

PROFESSIONAL EVOLUTION OF ENGLISH TEACHER GRADUATES IN UNIVERSITY OF PANNONIA

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Follow up of graduates, career monitoring, alumni, and the abbreviations AR (Alumni System) and DPR (Graduate Follow-Up System) will be heard about frequently in the near future in relation to higher education in Hungary. These issues have attracted increasing attention for ten-fifteen years in Hungary, and this attention seems to accumulate and become systemic nowadays. It was first in 2006 that it became compulsory for higher educational institutions to start introducing their DPR, in accordance with the regulations of the new Higher Education Act. The institutional DPR is to contain compulsory and optional elements, which are determined centrally. However, it is not forbidden for universities to further improve their system for instance by adding extra elements to it. One crucial question is whether career monitoring and follow up will be treated more than a compulsory task to be ticked and forgotten once done, and also whether it will serve aims beyond the mere discharge of an obligation.

Keywords: career monitoring; follow up; English teacher graduates; the University of Pannonia, Hungary

The research centres upon the follow up of English teacher graduates, i. e. the question of researching on English teacher graduates in relation to their professional careers and to the institute from which they graduated. This constellation of research characteristics adds a new aspect also to pedeutology.

The full research report outlines the concept of career monitoring as related to English teacher graduates, in general, and with reference to the University of Pannonia, in particular. And it also presents such a research, including its procedure and findings, carried out among English teachers who graduated from the University of Pannonia, Hungary in June 2001.

A questionnaire has been developed to serve as the research instrument. Findings are discussed in relation to, for instance, social and geographical mobility, choice of the profession, career profile, labour market position, subject repertoire, teaching load, professional aspiration, professional success, and reflection on English teacher training.

The main achievements of the research are both methodological-procedural and empirical. They are the formulation of the research concept and design, the development of the questionnaire, the data, facts and relationships as the results of the questionnaire-research, and the discussion of the implications for and the possible ways of further research.

The research also resulted in a model of English teacher competences, which is to be considered an ancillary achievement. In addition to the construction and the analysis of the model, English teachers' English language ability was paid special attention and its place was designated in the model and in the content of English teacher training.

This paper briefly focuses on the main aspects of the scope and aim of the research; the background and literature; the methods, instrument and subjects, the achievements and results of the research, and also gives a bibliography of papers so far published or presented on the research.

Scope and aim of research

In a specific overlap of higher educational research, foreign language pedagogy, foreign language teacher training and teacher research, we dealt with the question of researching on English teacher graduates in relation to their professional careers and to the institute from which they graduated.

The underlying aims were to develop a general and adaptable research conception and design of the theme and by concretising the conception, to conduct a primarily descriptive career monitoring of English teachers who graduated from the full-time five-year English programme of the University of Pannonia, Hungary in June, 2001.

The research is thus a contribution to the career monitoring and evaluation endeavours of higher educational institutions, including the University of Pannonia, in general, and of English teacher training in Hungary, including the English-American Institute of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Pannonia, in particular, by means of

- (a) the collection and discussion of relevant literature and aspects that constitute the context of a research of the kind,
- (b) the research concept and design,
- (c) the questionnaire-research conducted,
- (d) the data, facts and relationships as the findings of the survey, and
- (e) the discussion of demand and implications for, and possible ways of further research.

The central undertaking, theme and thus aim of the stage connected to the University of Pannonia was to describe patterns of professional life of English teachers who graduated from the full-time five-year English programme of the University of Pannonia, Hungary in June, 2001.

In accordance with the central theme above, three concrete preliminary aims were defined. These were the following:

- (a) The primary aim was to describe the data, facts and relationships characterising the population of the research in relation to the areas investigated.
- (b) On the basis of the results of this primary research, we also aimed to facilitate the formulation of research hypotheses which could serve as the bases of working hypotheses for further research.
- (c) A further aim was to develop a questionnaire as the instrument of the research which could serve as the primary basis for developing a similar instrument or instruments for further researches into the area.

Background, literature review

The results of the literature review were discussed as basic concepts, background issues, awarding institution and research method.

Within these, follow-up, quality assurance, accountability; higher education research, foreign language teacher training, pedeutology (teacher research), including also foreign language pedagogy, the triangle of higher education, labour market and follow-up of graduates, follow-up endeavours of the awarding institution; and characteristics of English language teacher training of the university were also referred to and discussed.

Research methods, instrument and subjects

The research methods we applied were deductive and inductive. Deductive methods were used to investigate the relevant literature and context, including the relevant history of the English-American Institute of the University of Pannonia, Hungary. At the empirical stage of the research data collection was done by means of a questionnaire.

The questionnaire data was processed both manually and with the help of software. A spread sheet programme was used to present the results in figures and tables, and a data-miner application was used especially to do classification. General rules as to how to interpret the results were also discussed.

The instrument of the empirical stage of the research was a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of 71 main questions containing further sub-questions. Thematically the questions can be classified into eight groups. These are:

- (a) basic data (personal data such as sex, marital status, place of residence, secondary school studies, the time period between graduation from secondary school and being accepted for one of the English programmes at the University of Pannonia),
- (b) qualifications,
- (c) choice of the profession of an English teacher,
- (d) labour market position,
- (e) professional questions
- (f) professional-teacherly aspirations,
- (g) assessing English teacher training at the university, and finally
- (h) reflection on the questionnaire itself.

The subjects we asked to answer our questionnaire were English teachers who graduated from the full-time five-year English teacher training programme of the University of Pannonia, Hungary in June, 2001. The response rate was 98 percent.

Research results

The new scientific results of the research can be grouped as methodological-procedural, empirical and ancillary ones. The main methodological-procedural achievement is a complete, adaptable research conception and design, and its operationalisation in relation to English teachers who graduated from the University of Pannonia. Within this, the results include thus the formulation of the research topic, the definition and analysis of the context, the development of the research instrument, and the implications for

further research. The empirical findings of the research include all the data, facts and relationships arrived at through the questionnaire-research.

During the research process new aspects and directions opened up for the researcher. Findings in relation to these new research areas are called here ancillary ones. The name refers only to this feature of the results, and by no means to their negligibility, insignificance, or inferiority to the methodological-procedural or empirical ones. Likewise, the order in which the major achievements are presented below rather expresses a chronological succession than an order of importance.

Research concept and design. We pointed out that the theme is to be researched on and the significance of the research on it. We developed a research design that can easily be adapted and/or further improved to suit the aim of similar investigations.

Research instrument. We developed the questionnaire which was applied in the empirical stage of the research. During the data processing stage directions for further improvement and amendment of the instrument were set.

Questionnaire results

The data, facts and relationships characterising the population in the areas investigated have first been described. Since even a list of the results would be too long for this paper to include, some of them will be discussed briefly in the following.

Social mobility, choice of the profession

It has been confirmed in relation to the population investigated that the choice of the teacherly profession provides a way of social ascent and that the English teacherly social class as teacherly classes in general is not a closed one. Almost every third respondent (31%) comes from a family with at least one parent being or having been a teacher, but only about every fourth of them (27%, 8% of the whole population) thought they had been influenced in choosing the teacherly profession by the parental example.

It has also been confirmed that the motive for the choice of the profession and for application to the programme was not necessarily the aim to become a teacher. It was also influenced by an interest in English as a language, but not in English as a language to be taught (41%) and the good chance to be accepted to university (10%) [Table 1]. Differences have been observed between men and women in regard to circumstances of the choice of the profession. Early commitment and also becoming committed during university studies to the teacherly profession is characteristic of the class of women, whereas the motive for application for men was rather non-teacherly in nature [Figure 1].

It has been found that the role English teacher training at the university played in orientating students towards the profession was possibly significant. More than one third of the respondents (35%) said they had decided to become teachers during their university studies [Table 2].

Career profile, labour market position

English teacherly career profiles have also been set up. Career profiles after graduation show that more than half of the subjects (55%) have stuck to the profession, they have always worked as teachers, and there are only 10

percent who say they have never worked as teachers and do not even plan to take up careers as teachers [Table 3]. More than half (59%) of the respondents who work as teachers say they have dealt with the question of leaving the profession, and 15 percent of them do plan to give up their work as teachers [Figure 2].

The labour market position of the population has been found satisfactory in general. Four fifths (80%) of the population worked during their university years, most of them (85%) worked as English teachers [Table 4]. After graduation every fifth respondent (20%) continued working holding the same position as before. At the time of the data collection four fifths (80%) of the population worked full-time, and nobody was unemployed [Table 5]. More than every fourth (27%) respondent said they had tried (typically part-time) entrepreneurship to teach English in this way, which is fewer than expected [Table 6]. The analysis of the number of employments showed that more than a quarter (29%) of the respondents had had three, four, five, and even seven employments since graduation either simultaneously or consecutively [Figure 3].

Indices of teaching activity

The indices examined in relation to the respondents' teaching activity show that there is a diversity of subjects taught, characterising not only the population as a whole, but the individual respondents, as well.

16 subject-areas have been determined to cover English teaching in Hungary and the respondents were asked to give and specify the ones they had ever taught. Most of the respondents (35%) said they had had one type of subject, one eighth (12%) two, one fifth (20%) three, one tenth (10%) four and 6 percent six types of subjects in their subject-repertoire [Figure 4]. Teaching English for specific purposes is not significant in the population, in the public (state) educational sphere it is only at classes 13-14, at (private) language schools and language centres of higher educational institutions it is more a characteristic. One third (33%) of the population said they had subjects other than English in their subject-repertoire.

At the time of the data collection the average teaching load in terms of lessons a week was 24.45, taking only public (state) education into consideration it was 20.20, and including all respondents that is even those who said they did not work as teachers, it was 13.97. Approximately every fifth-sixth lesson of all was not an English one [Table 7].

Professional success

Fourteen indices have been determined to investigate respondents' professional success. These were (a) the time of starting to look for employment after graduation, (b) the number of months between graduation and employment, (c) the English-teacherly nature of the first employment after graduation, (d) English-teacherly nature of further employment, (e) career profile, (f) intention to quit the profession, (g) membership in professional associations, (h) labour union membership, (i) being in employment at the time of data collection, (j) employment for an indefinite period at the time of data collection, (k) type of employment at the time of data collection, (l) scientific aspiration, (m) research activity, and (n) publication activity.

It has been observed that in the population investigated the quality of the degree has predictive validity in relation to the respondents' professional success provided we accept that the indices examined play a role in it.

Reflection on English teacher training

An evaluation of the programme the respondents graduated from has also been done. It has to be emphasised, however, that our evaluation is only one possible way of evaluating the programme. This is based on graduates' opinion, is retrospective and dominantly summative in nature, but also has formative elements and can also function as a needs analysis.

The assessment, of the programme, by the respondents was asked for in two major forms. First, they were asked to assess the blocks of subjects one by one and also as a whole in a five-point scale with 1 meaning the worst and 5 being the top mark. Borrowed from the field of language testing, the term analytic assessment is used to refer to the separate assessment of each block and the term holistic assessment is used to refer to the assessment of the training as one unity, as a whole. Second, by means of an open-ended question respondents were asked to name areas they missed from the training.

The most useful areas are teaching practice (4.18) and language improvement (4.02), and from amongst the blocks of other departments involved in the training the block of pedagogy-psychology (3.57) [*Table 8*].

It has been observed that the holistic assessment [*Figure 5*] of the training is dominated by the assessment of the English-American Institute. In a comparative analysis of the results of the analytic and the holistic assessments it was found that the respondents holistically (3.79) assessed the training provided by the English-American Institute (3.79) rather than the training provided by the university (3.55).

Furthermore, a relationship has been found between the analytic assessment and the areas missed from the training. It is that the more useful a block of training is according to the graduates, the more they miss from it [*Table 9*].

The respondents who started working as English teachers after graduation consider the programme more useful on the average than those who found other types of employment. The differences are not significant in general. In relation to the means of the nine blocks (3.564 and 3.423) it is one and a half tenths, in the case of the holistic assessment (3.815 and 3.737) it is less. Regarding the blocks one by one, however, there are areas which are considered more useful by respondents who chose other than English teacherly employment after graduation. These are literature, history-culture-civilisation and pedagogy-psychology.

Model of English teacher competences

As an ancillary achievement, one possible model of English teacher competences was constructed (*Figure 1*), and its analysis was also done.

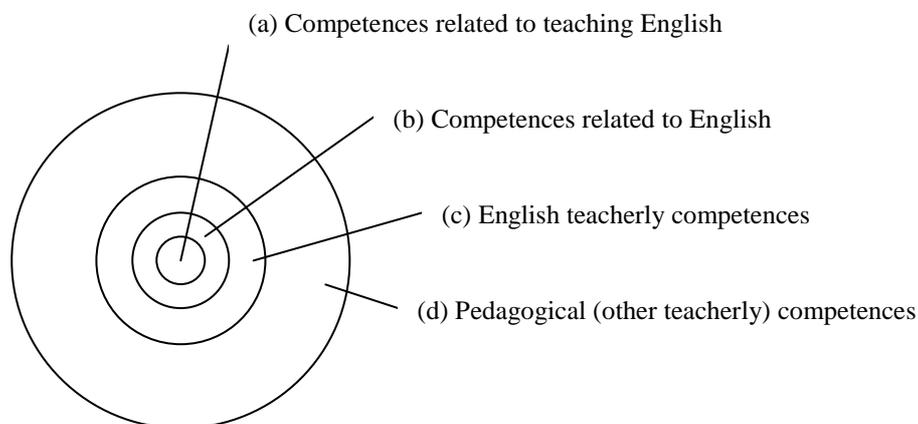


Figure 1: English teacher competence components

Place of English language ability amongst English teacher competences

We designated the place of English teachers' linguistic-communicative competence – English teachers' English language ability – amongst other English teacher competences. It was designated its place in the proposed model of English teacher competences, within the context and content of English teacher training in Hungary, in general, and in the University of Pannonia, in particular, and through empirical study.

By means of these we confirmed that English teachers' command of English and of English for teaching purposes is of primary importance in English teacher training, and we pointed out that it was so for the group of the graduates we investigated.

Implications for further research

The questionnaire-study conducted is to be considered a complete research in its own right. But, in the series and context of further investigations suggested, it would mean the first phase and thus the test of the complete research concept, process and report.

Apart from the fact that this research is complete in itself with well-defined boundaries and results worth publishing, we also evaluated and analysed it with a view to facilitating the work of the researcher who undertakes the task of continuing the research.

We postulated and described some possible ways of further research by outlining constellations of widened or narrowed research scope, population and methodology.

Journal, book and conference papers on research

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Appendix

Tables and figures of survey results that were highlighted in the paper have been appended below.

Table 1 Choice of the profession

Choice of the profession	Respondents (%)
Wanted to become teachers, both parents teachers	2.04
Wanted to become teachers, mother teacher	6.12
Wanted to become teachers, father teacher	-
Wanted to become teachers, neither parent teacher	12.24
Did not want to become teachers when applying to university, but changed their minds when at university	18.37
Were interested in English as a language, did not want to become teachers	40.82
English was the major they had a good chance to be accepted to	10.20
Other	10.20

Table 2 Time of the choice of the profession

Time of the choice of the profession	Respondents (%)
1: Secondary school	28.57
3: University	34.69
4: Never	20.41
5: Other	12.24
1 & 5	2.04
4 & 5	2.04

Table 3 Respondents' teacherly career profiles

Teacherly career profile	Respondents (%)
Have always worked as teachers	55.10
Quit the profession	10.20
Have never worked as teachers but would like to	2.04
Have never worked as teachers and would not like to	10.20
Quit the profession but would like to return	4.08
Other	18.37

Table 4 Type of work by respondents during university studies

Type of work during university studies		Respondents [in relation to the class; to the population (%)]	
1 Did not work			20.41
2 Worked			79.59
	2.1 Not as English teachers		15.38; 12.24
	2.2 As English teachers		84.62; 67.35
	2.2.1 In public (state) schools	42.42; 28.57	
	2.2.2 In (private) language schools	36.36; 24.49	
	2.2.3 As private teachers	54.55; 36.73	

Table 5 Type of employment at the time of data collection

Type of employment at the time of data collection	Respondents (%)
Employed full-time	75.51
Employed part-time	8.16
Full-time entrepreneur	4.08
Employed, but away on GYED (maternity leave)	4.08
Not employed, receiving GYES (maternity aid)	2.04
Not employed, full time students	-
Unemployed	-
Other	6.12

Table 6 Respondents activity of teaching English as entrepreneurs

	Have ever had an entrepreneurial licence to teach English (%)	Have their entrepreneurial licences to teach English at the time of the data collection (%)
Yes	26.53	22.45
No	69.39	73.47
Missing	4.08	4.08

Table 7 Weekly teaching load characterising the group of respondents

	Primary school	Secondary school	Language school	University	College	Home	Other	TOTAL
English lessons per week	102. 5	278	35	42	0	90	14	561.5
Number of respondents [answers]	<u>7</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>2</u>	25 [42]
English lessons per week / respondents	14.6 4	17.3 8	8.75	14	0	9	7	22.46
English lessons per week / population	2.09	5.67	0.71	0.86	0	1.84	0.29	11.46
Other than English lessons per week	13	51	0	42	0	17	0	123
Number of respondents [answers]	<u>3</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	14 [18]
English lessons per week / respondents	4.33	6.38	0	14	0	4.25	0	8.79
English lessons per week / population	0.27	1.04	0	0.86	0	0.35	0	2.51
Lessons per week in total	115. 5	329	35	84	0	107	14	684.5

Table 8 Assessment, by the respondents, of the five year English teacher training programme of the awarding university

	Mother institutional									SUM
	General teacher training									
	blocks of subjects									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
Of no use (1)	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	6	11
Of little use (2)	2	3	8	1	1	5	16	5	12	53
Of average usefulness (3)	7	12	10	<u>21</u>	5	<u>16</u>	<u>18</u>	14	<u>15</u>	118
Very useful (4)	<u>24</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>17</u>	14	15	<u>16</u>	6	<u>20</u>	10	141
Absolutely useful (5)	12	9	9	8	<u>21</u>	8	3	5	1	76
Question irrelevant	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
Missing	3	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	33
No answer in total	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	42
Valid answers	45	44	45	44	44	45	44	44	44	399
All answers	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	441
Mean	4.0 2	3.7 3	3.5 6	3.6 6	4.1 8	3.6 0	2.8 6	3.5 7	2.7 3	3.55
Mode	4	4	4	3	5	$\frac{3}{4}$	3	4	3	4
Frequency of mode (%)	48. 98	38. 78	34. 69	42. 86	42. 86	32. 65	36. 73	40. 82	30. 61	31.97
Standard deviation	0.7 8	0.9 5	1.0 8	30. 81	1.0 4	0.9 1	0.9 3	0.8 5	1.0 4	

A = Language improvement
B = English language pedagogy
C = Literature

D = Linguistics
E = Teaching practice
F = History, culture, civilisation

G = Applied linguistics
H = Pedagogy-psychology
I = Social sciences

Table 9 Areas missed from the training

AREAS MISSED FROM THE TRAINING		NUMBER OF OCCURENCES							
		Male		Female		TOTAL			
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
RELATED TO EFL PEDAGOGY TRAINING:									
	More practice than theory oriented lessons, practical methodological knowledge and skills	1	9.09	6	15.79	7	14.29	28	57.14
	More teaching practice at schools	3	27.27	3	7.89	6	12.24		
	Teaching more types of age groups during teaching practice	-	-	2	5.26	2	4.08		
	Primary school methodology	1	9.09	1	2.63	2	4.08		
	Design, compilation of lesson plans	-	-	1	2.63	1	2.04		
	Methods of teaching phonetics	-	-	1	2.63	1	2.04		
	Starting to teach foreign language to total beginners	-	-	1	2.63	1	2.04		
	Design and compilation of written tests	-	-	3	7.89	3	6.12		
	Correcting tests, compositions, different marking systems of mistakes and errors, evaluation	-	-	1	2.63	1	2.04		
	The topic of assessment (should be more)	-	-	1	2.63	1	2.04		
	ESP, Business English	-	-	2	5.26	2	4.08		
	Language examination systems	-	-	1	2.63	1	2.04		
RELATED TO PEDAGOGICAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAINING:									
	More possibilities at the Department of Pedagogy-Psychology (dealing with and integrating handicapped, hyperactive, blind, dyslexic learners; integrated and differentiated classes; keeping discipline)	-	-	5	13.16	5	10.20	22	44.90
	Preparation to the educational side of the teacherly profession, leading form master's lessons, and working as a form master; seminars on concrete pedagogical knowledge and skills	-	-	5	13.16	5	10.20		
	Solving concrete situations, problems and conflicts	1	9.09	2	5.26	3	6.12		
	Syllabus design	1	9.09	2	5.26	3	6.12		
	The administrative tasks of the teacher	-	-	2	5.26	2	4.08		
	Knowledge and skills related to the concrete teacherly work	-	-	2	5.26	2	4.08		
	School-law (operation of school, regulations, rulebook, staff meetings, office hours)	-	-	2	5.26	2	4.08		
RELATED TO LANGUAGE IMPROVEMENT:									
	More language improvement seminars	2	18.18	-	-	2	4.08	3	6.12
	Techniques of interpretation, practices to improve interpretation skills	-	-	1	2.63	1	2.04		
RELATED TO OTHER AREAS:									
	Hungarian orthography	-	-	1	2.63	1	2.04	2	4.08
	Learning the history and civilisation courses in as much detail that we would be able to teach them later	-	-	1	2.63	1	2.04		
AMBIGUOUS:									
	Wider professional knowledge	1	9.09	-	-	1	2.04	1	2.04

Figure 1 Time of the choice of the profession by sexes

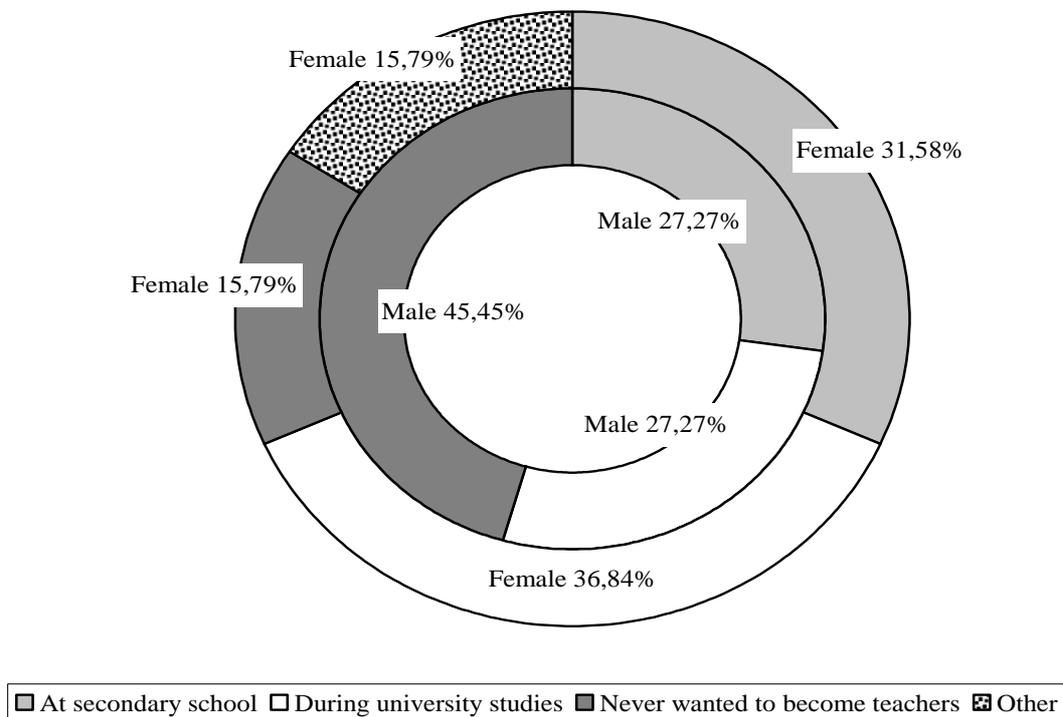


Figure 2 Intention to quit the profession

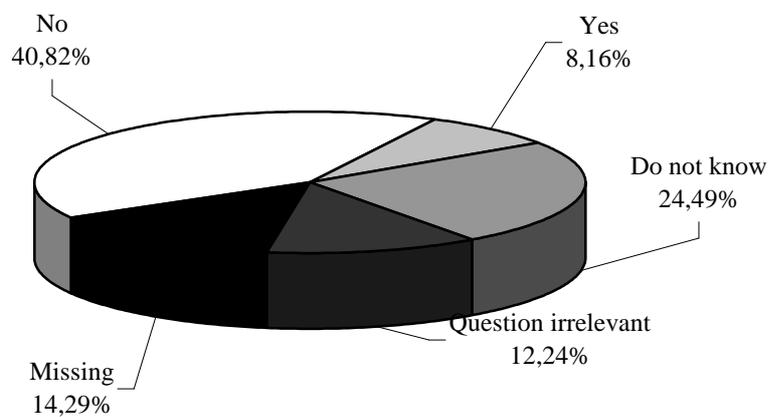


Figure 3 Number of employments from entering university and after graduation

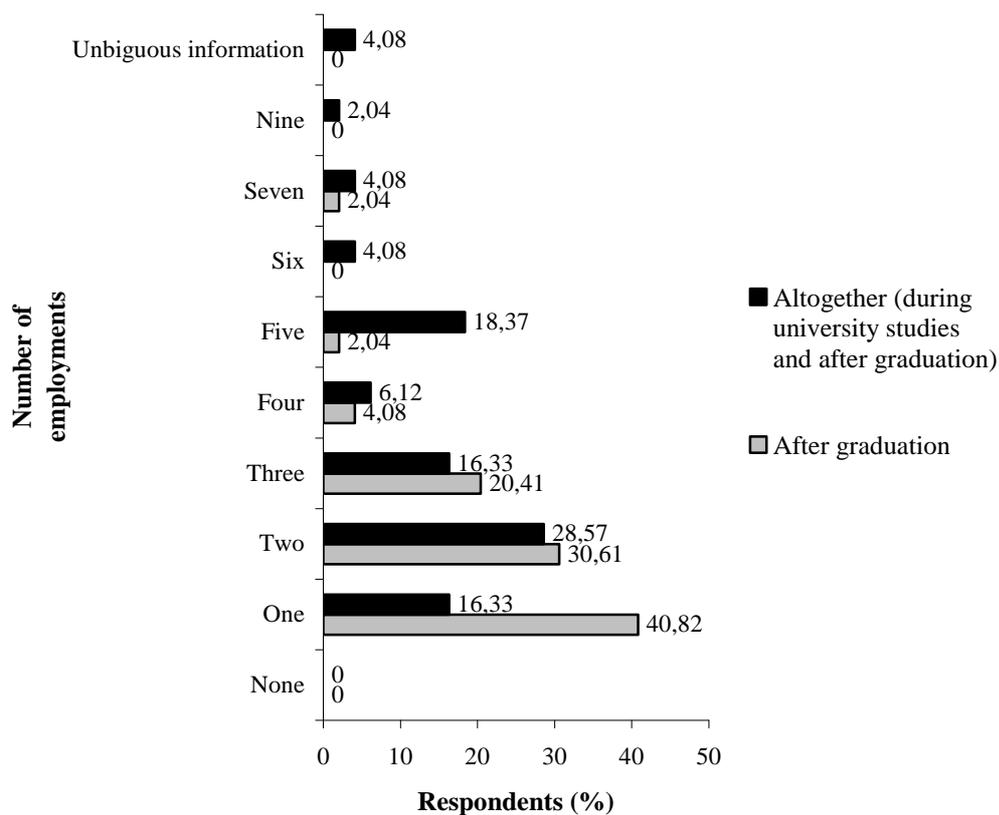


Figure 4 Number of types of subjects with English as content taught by respondents

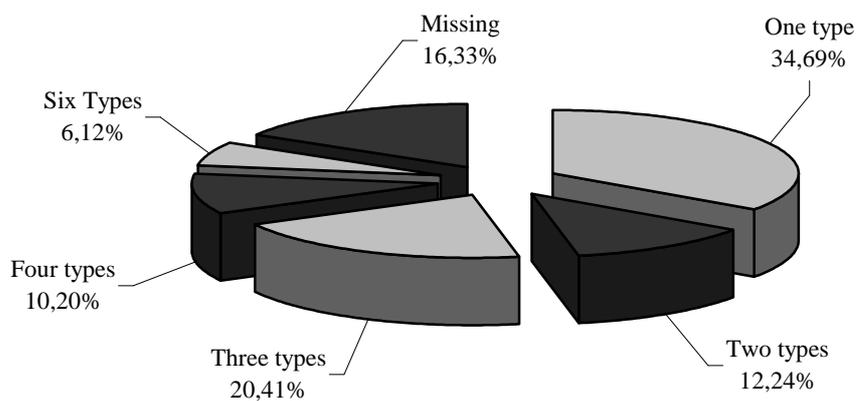


Figure 5 Holistic assessment of the training

