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THESES OF DOCTORAL (PhD) DISSERTATION

**EXAMINATION OF COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS  
WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE  
SKILLS IN THE NORTH GREAT PLAIN REGION**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION, OBJECTIVES**

Globalisation, perhaps the most often mentioned phenomenon at the turn of the millennia, strongly affects the whole economy and society, labour market processes and thus the tasks of the education and training system. Mobility, which has been typical in the case of products and services for a long time, has become more and more common in the case of organizations and employees as well. Due to this persons searching for jobs, educational institutions and regions trying to attract investors have had to face fierce competition. As a result of the expansion of secondary and tertiary education at the end of the twentieth century a great number of highly qualified employees appeared in the labour market, which – apart from quantity forecasts – appreciates the value of early projections for concrete needs and quality. The results of these needs analyses are essential for all actors of the labour market.

Employers' expectations of employees bear special importance in regions with employment problems. Foreign investors creating a high number of jobs prefer developed regions where human resources are highly qualified and equipped with up-to-date competencies. Foreign language skills are obvious expectations for foreign organisations, and indispensable in tourism and the exporting activity of local companies. The performance of the private sector forcefully influences a region's competitiveness. According to research commissioned by the agencies of the European Union, European enterprises lose business and sales opportunities because of the lack of foreign language skills. Hungary and especially the North Great Plain region possess an outstandingly poor ranking in this field in Europe.

The importance of speaking foreign languages can also be examined from the aspect of potential employees. Besides qualifications the value of competencies has been appreciated in the selection process. In jobs requiring a degree computing and communicational skills including foreign language command have become essential. However, research results show that Hungarian employers are still not satisfied with recent graduates' performance in the knowledge of foreign languages and technical languages.

By analysing employers' expectations regarding foreign language skills in the North Great Plain region, the present research project primarily aims at contributing to the adjustment of foreign/technical language curricula to the requirements of the user side as this could enhance the quality of human capital in the North Great Plain region. With the help of empirical investigations supplementing and supporting the analysis of the technical literature, the research intended to detect and investigate the importance of competencies contributing to the competitiveness of employees and organisations and this way the whole of the region. A further aim of the research was to analyse the differences in foreign language use between categories of organisations. They were classified on the basis of economic branch, ownership form and organisational size. The analysis of language use at work served as the basis for the research on language skills, tasks and the current use of particular foreign languages. Employers' forecasts on future language use have also been examined. One of the primary goals of foreign language training is to help students succeed in job applications therefore a thorough analysis of foreign language expectations of the selection process is included in the dissertation as well. The overview of technical literature served to reveal the role of foreign language knowledge in organisational, regional and European competitiveness.

## **2. MATERIAL AND METHOD**

The research started with the expedient compilation of a questionnaire to the employers with the purpose of surveying expectations of professional employees in the North Great Plain region of Hungary. Out of the competencies needed in the labour market the research and thus the paper discusses the topic of foreign language skills in details. However, qualifications and competencies expected by employers also play a role in curricula planning for language courses. Research objectives and thus questions of the survey have been grouped into two major categories:

- a.* employers' expectations of professionals regarding qualifications, competencies and foreign language skills

- b. principles and procedures of the selection process including the control of language proficiency.

Because of the topic of the examination – foreign language expectations – targeted sampling has been applied, i.e. organisations with tasks and activities requiring foreign language skills have been selected exclusively. On average 29.6 per cent of tasks at the responding employers require foreign language knowledge.

The sample included 112 organisations with the following profile distribution: 21.4% agricultural, 14.3% processing industry, 12.5% public administration, 11.6% real estate and other economic services, 9.8% commercial, 9.8% educational, 6.3% logistics, postal and telecommunication services, 4.5% financial, 4.5% catering, 3.6% construction industry and 2.5% energy supply. In respect of the type of ownership 70.6% are private enterprises (50.0% Hungarian, 16.1% foreign and 4.5% partly foreign), 22.3% are state budget and 7.1% are non-profit institutions. As for the number of employees 14.3% employ 1-9 persons, 32.1% 10-49 persons, 33.0% 50-249 persons and 20.6% of the organisations have more than 249 employees.

After having checked the reliability and completed the descriptive statistical analyses sub samples were formed based on the main classification criteria (type of ownership, branches of the economy, organisational size) of the total sample, then differences of the sub samples were revealed based on the relevant questions of the examination. The research included the following statistical methods: variance analysis with principal components, Kruskal-Wallis analysis and loglinear analysis.

### **3. MAJOR RESULTS AND ESTABLISHMENTS OF THE THESIS**

#### **3.1 Harmonising curricula between employers and higher education institutions**

The extent of practical component in the curricula is an everlasting dilemma of education. The role of training or education is to provide the basics of the theoretical part of a science

or field of study and endow students with skills allowing for adaptation to constant changes. When planning curricula, heads and teachers of educational and training institutions should more and more rely on the experience and expectations of employers. The *Education Development Plan (2007–2013)*, part of the *National Development Plan* suggests monitoring regional labour market demands. The *Development Concept and Strategic Program of the North Great Plain region for 2007-20013 (2005)* also emphasises that in the interest of meeting regional labour market demand and supply a market-oriented modernisation of the secondary and tertiary level of vocational education is needed.

One question asked the representatives of the organisations about the importance of involving employers in curricula planning for higher education institutions. Employers of the North Great Plain region have given a score of 3.9 on a scale between 1 and 5. As 4 was the equivalent of very important one can state that employers would find it expedient if their experience and expectations were applied in course and curricula design.

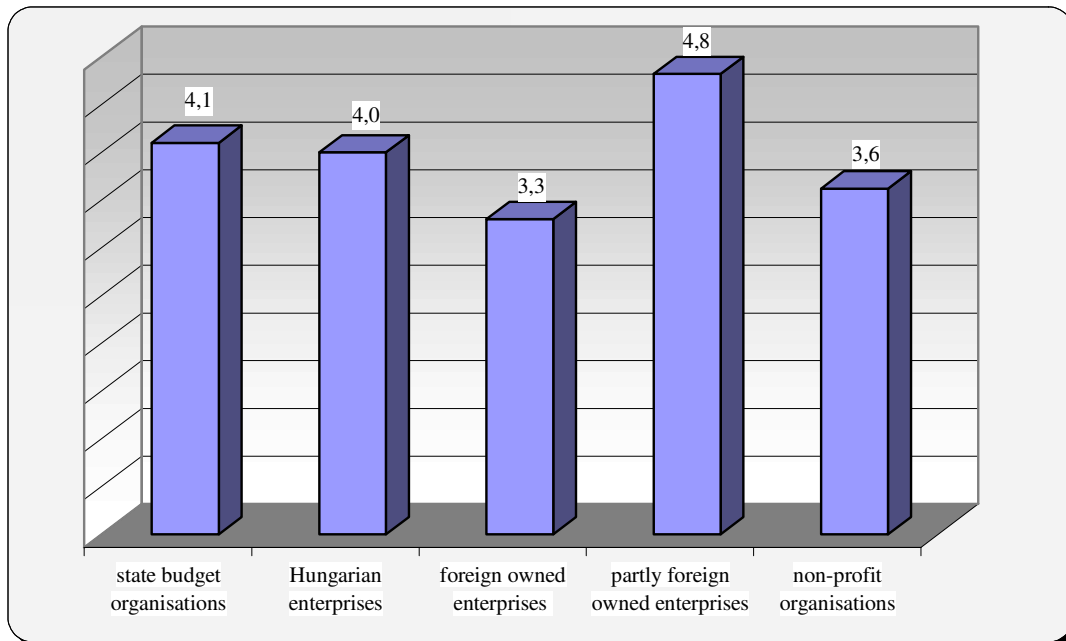
Regarding the importance of harmonising the content of curricula between employers and training institutions and based on the results of statistical examinations (Kruskal-Wallis analysis) it has been established that employers of the North Great Plain region belonging to different ownership categories expressed a significantly different opinion ( $p=0.006$ ). Foreign owned companies found it least important, scoring 3.3, followed by non-profit organisations with 3.6. Hungarian business organisations and government agencies attributed approximately equal importance to the question (scoring 4.0 and 4.1 respectively), and the issue was ranked highest by partly foreign private organisations (4.8) (*Figure 1.*).

Wholly foreign enterprises of the research are subsidiaries or branches of multinational companies, and thus these are organisations with a high number of employees. They usually train their newly employed staff in special, in-house trainings which follow strategies developed by the organisation's own experts.

Financial and human resources required by these trainings are also available for them.

*Figure 1.*

*Evaluating the importance of involving employers in curricula planning for higher education institutions*



Source: Author's own research results (2006).

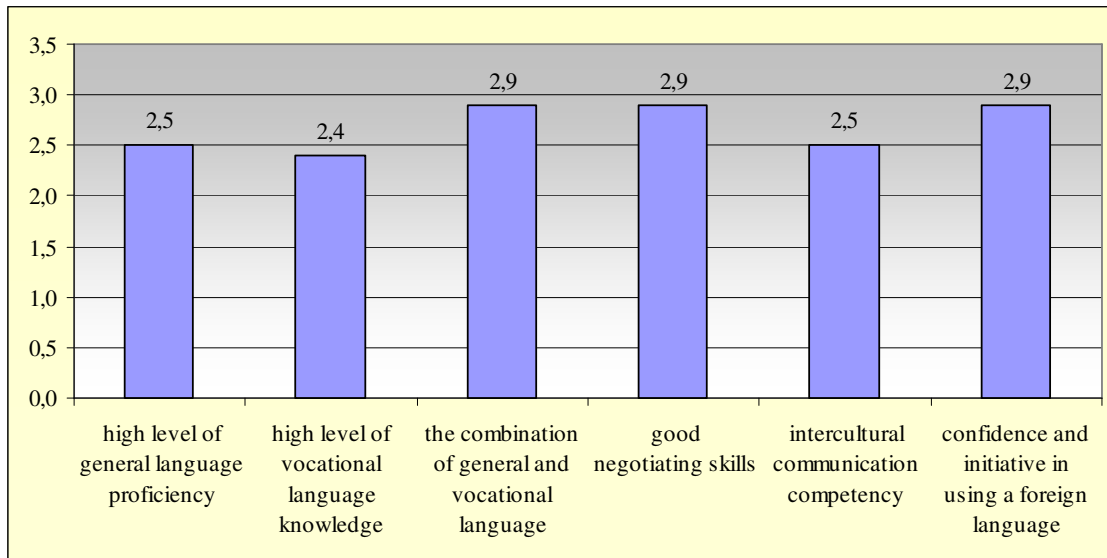
N=112

### **3.2. Foreign language skills expected by employers**

Foreign language skills (high level of general language proficiency, high level of vocational language knowledge, the combination of general and vocational language, good negotiating skills, intercultural communication competency, confidence and initiative in using a foreign language) have been given nearly equal importance by the North Great Plain employers, which is a useful piece of information for course planning. Employers had to assess each of the above mentioned skills on a five degree scale (0=not needed, 1=possibly useful, 2=useful, 3=very useful, 4=essential), and all the six skills were ranked between the useful and very useful degrees (*Figure 2.*).

Figure 2.

*Employers' measuring the importance of foreign language skills*



Source: Author's own research results (2006).

N=112

Importance of foreign language competencies have been analysed by economic branches as well. Significant differences between the branches have been found in the evaluation of the following competencies: high level of vocational language knowledge, the combination of general and technical language knowledge and confidence and initiative in using a foreign language. Results of the Kruskal-Wallis analysis were  $p= 0.003$ ,  $0.01$ , and  $0.012$  respectively.

Examining the need for the skills above the following can be established: vocational language knowledge is least needed in education and catering since the technical language of these professions are part of general language knowledge. High level of technical language skills have most been required by organisations in the field of commerce. In commercial areas especially in foreign trade language knowledge is almost useless without possessing the special technical terms and being aware of the meaning of clauses and provisions. Professional language skills have gained relatively high appreciation in the civil service profession as well. A lot of public administration offices perform specified tasks with highly specific language requirements, e.g.: environmental agencies, agricultural public

administration offices coordinating EU projects etc. In other professional areas average values have been attributed to technical language knowledge. The combination of general and technical language skills counts most in trade and industry and least in education and catering. Confidence and initiative in language use is most appreciated in commerce and catering (*Table 1*).

*Table 1.*

*The evaluation of foreign language skills by economic branches*

<b><i>Economic branch</i></b>	<b><i>1.</i></b>	<b><i>2.</i></b>	<b><i>3.</i></b>	<b><i>4.</i></b>	<b><i>5.</i></b>	<b><i>6.</i></b>
Agriculture	2.5	2.3	2.5	3.3	2.2	3.0
Industry	2.4	2.4	3.0	2.7	2.4	2.6
Commerce	2.6	2.8	3.2	3.2	2.8	3.4
Catering	1.8	1.8	2.2	3.4	2.0	3.2
Economic services	2.7	2.2	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.5
Public administration	2.4	2.5	2.6	3.0	2.3	2.9
Education	2.0	1.5	2.2	2.4	2.1	2.9
Average	2.5	2.4	2.9	2.9	2.5	2.9

*Source:* Author's own research results (2006).

N=112

*1.* high level of general language proficiency, *2.* high level of vocational language knowledge, *3.* the combination of *1.* and *2.* *4.* good negotiating skills, *5.* intercultural competency, *6.* confidence and initiative in using a foreign language.

### **3.3. Presently used languages**

The most important issue when planning foreign language programs is the selection of languages. Economic and labour market tendencies cannot be ignored. Employers were asked to list currently used languages – with the maximum of five – in the order of importance. Some organisations stated the use of more than one language in the first or second place. The scope of statistical analysis involved all languages listed in the first place in all positions. A score system was applied to distinguish between the ranking positions: a language mentioned in the first position was given five scores, in the second four scores etc.

The statistical examination showed that English is the dominant foreign language in all branches of the economy in the North Great Plain region. In respect

of English no significant difference was shown between the branches. However, the incidence of German, Russian, Italian and French languages proved to be significantly different in different branches of the economy. The Kruskal-Wallis analysis provided the following results:  $p=0.003$ ,  $0.025$ ,  $0.000$ ,  $0.001$  respectively. German has the most frequent incidence in catering and education, Russian in commerce and catering whereas Italian enjoys an above average use in commerce and French in education (Table 2).

Table 2.

*Kruskal-Wallis analysis results of the correlation of languages with the economic branches*

<i>Economic branch</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Russian</i>	<i>Spanish</i>	<i>Romanian</i>	<i>Italian</i>	<i>French</i>
Agriculture	4.424	2.375	0.327	0.355	0.254	0.133	0.073
Industry	4.878	2.710	0.377	0.236	0.660	0.049	0.511
Commerce	4.818	1.546	1.273	0.273	0.364	1.000	0.000
Catering	4.400	3.800	1.200	0.000	0.000	0.200	0.400
Economic services	4.735	2.687	0.360	0.000	0.573	0.054	0.380
Public administration	4.812	1.687	0.751	0.000	0.751	0.000	0.438
Education	4.846	3.693	0.308	0.077	0.308	0.000	1.385
Total	4.776	2.384	0.697	0.183	0.481	0.344	0.343

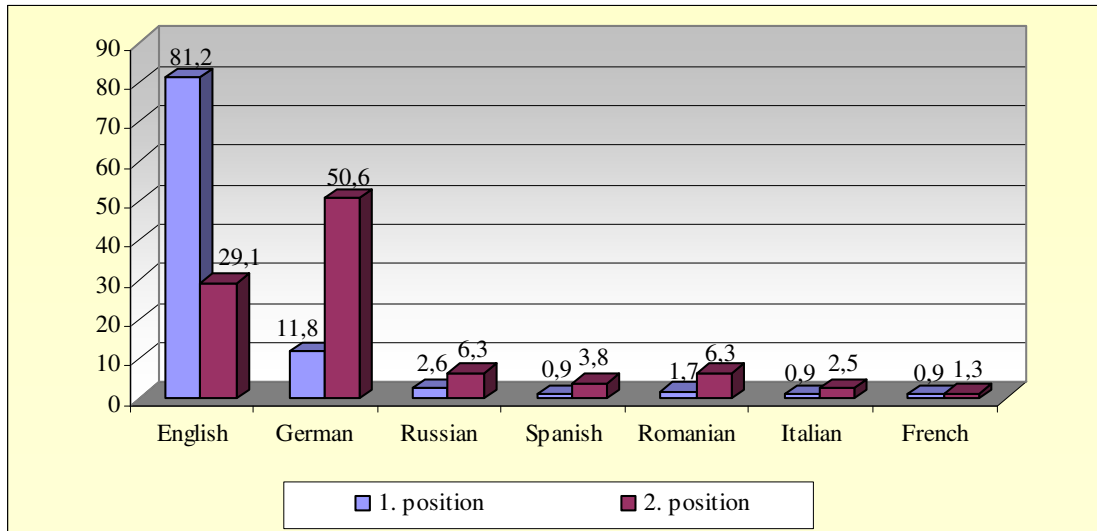
Source: Author's own research results (2006).

With respect to foreign language use the North Great Plain region does not show any special local peculiarities. Although international relations of the North Great Plain region or those of Hungary would not justify the importance of English as the most important foreign language, it still enjoys an outstanding position, reflecting the global tendency of using English as a tool for international communication. This research result coincides with the outcome of European studies stating that 60 per cent of European big companies use “neutral” English for internal communication and keeping contact with customers (ELAN, 2006). Based on the

total answers German is the second and Russian is the third most often used foreign language in the region (*Figure 3*).

*Figure 3.*

*Percentages of foreign languages mentioned in the first and second position by the employers of the North Great Plain region*



Source: Author's own research results (2006).

N= 112, 80

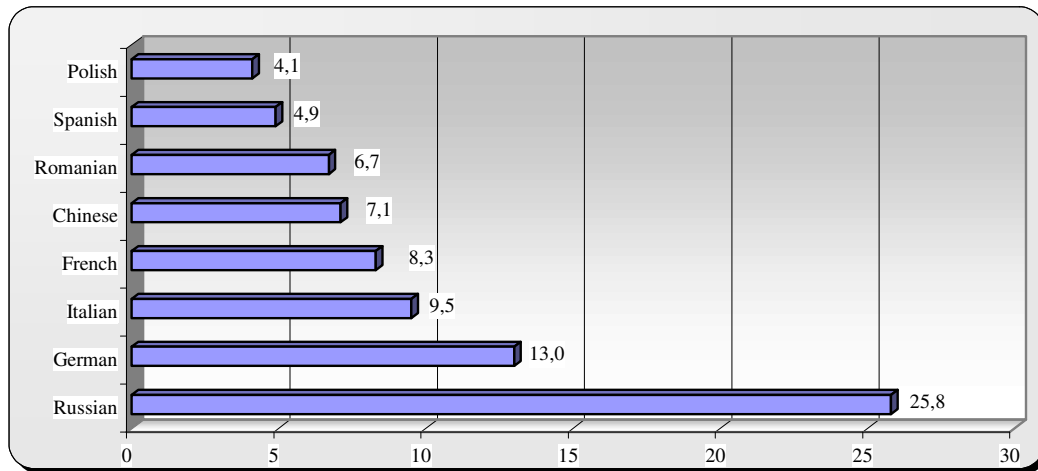
### **3.4. Foreign languages potentially useful in the future**

Educational institutions also need to have information about foreign languages considered to be advantageous in the future. New foreign languages in the array of an organisation can open up new business or cooperation opportunities. More than half of the organisations stated that the use of certain foreign languages –besides the currently used ones – would be valuable for their future activities. With respect to future foreign language use – apart from the presently used languages in the particular organisation – Russian has been forecasted as the most helpful language, followed by German, Italian, French, Chinese, Romanian, Spanish and Polish. The ranking of languages valuable in the future was based on the score system described

in the previous chapter. The percentages have been calculated on the basis of the overall scores of all mentioned languages (*Figure 4*).

*Figure 4.*

*Percentages of foreign languages most frequently mentioned as potentially useful in the future by the employers of the North Great Plain region*



Source: Author's own research results (2006).

N= 65

Considering the total answers of the organisations the education of Russian language would definitely deserve more attention although it has been neglected in the past two decades. Concerning the predicted use of Russian, German and Spanish languages significant differences have been found between the different economic branches. The Kruskal-Wallis analysis provided the following values:  $p= 0.001, 0.01, 0.035$ . Russian is thought to be most needed in agriculture, catering, public administration and various economic services (finance, logistics, postal and telecommunication services). German was said to be useful in commercial and agricultural businesses, while Spanish is most wanted by trading and educational organisations.

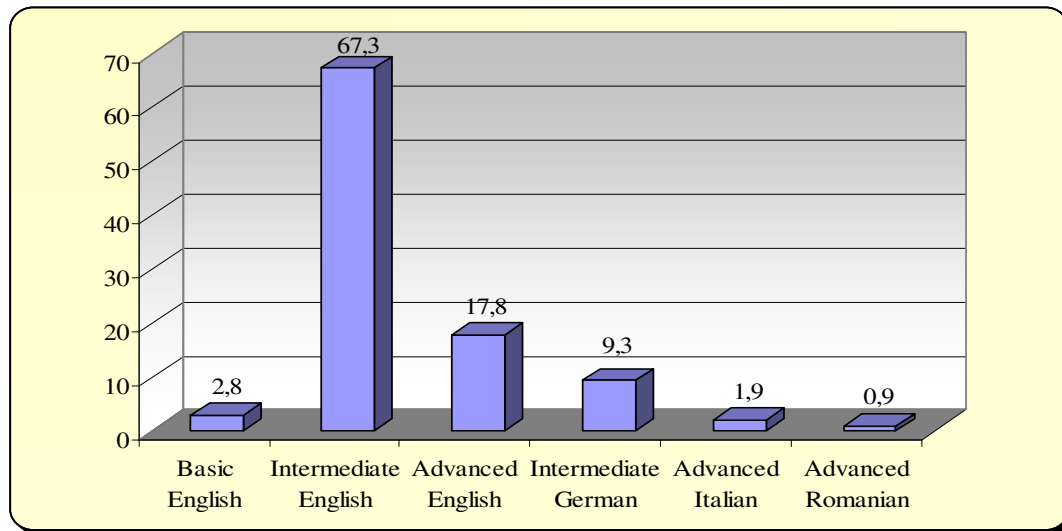
### **3.5. Foreign language expectations in the labour market**

Results of the empirical research justified the hypothesis that intermediate level English language knowledge is the most common requirement of organisations in

the North Great Plain (*Figure 5*). Similarly to the previous questions employers were asked to list five languages with the required degree of proficiency in the order of importance. Regarding the foreign language expectations of professionals the dominance of English is stronger than it was in the case of present language use, i.e. 87.9% of employers mentioned English in the first position as a foreign language requirement for new professional employees whereas only 81.2 % stated that English is the primarily used foreign language in their organisation.

*Figure 5.*

*Percentages of the first ranked foreign language knowledge expectations of professionals in the North Great Plain region*



*Source: Author's own research results (2006).*

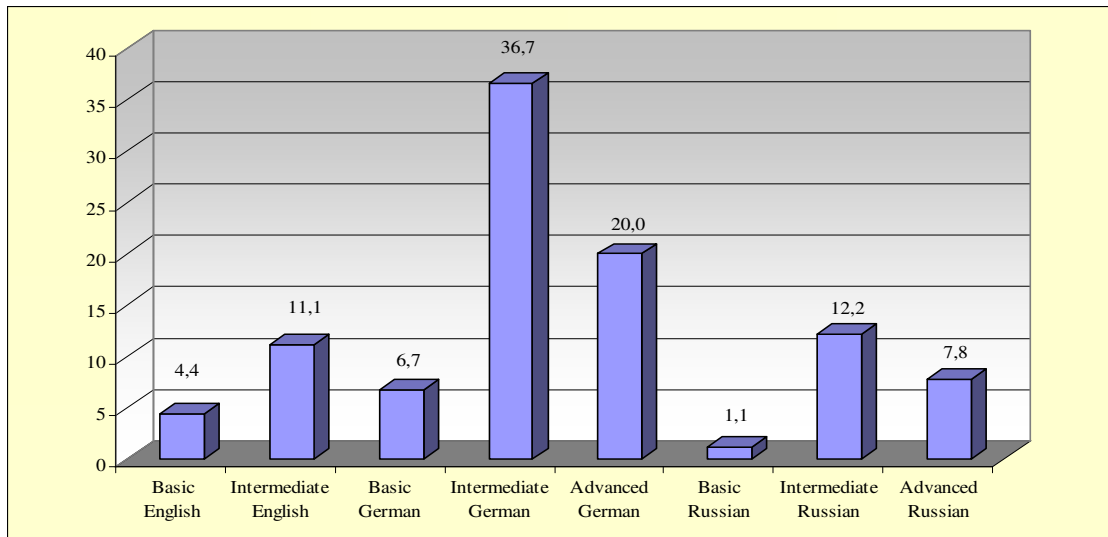
N=107

On the basis of the research results it can certainly be established that English language command is a key labour market competency in the North Great Plain region. Within English language knowledge intermediate level is the one most favoured by the organisations although the majority of tasks performed by professionals would demand advanced level language proficiency. Employers' expectations are strongly influenced by harmonising labour market demand and supply, and recent graduates' language proficiency is forcefully determined by the degree requirements: in higher education institutions five-year-courses can only be

completed with a language exam certificate of intermediate degree and three- or four-year courses with a certificate of basic or intermediate degree. Advanced level language proficiency has not usually been prescribed by universities. German language command at intermediate level proved to be the second most common expectation of employers (*Figure 6.*). No significant difference has been found in the correlation of foreign language expectations of employers and various economic branches.

*Figure 6.*

*Percentages of foreign language expectations of organisations  
(language requirements listed in second position)*



*Source: Author's own research results (2006).*

N=90

Since the research deals with expectations of recent graduates in the labour market of the North Great Plain region it is worth comparing the ratio of the region's higher education students studying different foreign languages to the ratio of employers' foreign language requirements and foreign language demand for the present and the future. One can establish that the ratio of students studying English is below the level of demand for English. The regional labour market would also need a higher proportion of students speaking Russian, Italian and Spanish. The number or ratio of students learning Romanian is not even registered in the official statistics (*Table 3.*).

Table 3.

*Percentage distribution of students studying specific foreign languages in proportion to the total number of students studying any foreign language in the North Great Plain region, 2005/2006 school year*

<i>Foreign language learnt</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
English	66.0
German	27.0
French	2.5
Russia	2.1
Italian	1.5
Spanish	0.3

*Source: Author's own compilation based on the Hajdú-Bihar, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county Statistical Yearbooks of the Hungarian Statistical Office, 2006*

### **3.6. Verifying language knowledge**

One of the most important and direct task of foreign language education in higher education is to help students succeed in job applications. In order to reach this goal a thorough knowledge of the recruitment procedures and assignments is fundamental.

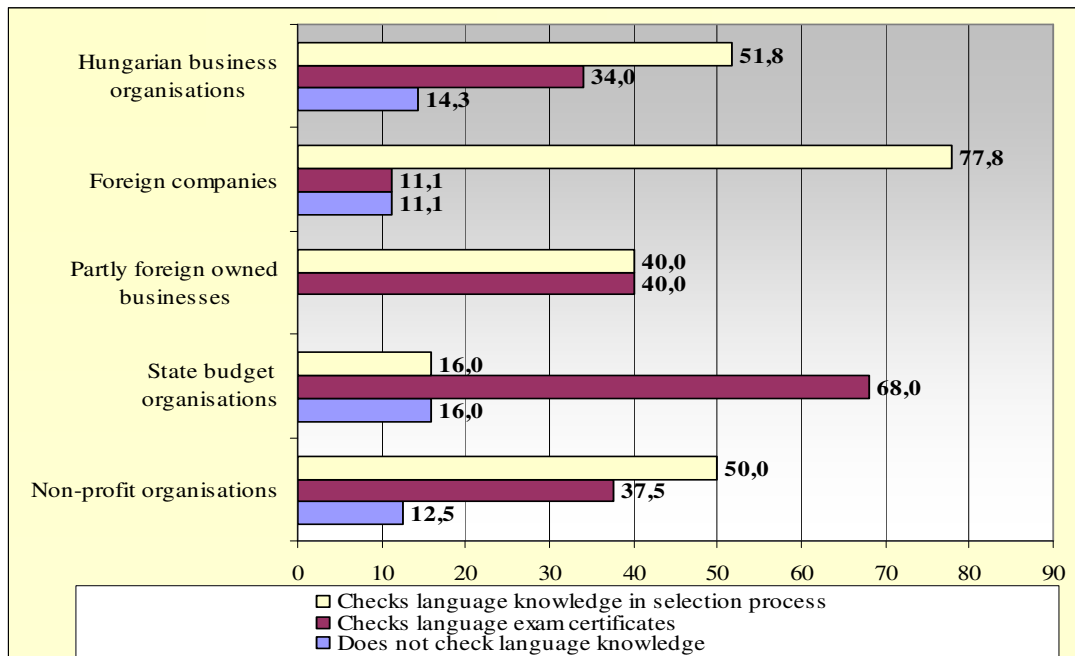
When asked about the selection criteria employers gave answers in accordance with the concrete expectations (*Figure 5. and 6.*). Only 11.8 per cent of employers accepted the statement that the advanced language command of one foreign language is more valuable than the intermediate knowledge of two languages. On contrary to advanced language proficiency *real language knowledge* was favoured by the organisations. Based on the total sample 54.5% of employers accepted the statement that real language knowledge was worth more than language exam certificates. Results of statistical analysis justified that different *ownership forms* of organisations have significantly different views in this issue. The theoretical preference of real knowledge was outstandingly high at foreign and partly foreign companies (76.9%, 100.0%). Hungarian private enterprises attributed a lower significance to this issue, only 51.0% agreed with it, and the figure was even lower at non-profit organisations (42.9%); the value of this statement was lowest at state budget institutions (38.5%). The loglinear analysis applied for checking significance found a significant

difference between the ownership categories in the issue of theoretically preferring real language knowledge as opposed to certificates ( $p=0.0094$ ).

The *practical effectiveness* of the above mentioned principles has also been investigated. Based on the results of the analyses it was established that the *ownership form* of the organisation influences whether employers check applicants' language knowledge themselves in the selection process. It is typical at foreign companies (77.8%) and Hungarian and non-profit organisations also undertake this recruitment task in a fairly high proportion (51.8% and 50.0% respectively). Surprisingly, only 40.0% of partly foreign organisations check actual language command although in theory all of these employers agreed with the preference of real language knowledge to language exam certificates. Government owned organisations are the ones where actual language knowledge is least checked (16%) and the importance of certificates is highest (68%) (Figure 7).

Figure 7.

Percentage of methods for checking language knowledge in the selection process by ownership categories



Source: Author's own research results (2006).

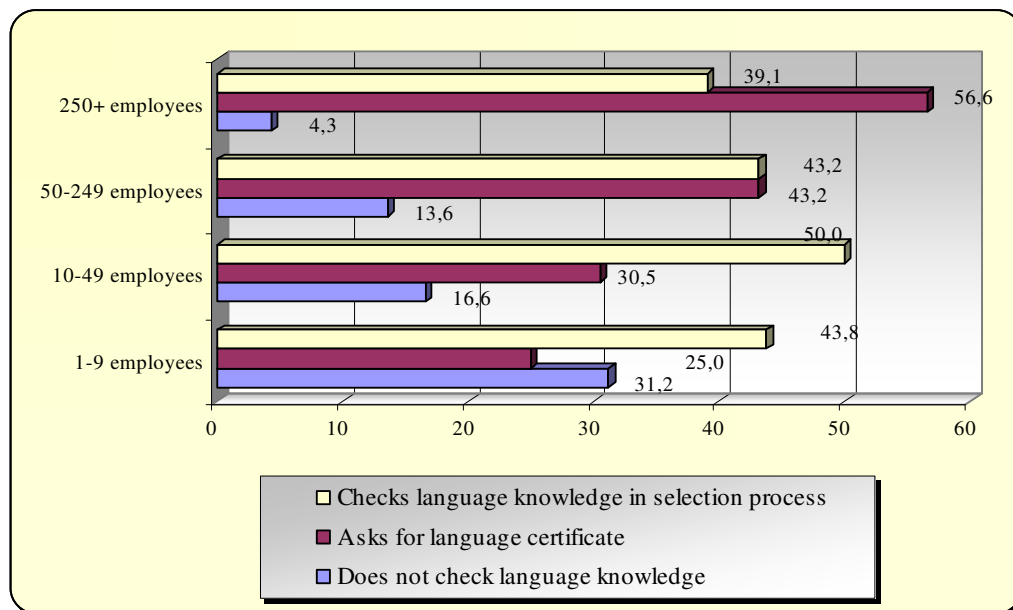
N= 111

The statistical verification (loglinear analysis) confirmed the percentage results: the actual level of language knowledge is least checked by state budget organisations, and most by foreign owned companies. Verifying language proficiency in the selection process proved to be significantly different in different ownership categories ( $p=0.028$ ).

On the basis of the statistical analysis of the data it has been established that *organisational size* also affects the way language knowledge is checked. The lack of verifying language command in the selection process is most typical in micro organisations (31.2%), then in small organizations (16.6%), while less common in organisations employing 50-249 employees (13.6%) and least typical in big organisations (4.3%). It can be established that checking language knowledge is in inverse proportion with organisational size whereas the verification of language knowledge by exam certificates is in direct proportion with the size of the organisation (*Figure 8*).

*Figure 8.*

*Percentage of methods for checking language knowledge in various organisational sizes*



*Source: Author's own research results (2006).*

The statistical (loglinear) analysis showed a significant difference between the organisations of different size in the lack of checking language knowledge and in checking language knowledge by looking at the certificates only ( $p=0.043$  and  $0.011$ ). Checking language knowledge in the selection process did not show a significant difference by organisational size.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

The European cohesion policy focuses on knowledge, research and innovation thus on human resources. Economic development built on human capital and the relating increase in the number of jobs are both parts of the *Development Concept of the North Great Plain region*.

- Apart from qualifications the labour market competitiveness of recent graduates is strongly influenced by the competencies they possess. From the aspect of employability *foreign language proficiency is one the most demanded competency*. However, based on national investigations and the present study, the language proficiency of recent graduates does not meet the requirement of employers neither in the North Great Plain region nor in the whole of Hungary.
- At the same time potential employees' motivation for language learning could be ensured by better work or income possibilities. European surveys also reveal the increase of employment-oriented language learning as opposed to learning for personal goals. This is an important point for consideration especially in technical language and adult education.
- National and regional official statistics on foreign language knowledge give an even more unfavourable picture. Yet *official statistics on a region's human capital are followed by potential investors* also and can affect their decisions when locations are selected for their operation. Job-creating investments usually avoid backward regions. In addition, hoping to achieve higher income highly qualified workforce moves to developed areas. Supporting the training

of professions and skills needed by employers and detected by labour force surveys can stop the vicious circle.

- The language training objectives of a region ought to be harmonised with the economic development visions. The geographical location of the North Great Plain region is ideal for the establishment of logistic or call centres which would require workforce with secondary qualification but possessing language command. At the moment this segment of the workforce is not available in the region but bilingual technical secondary schools could fill this niche.
- From regional point of view foreign language training bears importance in the public and non-profit sector as well. The European Union's support system is based on applications and experts trained to meet the current demands can better interpret calls for applications and they are also capable of writing better applications. In the case of consortium applications partner seeking and cooperation high level of language knowledge is essential.
- Investing in human capital should be as cost-effective as other forms of investment. To achieve this, the early detection of employers' needs and the adjustment of the training accordingly are vital. In terms of qualification requirements there is a need for more professionals with technical and economic/business degree. However, the majority of students in the region study humanities. Required qualifications in the region also show the needed technical language. In respect of skills having the possibility to fit in technical language programs problem-solving emerged as the most wanted by employers, and the difference between the importance and employers' satisfaction with the particular skill proved to be the biggest in the case of problem-solving also. Foreign language skills (high level of general language proficiency, high level of vocational language knowledge, good negotiating skills, intercultural competency, confidence and initiative in using a foreign language) have been given nearly equal importance by the

North Great Plain employers, which is a useful piece of information for course planners in language training.

- Regarding present language use English is the dominant foreign language in all branches of the economy in the North Great Plain. German is the second and Russian is the third language on the list of importance. With respect to foreign languages useful in the future – apart from the presently used languages in the particular organisation – Russian, German, Italian, French, Chinese, Romanian, Spanish and Polish were said to be valuable, with Russian showing an outstanding importance. Although potentially useful languages were only forecasted by the organisations – bearing in mind the tendencies in global economy – the value of Russian and Chinese languages can be taken for certain especially in trading organisations. Russian and German languages were found to be useful in the future by specific branches of the economy, thus their importance can be predicted well in career planning. As a conclusion one can state that English language alone will be considered to be a key competency in the professional labour market but organisations might have miscellaneous requirements concerning the second or third foreign languages.
- Concerning the selection requirements English language knowledge is a must in almost 90 per cent of the organisations involved in the examination. It is disputable that in most cases intermediate level is expected although the majority of tasks performed by professionals would require advanced language proficiency.
- The verification of language proficiency in the selection process raises several issues and projects different tendencies for the future. Most employers agreed with the preference of real language knowledge to simply checking the certificates, and even in practice almost half of the examined organisations follow this method, but differences have been observed between the public and private sector. Typically foreign companies undertake the recruitment task of verifying language command. The answers and results of foreign

companies deserve special attention, as these organisations are the ones which might demonstrate a future labour market tendency. Another future tendency could be a higher transferability and reliability of the language exam system. Transferability will be provided by the *Common European Framework of Reference*. This system renders a category to all levels of each language exam, which would make the control in the selection process less justified. In order to make the system of language exams more reliable an examination staff independent of teaching would be needed.

- Analysing the reasons of ill-successes in language teaching would be important and having drawn the lessons these mistakes should be avoided. Hindrances for efficiency include heterogeneous, large language groups and language teaching prolonged for too many years with insufficient numbers of language classes, reducing student motivation and interest.
- *Higher education institutions* cannot be blamed for the language knowledge shortcomings of Hungarians but there are certain areas and levels where the support of universities would be helpful. Technical language training of professionals can only be implemented in the tertiary sector of education with the primary tools of *mobility programs* for both students and lecturers.
- *Teaching in foreign languages* executed in Hungary could definitely contribute to the development of technical language. Teaching complete programs in a foreign language might not be feasible due to the lack of financial resources but the education of single subjects could also be valuable.
- The analysis of both the technical literature and the empirical examinations show that foreign language skills have become key competencies in the labour market and a distinguished factor when evaluating the human capital stock of a region. Since currently the North Great Plain region of Hungary bears a competitive disadvantage this issue should be listed among the priorities of economic development plans.

## **5. NEW AND NOVEL SCIENTIFIC RESULTS**

*1. The present paper describes the first complex, topic specific, theoretical and empirical research in the North Great Plain region aiming at harmonising employers' expectations and the content of foreign language curricula and applying scientific methods especially the up-to-date procedures of statistical science.*

*2. Based on the analyses the research scientifically verified in regional interrelationships that practical and up-to-date foreign language competencies are indispensable quality preconditions in the regional implementation of the Lisbon strategy and all kinds of innovation. Speaking foreign languages can play a vital role in the alleviation of economic and social disparities and in bridging the gap between developed and lagging behind areas.*

*3. With the example of the North Great Plain region the research justified in regional dimensions the interrelationships between the low level of foreign language skills and the economic and social backwardness, and related to this the need for adjusting training content to the demands of the organisations.*

*4. The study revealed the employment and labour market importance of technical language by economic branches in the North Great Plain region with special emphasis on jobs performed by recent graduates.*

*5. The results of the empirical examination laying the grounds for the scientific analyses show that in the North Great Plain region – concerning present language use – English is the dominant language in all branches of the economy whereas the use of German, Russian, French and Italian varies by economic branches. However, considering the west-east direction strategic connection role of the region furthermore its potential cross-border economic and labour market relations Russian language will probably enjoy a distinguished position in the future.*

*6. The analyses verified the importance of monitoring : when selecting new employees real, “market-conform” language knowledge is the primary issue, especially in foreign companies as these type of organisations attribute the greatest importance to real language proficiency.*

Finishing the dissertation does not mean completing the research. Issues arisen when studying the technical literature and analysing the results of the empirical examinations can serve as the starting point for further investigations.

## **PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE THESIS**

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