary skills, the expectations are hardly surprising.

Internationalisation has also influenced university education. International students come to universities in Hungary very often to take part in international programmes offered by universities. Moreover, changes have been present in courses offered for Hungarian students. The primary responsibility of universities is to educate and prepare students for a new environment and expectations on the international labour market. Excellent intercultural communication competencies and foreign language skills may be the key to students' success.

The relevance and importance of the research topic are significant since the common interest of universities, students and organisations is to have more and more employees with excellent competencies who can perform well in a diverse, multicultural environment. The current situation differs from the ideal one because foreign language training at university cannot wholly fulfil organisations' requirements regarding foreign language skills and intercultural communication competencies.

The present research has had various goals. The sub-goals were achieved in the literature review. One of them was the recognition and presentation of the aspects of intercultural communication competencies. Another one was the presentation of employers' requirements which have changed as a result of internationalisation. The dissertation's goals also included

the presentation of newly formed requirements concerning foreign language training at university.

Further main goals included the presentation of organisations' requirements for foreign language skills and intercultural communication competencies. The definition of the necessary level of foreign language skills needed for different activities represented an essential part of the research. Assessing how satisfied organisations are with graduate entrants regarding their foreign language skills and intercultural communication competencies has also been crucial.

Another goal of the research was to evaluate and present students' foreign language skills and intercultural communication competencies. A questionnaire was applied to assess students' foreign language skills, intercultural communication competencies, ways, and language learning motivation. Based on the findings, conclusions have been drawn on why foreign language training at university cannot completely fulfil organisations' requirements.

Based on this, two further goals came up: making some suggestions for improving the university training according to the employers' opinions and learning the recommendations of language teachers taking part in foreign language training at university concerning how to meet organisations' requirements. Furthermore, the research's fundamental goal was to learn the language teachers' opinions concerning the problems of meeting the needs of organisations.

1.2. Main aims of the research

The dissertation includes some sub-goals (RC) and main goals (C). The sub-goals were achieved by secondary research and the main goals by primary research.

Sub-goals:

RC1: The recognition and presentation of the aspects of intercultural communication competencies based on the literature review

RC2: The presentation of employers' requirements which have changed as a result of internationalisation based on the literature review

RC3: The presentation of requirements concerning foreign language training at university which have changed as a result of internationalisation based on the literature review

Main goals:

C1: The presentation of organisations' requirements for foreign language skills and intercultural communication competencies

C2: The evaluation and presentation of students' foreign language skills and intercultural communication competencies

C3: To make some suggestions for the improvement of the university training according to the employers' opinions

C4: To learn the opinions of language teachers taking part in foreign language training at university concerning how the needs of organisations can be met

C5: To learn the recommendations of language teachers taking part in foreign language training at university concerning how to meet the requirements of organisations

1.3. Research hypotheses

H1: Organisations in the service sector require language skills in more languages at a higher level for all corporate activities than those in the manufacturing sector.

H2: Organisations with a global market, whose headquarters are located abroad require language skills in more languages at a higher level for all corporate activities than those with a domestic market and whose headquarters can be found in Hungary.

H3: Organisations' expectations for language skills in more languages at a higher level for all corporate activities increase in proportion to their size.

H4: Students can be grouped based on their gender according to their foreign language skills and intercultural communication competencies.

H5: Students are well informed about the requirements of organisations.

H6: Students consider foreign language training at university necessary.

H7: At present, foreign language training at university cannot fulfil the requirements of organisations.

2. DATABASE AND APPLIED METHODS

2.1. Introduction

Different methods were used in primary and secondary research to examine the research problem from various aspects. The dissertation topic is interdisciplinary, so within the framework of secondary research, it was necessary to review the relevant literature in organisational culture, psychology, language teaching, and language pedagogy.

The literature review defines the concept of globalisation, internationalisation and intercultural communication competencies. The Hungarian and international literature review describes recruitment, with particular emphasis on the requirements for competencies. The dissertation aims included the description of the changes occurring in language teaching and the presentation of the effects of internationalisation on university training in Hungary and internationally.

It was necessary to collect empirical data to achieve the aims of the present research. It was followed by the statistical analysis of the collected data and the assessment of hypotheses as confirmed or not confirmed based on the results. The statistical methods were supplemented by interviews which proved very useful in drawing conclusions; statistical methods cannot analyse them. The method of triangulation was used in the research, which BABBIE recommended for research in social sciences. To be able to examine the research topic thoroughly, different methods were used (BABBIE, 2000)

The research consists of three parts using the method of triangulation:

1. Organisational research - examined the requirements of employers for graduate entrants regarding foreign language skills and intercultural communication competencies.
2. Student research - surveyed students' foreign language skills, intercultural communication competencies, ways of language learning and motivation. The survey

covered how well-informed the students were about the labour market requirements regarding their language skills and intercultural communication competencies.

3. Interviews with language teachers - were conducted with language teachers who teach business languages at the University of Debrecen. The interviews were necessary to collect data to define how foreign language training at university can fulfil organisations' requirements.

Based on the findings, conclusions have been drawn, and recommendations have been made on how foreign language training at university can fulfil organisations' requirements.

2.2. Organisational research

In the organisational research course, we have examined how vital employers' requirements are for graduate entrants regarding their foreign language skills and intercultural communication competencies during recruitment. The questionnaire surveyed what level of foreign language skills is required for various activities by organisations. A questionnaire containing the essential questions was prepared and filled in. When compiling the questionnaire, it was essential to include various types of questions regarding the necessary language skills and level of foreign language skills required for various activities (using answering on Likert scales and respondents' answers). The questionnaire also included an open question on how satisfied the organisations are with university training regarding language skills and intercultural communication competencies. If they are not satisfied, some suggestions were made on how to improve the situation.

Different methods were used for having the questionnaire filled in by organisations: by a personally assisted method at the Job Fair at the University of Debrecen and a DEViK Mentor Club event at the Faculty of Economics and Business. Moreover, the online version of the questionnaire was prepared in Google Forms. With the help of **MAG PRAKTIKUM**

(Internship Centre at the Faculty of Economics and Business), the link was sent to the organisations who accept interns. They could fill in the questionnaire online.

Sixty organisations took part in the survey answering the questionnaire on how satisfied they were with graduate entrants concerning their language skills, intercultural communication competencies and university training.

We used SPSS for Windows 23.0 statistical software to analyse the data. The evaluation of results was implemented first concerning all organisations, and then organisations were classified based on different criteria. The criteria included whether the particular organisation operates in the service sector or manufacturing sector, it has a domestic or global market, its headquarters is located in Hungary or abroad and the size of the organisation based on the number of employees in Hungary (small companies up to 50 employees, medium-sized companies with 51-250 employees and large companies with more than 250 employees).

Table 1: Presentation of the organisational sample (n=60)

The nature of the activity		The nature of the market		The location of the headquarters		Company size		
<i>Manufacturing</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>Domestic</i>	<i>Global</i>	<i>In Hungary</i>	<i>Abroad</i>	<i>Small company</i>	<i>Medium-sized company</i>	<i>Large company</i>
19	41	33	27	28	32	12	23	25

Source: Compiled by the author, 2019

2.3. Student research

In the course of the student research, we applied a questionnaire filled in by students at the University of Debrecen. For this purpose, we compiled a questionnaire based on HUNYADI and his co-authors' suggestion regarding the methodological aspects (HUNYADI et al., 2000). The questionnaire included various types of questions: numerical, textual, attitude-questions, which could be answered on a 5-point Likert scale, open and closed questions. To assess the students' intercultural communication competencies, we used the method suggested by BABBIE (2000). According to him, if we want to test attitude, the best method to do this is to use short statements and ask the respondents to decide to what extent they agree. Respondents could indicate their answers on a 5-point Likert scale. We used 20 statements based on secondary research about the tools used to assess intercultural communication competencies. The statements included the attitude and dimensions which can be assessed in measuring this type of competencies.

We used SPSS for Windows 23.0 statistical software to analyse the data. We applied the following methods: descriptive statistical methods (mean, modus, group median), combined factor and cluster analysis where groups were formed based on the factors constructed by the test variables.

To present the relations between the examined factors, we used a dimension reducer method with factor analysis. Based on these results, we used cluster analysis to put the respondents into homogeneous groups, and we compared these groups to the other variables. For the evaluation of the statements, we used the method of principal component analysis. We examined the application of factor analysis by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) criterion. The value of KMO was 0,931, which is excellent ($KMO \geq 0,9$ excellent).

In the cluster analysis, the method of separating five clusters resulted in properly separated segments with distinct characteristics. The crosstab analysis showed whether students belong to one cluster or another, does not unequivocally depend on their gender.

Data recording took place between September and December 2019 by a personally assisted method. Respondents could fill in the questionnaires anonymously at three faculties of the University of Debrecen. The number of students filling in the questionnaires was the following: 905 students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, 186 students at the Faculty of Engineering and 142 students at the Faculty of Informatics. Altogether, we analysed 1233 answers from students. The respondents' distribution based on gender was the following: 44,2% male (545 students) and 55,8% female (688 students). The majority's age group was 19-21 years of age (74,6%) as the questionnaire was filled in mainly by full-time students.

2.4. Interviews with language teachers

Based on the literature, interviews are useful tools to supplement the data collected by questionnaires with further empirical data.

The interviews conducted with language teachers were semi-structured. They were conducted based on a previously prepared draft containing the relevant questions in March 2020 at the University of Debrecen. Altogether, we conducted 12 semi-structured interviews. During the interviews, the respondents could tell their opinions on whether the number of lessons is sufficient to prepare the students for the language examinations and acquire language skills in two foreign languages. The emphasis was on to what extent foreign language training at university can meet organisations' needs and what suggestions can be made to improve the situation from the language teachers' point of view. They also gave their views regarding the skills they could improve during the lessons. When compiling the sample, it was vital that we could ask at least one teacher's opinion in all the business languages taught at the university. It was also essential that all the respondents had several years of experience in business language teaching and examining, so they all had well-founded opinions.

Table 2: Presentation of the sample of language teachers (n=12)

	Languages taught	experience in business language teaching at university	experience in business language examination
1. interviewee	English	23 years	15 years
2. interviewee	German	27 years	20 years
3. interviewee	English	40 years	20 years
4. interviewee	Russian	30 years	0 years
5. interviewee	English	30 years	18 years
6. interviewee	English	29 years	20 years
7. interviewee	English	28 years	20 years
8. interviewee	German	24 years	18 years
9. interviewee	English, French	35 years	10 years
10. interviewee	English, German	26 years	20 years
11. interviewee	English, German	26 years	20 years
12. interviewee	English	29 years	18 years

Source: Compiled by the author, 2020

3. THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE DISSERTATION

This section includes the presentation of the sub-goals, the primary goals and the hypotheses based on the conducted secondary and primary research.

Sub-goals:

RC1: The recognition and presentation of the aspects of intercultural communication competencies based on the literature review

There is abundant Hungarian and international literature about intercultural communication competencies. Various international authors use different naming in their research. In the literature review, we could examine the concept from different perspectives and present the various contents, definitions and authors. We defined the different concepts based on several authors' research. We presented the dimensions and the international tools used for assessing intercultural communication competencies focusing on the similarities and differences between them.

RC2: The presentation of employers' requirements which have changed as a result of internationalisation based on the literature review

Based on Hungarian and international literature, the dissertation presented the changes in recruitment in recent years. It also showed the main requirements of employers which appeared as a result of globalisation and internationalisation. Most of these trends are international, but we also presented the characteristics specific to Hungary. Students need to be aware of global trends, as some of them would like to be employed by multinational companies in Hungary or even abroad. The research included the newly formed trends and forms of employment in the international labour market, due to which new requirements

appeared in recruitment. We emphasised the requirements in the three areas examined—Economics, Engineering and Informatics. Most Hungarian changes can be observed internationally, but the higher requirements for language skills are remarkable in Hungary because foreigners seldom speak Hungarian.

RC3: The presentation of requirements concerning foreign language training at university which have changed as a result of internationalisation based on the literature review

The dissertation presented the changes and challenges in foreign language teaching of the past years based on literature. It defined the concept of intercultural communication competencies and requirements for language teaching based on Hungarian literature. We emphasised the changes and requirements in language teaching and improving intercultural communication competencies in Hungarian higher education. It entails analysing the present situation in business language teaching as in most of the training examined there is business language teaching. The dissertation presented the appearance of language skills and intercultural communication competencies in the relevant documents of the European Union and Hungary by using the content analysis method. The main aim of the dissertation was to present the current situation both in Hungary and at international level.

Main goals:

C1: The presentation of organisations' requirements for foreign language skills and intercultural communication competencies

We surveyed the specific requirements in the primary research by a questionnaire compiled based on the relevant literature. It was followed by an analysis based on different criteria. The requirements referred to the level and type of language skills and the required number and types of foreign languages. The research also concerned the necessary level of foreign

language skills needed for different corporate activities. It was also defined how satisfied organisations were with graduate entrants regarding their language skills and intercultural competencies. Conclusions were drawn based on the results concerning the factors which might influence organisations' requirements. We examined the results based on whether the particular organisation operates in the service sector or manufacturing sector, it has a domestic or global market, its headquarters is located in Hungary or abroad, and the organisation's size. It was followed by defining the reasons causing differences in requirements based on the organisations' above-mentioned different characteristics.

C2: The evaluation and presentation of students' foreign language skills and intercultural communication competencies

In the primary research, we surveyed students' language skills, intercultural communication competencies, and language learning methods by a questionnaire compiled based on the relevant literature. We also explored to what extent students are aware of the requirements when finding a job. The research also covered to what extent students consider university language training necessary and what motivates them to take part in it. We assessed the students' intercultural communication competencies by a test consisting of 20 statements. We could identify different groups of students based on the results and define the factors characterising each group.

Table 3: Clusters and characterising factors

Clusters	Factors		
	1. <i>Intercultural Cooperation</i>	2. <i>Level of Language Knowledge</i>	3. <i>Usefulness of Language Knowledge</i>
1. <i>Interculturally Open</i>	characterises	the opposite characterises	the opposite characterises
2. <i>Interculturally Reluctantly Cooperating</i>	the opposite characterises	the opposite characterises	characterises
3. <i>Interculturally Passive</i>	the opposite characterises	characterises	characterises
4. <i>Interculturally Open with Poor Language Skills</i>	characterises	the opposite characterises	characterises
5. <i>Interculturally Active, Open with Good Language Skills</i>	characterises	characterises	characterises

Source: Compiled by the author, 2019

These clusters of students possess different advantages and disadvantages for employers which were also described. Based on the student research, we could conclude how foreign language training at university can fulfil organisations' requirements.

C3: To make some suggestions for the improvement of the university training according to the employers' opinions

A survey and a discussion with corporate executives and HR professionals outlined the most critical trends and presented university training requirements. Employers' suggestions were presented on how the training could be improved to fulfil the requirements.

C4: To learn the opinions of language teachers taking part in foreign language training at university concerning how the needs of organisations can be met

It is essential to examine the research topic from various aspects, so we used different methods. One of them was the interviews conducted with the language teachers at the university. The interviews aimed to reveal their opinion on whether foreign language training at university can fulfil organisations' requirements. It was essential for us to find why foreign language training at university cannot completely meet the requirements of organisations at the moment. The interviews were necessary to make suggestions on how the training could be improved because it would be the primary goal of organisations, students and universities in the long run.

C5: To learn the recommendations of language teachers taking part in foreign language training at university concerning how to meet the requirements of organisations

We conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 language teachers who teach business languages at the University of Debrecen. They agreed that foreign language training at university could not completely fulfil the requirements of organisations. According to them, the main reason is that students who enter foreign language training programmes at university do not possess that level of prior foreign language knowledge necessary to learn

business languages. Besides, there are not enough semesters and lessons for the students to acquire good foreign language skills and pass the language examination needed for obtaining their degree. During the interviews, several suggestions were made by language teachers to improve the situation; for example, it would be necessary to have ongoing dialogues between educational institutions and the representatives of organisations. Moreover, foreign language teaching in public education must inevitably improve, and more foreign language lessons for more semesters during foreign language training at university would be beneficial.

Confirmation of hypotheses:

H1: Organisations in the service sector require language skills in more languages at a higher level for all corporate activities than those in the manufacturing sector.

First, the results were analysed by sectors, then the results of organisations operating in the manufacturing and service sectors were compared in the course of the organisational research. These results showed that 100% of manufacturing companies and 90% of service companies tend to use at least one foreign language often. A higher percentage (48,8%) of service companies do not use a second foreign language; in manufacturing companies, this percentage is lower (42,1%). At 94,7% of manufacturing companies, language skills are expected from graduates, whereas this percentage is only 82,9% in service companies. However, a higher proportion (29,3%) of service companies indeed expect knowledge of more foreign languages than manufacturing companies (21,7%). After comparing the data for the level and type of language skills expected, we can say that manufacturing companies require language skills in more languages at a higher level than service companies. After comparing the results of manufacturing and service companies' language skills required for their organisational activities, it turned out that it is essential to speak a foreign language at most of the manufacturing companies. There are three specific organisational activities in case of service companies where there is a higher percentage of essential language skills

than manufacturing companies. These activities are the following: participating in conferences and meetings, training, retraining and making calls. In the remaining five activities, the proportions regarding the indispensable language skills were higher at manufacturing companies. It could be that those three activities are more typical in case of service companies than manufacturing companies, which is why they show higher ratings. All in all, the results did not confirm this hypothesis; thus, I consider it not confirmed.

H2: Organisations with a global market and whose headquarters are located abroad require language skills in more languages at a higher level for all corporate activities than those with a domestic market and whose headquarters can be found in Hungary.

The results of the organisational research were analysed based on organisations with a domestic and global market and organisations with headquarters located abroad or in Hungary. The results showed that 100% of organisations with a global market often use at least one foreign language. In contrast, this percentage is only 90% in the case of organisations with a domestic market. 96,3% of organisations with a global market require language skills from graduates, in case of organisations with a domestic market this percentage is only 78,8%. A higher proportion (48,1%) of organisations supplying global markets require two foreign languages than organisations with a domestic market, in case of them, this percentage is only 12%. After comparing data regarding the level and type of language skills, it can be stated that organisations with a global market require language skills in more languages at a higher level than organisations with a national market. After comparing the results of activities at organisations with a global and national market regarding required language skills, it turned out that it is essential to possess language skills for all organisational activities in case of organisations with a global market. The proportions are higher in every case than the proportions of organisations with a national market. It could be explained by the fact that global operations require communication in foreign languages every day. According to the survey results, 96,9% of organisations with headquarters located abroad use at least one foreign language often, whereas at organisations with headquarters located in Hungary this percentage is 89,3%. 96,9% of organisations with

headquarters located abroad require language skills from graduates, whereas this proportion is 75% in organisations with headquarters located in Hungary. A higher proportion (37,5%) of organisations with headquarters located abroad require the knowledge of two foreign languages than organisations with headquarters located in Hungary (21,4%). After comparing the requirements, it turned out that organisations with headquarters located abroad expect language skills in more languages at a higher level than organisations with headquarters located in Hungary. For all organisational activities in case of organisations with headquarters located abroad, it is essential to possess language skills. At these types of companies, the proportions of expectations regarding language skills are always higher than in organisations with headquarters located in Hungary. Considering all the results, I believe this hypothesis confirmed.

H3: Organisations' expectations for language skills in more languages at a higher level for all corporate activities increase in proportion to their size.

The results of the organisational research were also analysed by the size of the companies. The expectations of small, medium-sized, and large companies were analysed, then the results were compared. After the comparison, it could be stated that 83,3% of small companies use at least one foreign language often, this percentage is 91,3% in the case of medium-sized companies and 100% at large companies. 75% of small, 82,6% of medium-sized and 96% of large companies require language skills from graduates. Based on these results, it can be assessed that with the increase of the size organisations require language skills in more and more languages at increasingly higher levels. With the increase of the size, organisations require the knowledge of two foreign languages in higher proportions. 8,3% of small, 26% of medium-sized and 44% of large companies require the knowledge of more foreign languages. Comparing the language skills required for specific organisational activities does not confirm that the expectations are also on the increase with the increase of the size. There is only one activity where data support the idea that with the increase of the size, language skills' expectation increases proportionally. This activity is international assignments and working abroad. The data show that there are organisational activities

where the results do not depend on size. For this reason, I could only partially consider this hypothesis confirmed.

H4: Students can be grouped based on their gender according to their foreign language skills and intercultural communication competencies.

After analysing the student research results, we could identify five clusters by cluster analysis, where *Intercultural Cooperation, the Level of Language skills and the Usefulness of Language skills* factors were typical to different extents. The five clusters identified are the following: 1. *Interculturally Active, Open with Good Language Skills* 2. *Interculturally Open with Poor Language Skills* 3. *Interculturally Passive* 4. *Interculturally Open* 5. *Interculturally Reluctantly Cooperating*. These groups possess different advantages and disadvantages for employers. We analysed the clusters based on students' gender by crosstab analysis. In the case of four clusters, the proportion of females was higher than males. However, in the first cluster (*Interculturally Active, Open with Good Language Skills*), males' proportion was higher (more than twice as much as females). Taking the results into consideration, we cannot unequivocally assess that students' language skills and intercultural communication competencies depend on their gender, so I consider this hypothesis not confirmed.

H5: Students are well informed about the requirements of organisations.

In the course of the students' survey, we were able to define how students are aware of their foreign language skills requirements. A part of the questionnaire was about students' awareness of the required level of language skills when applying for a job. A very high percentage (87,4%) think it is vital to communicate in one or more foreign languages at the workplace (with colleagues and clients). A smaller percentage (57,5%) said that communicating in writing at the workplace (with colleagues and clients) is essential. The smallest percentage of them (51,5%) considered it vital to go on business trips abroad and

manage without problems (presentations, conferences). The high proportions indicated that students are aware of the expectations; that is why I consider this hypothesis confirmed.

H6: Students consider foreign language training at university necessary.

In the questionnaire, students were to indicate why they consider university foreign language training essential. 74,7% of the respondents thought that adequate language skills are crucial nowadays. In the next part of the questionnaire, students were to indicate to what extent they agree with foreign language training and language skills on a Likert scale. The two of the 20 statements that received the highest proportions from the respondents (the mean values of these responses were 4,4 and 4,5; the two highest rates) were the ones regarding foreign language training and language skill. A further result showed that 93,2% of the students surveyed chose the option of learning a language at school from language learning, which confirms that they consider foreign language training at university essential. Most (58,8%) of the students said they learned or learned foreign languages at university. Based on these results, I consider this hypothesis confirmed.

H7: At present, foreign language training at university cannot fulfil the requirements of organisations.

First of all, this hypothesis can be confirmed by data collected about students' language skills. 28,1% of the respondents do not possess a general language examination at an intermediate level, which means that 71,9% of them owns at least one intermediate language examination certificate. 85,9% of those questioned does not possess a business language examination at an intermediate level yet, so 14,1% of them already have at least one business language examination certificate at an intermediate level.

Secondly, based on the results of the organisational research fourteen organisations out of 60 require language skills at an intermediate level in two languages, two organisations expect language skills at an intermediate level in three languages at least, and one

organisation requires language skills at an intermediate level in four languages. 63,3% of the organisations said that graduate entrants moderately meet the requirements of high-level verbal and non-verbal communication skills in a foreign language. 41,7% of the organisations found that graduate entrants do not meet or somewhat meet high-level intercultural communication skills requirements. These results confirm the hypothesis.

Thirdly, we must take into consideration the results of the interviews with language teachers to be able to confirm the hypothesis completely. During the interviews, it was often said that foreign language training at university could not completely meet the requirements of organisations. One of the reasons for this is that students entering university do not have the required pre-education, thus reaching the necessary level of business language skills is far more time-consuming than it should be. Apart from this, there is no effective conversation between language teachers and organisations, so language teachers do not know exactly what organisations require.

In conclusion, I consider this hypothesis confirmed.

4. NEW AND NOVEL RESULTS OF THE DISSERTATION

1. It can be considered a new result that the organisational research presented the differences and similarities in organisations' requirements regarding foreign language skills and intercultural communication competencies of graduate entrants during recruitment. The research was conducted based on different aspects. The evaluation of results was implemented based on the sector, the market, the headquarters' location and the size of the organisation.

2. It can be considered a new result that organisations made suggestions concerning changes that should be made in university education so that graduates would be able to meet companies' requirements for foreign language skills and intercultural communication competencies at a higher level.

3. It can be considered a new result that in the course of the research using the triangulation method, we were able to examine the problem from various aspects how language training at university could meet the requirements of organisations. During the interviews with the language teachers who teach business languages at the University of Debrecen, suggestions were made why the present situation differs from the ideal one and how to improve it.

4. It can be considered a new result in the research that we surveyed students' foreign language skills, intercultural communication competencies, ways of language learning and motivation. Based on the results conclusions were made about foreign language training at university.

5. It can be mentioned as a new result that in the course of the student research we could identify three factors around which competency statements were classified: *Intercultural Cooperation*, *the Level of Language Knowledge* and *the Usefulness of Language Knowledge*. With the help of these factors, we could identify different groups of students.

6. It can be mentioned as a new result of the research that in the course of the student research we could identify and characterise five clusters of students based on their intercultural communication competencies using the above- mentioned factors. The five clusters are the following: 1. *Interculturally Active*, 2. *Open with Good Language Skills*, 3. *Interculturally Open with Poor Language Skills*, 4. *Interculturally Passive*, *Interculturally Open* and 5. *Interculturally Reluctantly Cooperating*. These groups possess different advantages and disadvantages for employers. This classification can help educational institutions harmonise foreign language training with organisations' requirements.

7. It can be considered a novel result that in the secondary research, the international and Hungarian literature review described the concept of intercultural communication competencies, their main definitions and experts.

8. It can be mentioned as a novel result that in the secondary research, the international literature review collected and presented the international tools of measuring intercultural communication competencies, their dimensions and authors.

9. It can be considered a novel result that in the secondary research, the Hungarian literature review collected and presented the changes in foreign language teaching in Hungary due to globalisation and internationalisation.

10. It can be considered a novel result that in the secondary research the international and Hungarian literature review described the changes occurring in the labour market in Hungary and abroad as a result of globalisation and internationalisation. The dissertation also presented the differences in requirements and new trends.

5. PRACTICAL APPLICABILITY OF THE RESULTS

The dissertation's novelty is that it surveyed employers', employees' and language teachers' side who are directly involved in training. At the same time, it aims to help universities offer training programmes for a need in the labour market. Furthermore, it also helps students acquire foreign language skills and competencies, enhancing their employability in the future and giving them a competitive edge in any part of the world. During the interviews with language teachers, we asked the experts' opinions in connection with the problems they encounter and how the ideal situation could be achieved. They have the primary role and responsibility for ensuring that universities meet organisations' requirements regarding foreign language training.

The dissertation presented the requirements of organisations regarding foreign language skills and intercultural communication competencies. The definition of the necessary level of foreign language skills needed for different activities represented an essential part of the survey. The research surveyed how satisfied companies are with graduate entrants concerning their language skills and intercultural communication competencies. Another goal of the research was to evaluate and present students' foreign language skills and intercultural communication competencies. Based on the findings, conclusions have been drawn on why foreign language training at university cannot wholly fulfil organisations' requirements. We succeeded in defining some suggestions for improving the university training according to the employers' opinions and learning the recommendations of language teachers taking part in foreign language training at university concerning how to meet organisations' requirements. The results of the research are useful for organisations, universities and students as well.

6. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION



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Subject: PhD Publication List

Candidate: Tímea Lázár

Doctoral School: Károly Ihrig Doctoral School of Management and Business

MTMT ID: 10062565

List of publications related to the dissertation

Articles, studies (7)

1. **Lázár, T.:** Students' Foreign Language and Intercultural Communication Competencies Based on a Survey at the University of Debrecen.
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