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# Pedagogical Innovation of French-language Teaching as a Tool for Educating Managers in the Context of Internationalization

## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** Characterize pedagogical innovation in the context of internationalization of French-language education on the example of international study programme in French language - Sales management at the Faculty of Trade of the University of Economics in Bratislava and testing of its attractiveness from the perspective of the relationship between students and educational institution.

**Methodology:** Article deals with the analysis of the influence of internationalization of the university education within the study programme Management of sale, as well survey of the opinions of its graduates.

**Findings:** Pedagogical innovation is not only the tool of the educational policy but also creates conditions of the project European term and excellence in the development of Professional competences of the future managers.

**Value Added:** International study programme in French language overcomes cultural and disciplinary barriers and contributes to offsetting of the national and international differences.

**Recommendations:** Introducing of pedagogical innovations is the tool of new approaches, strategies, methods, as well as new content and new organization of education to guarantee employability of students on the home and international markets.

**Key words:** internationalization, pedagogical innovation, francophone study, European educational space, European term

**JEL codes:** I23, M30

## Introduction

The aim of the Slovak universities is to implement pedagogical innovations to offer higher quality of education that would correspond with the expectations and needs of the future managers. Such innovations take a primary post in the process of internationalization of the university studies all over the world. Pedagogical innovations in the context of growing internationalization form a part of teacher's profession which guarantees better integration of the students and enable them to make progress in their professional life. Quality education is a prerequisite for economic development (British Council, 2012), competitiveness and employment. International experience, interdisciplinarity and intercultural knowledge are criteria for the education of the future professionals who are forced to communicate in foreign languages. Quality of education and the level of professionalization of education are the factors of the professional preparation on the high level to guarantee employability of the students on home and international markets which marks higher competitiveness. Within the strategy of the University of Economics in Bratislava, The Faculty of Trade offers future engineers working in the sphere of trade and marketing possibilities of study in French language in bachelor and master's programme.

Article is divided in four parts. The first part deals with basic aspects of pedagogical innovation and professional competences of trade engineers. The second part introduces methodology of research. The third part characterizes basic dimensions of cooperation between the University of Economics in Bratislava and French universities. Opinions of the students about international study programme Management of sale are described in the fourth part of our article. Conclusion states about pedagogical innovation which is not only the tool of educational policy but also creates conditions of the project European term and excellence in the development of professional competences of the future managers.

## 1. Framework of analysis

There are many definitions of innovations. The term pedagogical innovation represents a change which brings new approaches into educational process, strategies, methods and a new content and organization of education. No innovation is possible without transfer of knowledge, contacts and interchange. Globalization fostered the process of exchange of knowledge between the countries and helped to develop new contacts with foreign universities and professional world. Quality of education and development of professional knowledge and skills has a significant importance for the development of knowledge society.

European Union offers the conditions for cooperation and creating of new study programmes which lead to education for business and employability. Part of increase of quality of educational activities in Slovakia is to support openness of Slovak educational institutions to the world, to make them more attractive abroad and to develop students', teachers' and research workers mobility.

As far as internationalization of education we can state that at the end of the 20's century the series of rapid transformations of economy caused the change of profession of trade engineer, his education, status and role in society. It is getting more and more specialized and broadens its orientation on economy of services influenced by digitalization and globalization. Globalization which characterizes our present creates growing demand for skilled personnel. Trade engineer of the twenty-first century is characterized with numerous and effective interactions with acquiring knowledge (natural sciences, informatics, business modelling, finance etc.) Trade sciences tend to interdisciplinarity, even hybridize (computing and customer service, marketing and geography, consumer behaviour and ecology, psychology, sociology etc.) with the aim to satisfy developing needs of trade which introduces new, complex and more sophisticated products on the market.

The goal of trade engineer is to form, analyse and solve in an effective and innovative way difficult tasks, conceptions, realizations, implementations and control which are linked with products and systems of services, its financing and commercialization within competitive enterprise. He must take into consideration not only economic but also social and environmental aspects of sustainable development and broader collective well-being.

The activities of trade engineer mobilize human resources, technical, financial, social and environmental knowledge adapted to its role based on serious scientific culture.

If a professional preparation of the future managers in the sphere of trade and marketing is naturally interdisciplinary and inevitably more intercultural, there still prevail many cultural and disciplinary barriers. These barriers were created during long and complicated historical process which influence cannot be ignored. As well cannot be ignored current principles and unexpected barriers in the way of change of existing status quo. One of the ways of overcoming these barriers is an international study programme in French language. Sales management enables offsetting of national and international differences. In the context of European term an international mobility became a revolutionary strategic education factor.

## 2. Methodology

For this article following approaches were used:

- a) analysis of the influence of internationalization of university study within the study programme Sales management as well as analysis of the methods of educational innovations within the frame of its modules (subjects). These two aspects are undoubtedly complementary. Success of Sorbonne- Bologna process, establishing of the European university educational programme (EHEA), programme Erasmus and strategy Horizon 2020 lead to extensive reforms on the continental measure and had a real leverage effect in modernization of the Slovak university education.

Organization of this process includes the representatives of all categories participants taking part on the study programme in French language Sales management (French Embassy in Bratislava, Minister of Education of the Slovak Republic, University of Economics in Bratislava, French universities, French-Slovak Institute, Francophone university agency). In this way interdisciplinarity and interculturality can be considered as two key elements of pedagogical innovation.

b) survey of the opinions of the graduates of French learning programme who obtained Slovak and French diploma; the results of the survey illustrate attractive image of the innovative programme among the students.

System of student opinion research on the study programme in French language Sales management can be considered from three viewpoints which correspond with each other (Wiktor, 2015, pp. 222–231):

- entry to the system – before the start of study within the frame of recruiting campaign for the study,
- with the process of study – research of quality, didactical approaches and organization of study,
- with system outputs – success of graduates in practice.

Opinions of the students on the study programme in French language draw from autotelic values which emphasize personal 'me' and instrumental values. Education represents value itself, (autotelic value) not only because it is better and more effectively organize activities and acquire better job and status in society but also because it decreases the possibility to become unemployed (Rkibi, 2015, pp. 109–117). Instrumental values (ambition and will to study in a foreign language, competences) are understood as the means to reach something that is important and significant for an individual person. It is more about the ways how to behave, act to reach particular goals. Opinions of the students are the part of message of universities, enable identification of relationships between the students and educational institutions and as well can be used for actual needs of running a study programme and university in the process of creating attractive image of the university as a community of teachers and learners.

Research done by the form of survey was focused on the graduates of the students programme in French language (81 graduates, 65 women, 16 men) who got a diploma engineer in a study subject Trade and marketing in the study programme Sales management at the University of Economics in Bratislava. From them 74 accomplished study of common study programme and obtained besides Slovak diploma also French one in a study subject Marketing with specialization Sale and distribution. 62 graduates took part in a survey, from them 55 women (88%) and 7 men (12%) of 24–34 age.

### 3. Influence of internationalization within the study programme Sales Management

Strategy of internationalization as a relatively new phenomenon (Witt, Hunter Howard, 2015, p. 41) is the process of integration of international dimension into educational, research and educational function. It is linked with world trends in educational systems and global competitiveness. Creating of new innovative programme Sales management inevitably caused the change of methods of educational innovations. To offer a reader a more clear picture we make more detailed examples of cooperation with French educational institutions and pedagogical innovations which create the part of study programme Sales management.

Internationalization in the sphere of francophone education comprises several basic aspects of cooperation with French educational institutions which were reflected in the creating and development of study programme Sales management:

- 1) Contacts in the sphere of research with the help of international scientific-research institution PGV (Vysegrad group countries) formed in the year 1994 at the University Pierre Mendes France in Grenoble (at present Université Alpes Grenoble), associates university research-workers dealing with studying European social-economic dynamics (Martin, 2015, pp. 47–55). Regular cooperation with scientific-research net PGV was the

fundamental motivation to create and develop francophone study and remains as one of its leading engines.

2) On the basis of cooperation with international scientific-research net of the Vysehrad group (PGV) education in French language at the University of Economics was firstly spontaneously offered to the students from the summer term of the academic year 1993/1994 as an optional subject – case studies from marketing in French language. From the winter term of the academic year 1994/1995 was the offer of francophone subjects extended from the subjects of common basis as marketing, statistics, international trade, mathematics and economic theory. Francophone subjects were predominantly offered to the students of managerial faculties of the University of Economics in Bratislava. In the context of internationalization of economy and its adaptation to the world market offer of the particular subjects to the students of the University of Economics gained a systematic form of “particularly francophone study” according to the agreement between University of Economics and Cultural department of French embassy in the year 1996. This kind of study then became an official pioneer of education in foreign languages at the University of Economics and a part of educational system.

3) Francophone study became to a certain extent a part of successful experiment in the sphere of education and an example for other universities in Slovakia to make possible the education for the future managers in French language. Currently francophone study belongs to the oldest forms of study in a foreign language at the University of Economics where besides study of professional subjects in French language are offered to study subjects in German, English, Spanish and Russian language etc.

4) From the year 2000 University technological institute IUT2 (Institute Universitaire de Technologie) of University Pierre-Mendes France in Grenoble (currently University Alpes Grenoble) granted a certificate to the students of francophone study with the cooperation of the University of Economics. Until the year 1999 participated in partly francophone study



103 students. In the years 2000–2013 a partly francophone studies finished and obtained a certificate 290 students.

5) One of the stimuli to develop francophone study was a remarkable development of the relations between Slovak and French companies. Development of economic relations with France reflected demands for human capital which represents extend of Professional knowledge and skills embodied in the workforce of a particular country which is the result of education as well as increase of qualification in a job (Ondrejko, 2011). Organizing of study-stays for French students in Slovak and French companies was in this period guaranteed also thanks to the cooperation of the University of Economics with Slovak-French chamber of commerce.

6) Significant role in the development of francophone education had a National foundation for teaching business management FNEGE (Fondation nationale pour l'enseignement de la gestion des entreprises). This foundation and Centre for further education of the University of Economics in Bratislava introduced a programme of education of executives in the years 1993–1998. Activities FNEGE enabled all Slovak francophone teachers to participate in the education of managers with the cooperation with French universities and participate in study-stays organized by French embassy in Bratislava and FNEGE with the aim to prepare an educational process.

## Development of a study programme in French language Sales Management

Partly francophone study implanted in the system of education at the University of Economics in Bratislava in the year 1996 lead to several advantages:

- effectiveness of parity in the relationships with French universities, equal Exchange of students and teachers,
- deepening of synergy , creation of common subjects and leading of diploma theses,

- complementarity – harmonization of differentiated strategies of the university partners from the perspective of the University of Economics in Bratislava.

Conception of francophone study is characterized by flexibility and adaptability within the frame of concrete institutional frame and corresponds Bologne declaration in the year 1992. It is dynamic, reliable and innovative because it offers the students knowledge about activities of French and Slovak companies in terms of labour market requirements. As the francophone study educates future European managers as a part of strategy of the University of Economics in Bratislava, in the years 2005–2008 became the part of two projects of the European social fund focused on the support of education in foreign languages:

- project ‘Internationalization of education of the economists and managers’ (2005–2008),
- master’s programme in French language Sales management (2006–2008).

The first programme ‘Internationalization of education of economists and managers’ was oriented not only on francophone students at the University of Economics but also on the managers and economists of the business sphere in Slovakia.

The second project was focused on elaboration of accreditation file of the study programme in French language Sales management. International character of the programme created conditions for participation of the Slovak francophone teachers and French teachers from Pierre Mendes University on its realization.

Project of the study programme in French language Sales management followed five main principles:

- 1) extend access of the students from European Union countries and other francophone countries to the wide offer of the study subjects dealing with modern sales techniques,
- 2) extend communication competence and adaptability to multilingual environment,
- 3) intensify interuniversity cooperation in the sphere of university education based on partnership and mutual trust,

- 4) facilitate integration of the students in multicultural and multidisciplinary working teams,
- 5) respect socio-political, economic, historical and cultural reality in Europe.

Study programme in French language Sales management prepares students for profession in the sphere of business, sales and international activities which solve complex marketing and business problems requiring medium and long-term decisions, modelling the virtual behaviour of market entities and its interaction with market environment knowing the methods of running business systems. For forming mentioned profile of the graduate participate 14 modules of the specialization Trade and marketing, 8 subjects of the study programme Sales management and 4 optional subjects.

Preparation of the accreditation file in the years 2006–2008 and engagement of the university teachers from Pierre Mendes France enabled to open a study programme in the academic year 2008/2009. It lead to the change of the system of francophone education. Partly francophone programme is concentrated on the first three years of study at the University of Economics, after finishing the students obtain a certificate from home and foreign university. Study is guaranteed by francophone teachers at the University of Economics as well visiting teachers finishing francophone studies is issued by university in Cergy-Pontoise and University of Economics in Bratislava. Study programme in French language Sales management which is focused for the masters' degree is provided by French and Slovak francophone teachers.

With respect to the context of pedagogical innovation of the modules of the programme Sales management, the most common pedagogical methods are:

- a) Case method. Education with the use of case studies has three phases: 1) individual analysis, 2) group discussion 3) discussion in a team. For the presentation of the characteristics of the case theory is presented by the form of interactive lecture. Students have one hour to solve in three member team the case based on the reality of a concrete company. Most of the study subjects use the method of case studies.

b) Interactive lecture. The aim of interactive lecture is to make the students active in their studies and make them to save more and better knowledge. Lecture starts with presenting a concrete problem. Concrete inventory of problems is presented on real video sequences where the most actual problems are showed in short spots. Teachers are given interesting information with the aim to encourage discussion. The main aim is to encourage discussion to the given topic.

c) Cooperative learning. Main advantages are: active learning (requires from the students to cooperate with the others), social skills (students learn to work together with the others while developing their interpersonal, communication and leading skills as well ability to find a compromise and cooperate), mutual dependence (reaching of common goal is conditional with mutual cooperation), individual responsibility (success of a group depends on the contribution of every member, an individual is evaluated as well as a whole group). The course of instruction is organized so that each student contributes to the fulfilment of the proposed task

d) Project teaching. Project teaching represents a modern teaching method, which is integrated into teaching process within the study subject Business project management. This teaching method is demanding because it requires enough time necessary for finishing the project.

Activities of Slovak-French university institute which was founded in 2011 lead to extending of European dimensions of a study program Sales management. From the academic year 2015/2016 students of the programme have a possibility to obtain a diploma 'engineer' at the University of Economics in Bratislava and a diploma 'M1 in European studies (specialization management) respectively M2 of European studies with specialization 'Financial management and European area' of Lorraine university in Nancy. Other possibilities of development of francophone education offers an entry of the University of Economics in the year 2015 into Francophone university agency (Agence universitaire francophone) Within the project of the Minister of Education of the Slovak Republic Internationalization of education for the period 2017-

2019 an international study program got other possibility for buying study literature and in participation of French teachers in a programme.

Extending of the study programme in French language Sales Management and enlargement in European dimensions and new perspectives of activities of the Francophone university agency AUF lead to deepening of internationalization of a concrete study programme through integration of the topics linked with European and world context. In this way the programme is obtaining a European character as a result from the already signed cooperation with French universities and international scientific and research network PGV which could create a space for university excellence and research.

Research of graduate opinions of the study programme in French language Sales management. Knowing the opinions of students about an offered study programme in French language is related with the fact that more and more commercialization and commercial elements of educational services enter traditional understanding of the message of university (Charles & Delpech, 2015). Selected range of the article is the reason for specific access and analysis of the given problem. It is expressed by a question: To what extend is the offer of a study programme in French language in accordance with demands and expectations of the target customers? Continuous evaluation and tracking of this question forms a natural part of educational institution. There exists sufficient evidence that institutions don't do this kind of evaluation:

- they are not market-oriented,
- their goal isn't oriented on target clients,
- they are in permanent danger of crisis.

In spite of the statute of the University of Economics as a non-profit public institution can be stated that in the Slovak Republic exist a competitive fight for the client – student in the field of education. The reasons are following:

- university funding system is in tune with the results of scientific research and a number of students,
- the number of students at the university indicates demand and option of practice of a graduate.

Slovak universities operate in a competitive environment where the offer of study programmes, objectives of pedagogical work, communication with client and relevant surrounding – is specific and reflects cultural, economic, social and political factors in society. Due to a competitive environment there is a growing pressure for use of marketing and communication with external environment in the activities of educational institutions. In connection with this, the definition of the customer, his needs and expectations remains. It is clear that the client of the school is the student himself. The education phenomenon itself is linked with the satisfaction of the individual needs of the client- his knowledge. Some students´ opinions can be mentioned about the study programme and pedagogical innovations. The research at the entry into the study program relies on the views of the students on the offer of study programs and their students´ evaluations. Results are very precious source leading to knowledge of the students´ motifs to choose a study programme in French language and students preferences in choosing proper study program improving marketing communication in the area of students recruitment, offering of quality of services of the students department and mainly intellectual adventure, acquiring knowledge, forming of the attitudes and skills.

The students have a possibility to know about the study in French language thanks to recruitment campaigns at the University of Economics during their study. Besides this information can be obtained via Slovak-French university institute by:

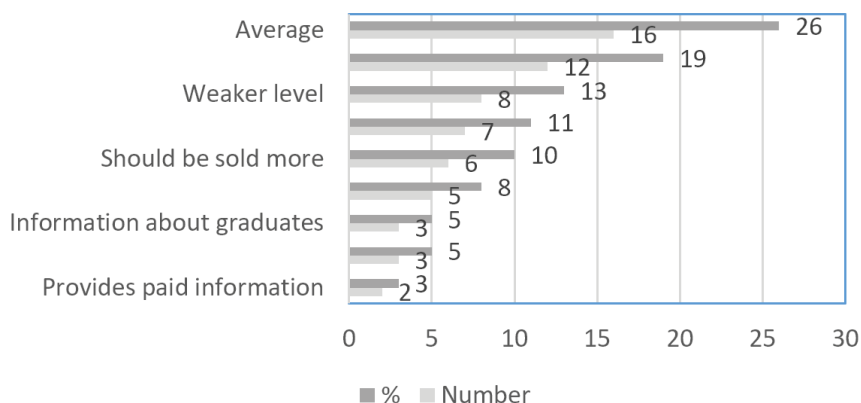
- information materials about francophone study
- round-table conferences (meetings of students with companies)
- discussion seminars (seminars with students from bilingual grammar schools)
- meetings of former graduates of francophone study, former scholarship students etc.

Information about study program can be gained also from the web of the University of Economics. Concrete web -page of the university providing information about the program was evaluated by the students in (figure 1): 26% of the students evaluate web-page describing study programme as average

one, weaker (13%), old-fashioned (3%). 7% of the students emphasize complexity of search of information about study programme in French language and possibilities of study stays and scholarships etc. Besides that for 8% of the respondents web-page doesn't provide information about partner's university and cooperation with companies (5%), and no information about graduates, respectively about offer of educational courses (different due to content and form) for the graduates but also potential clients (5%), it is marked with low level of publicity of the programme and public relations of the educational institute through the activities of the graduates. Only 3% of respondents characterize web-page as suitable. 19% didn't know about it.

Creation of common European market changed the conditions for managerial education of the students at the University of Economics which must react on the new professional and technological conditions and demands. From this reason the main motif of the study of the common study programme was to obtain a common diploma as well a curiosity to know French educational system (27%). Improving of language skills was the motif for 21% of respondents. Not to study a mass programme but a specific, different one from other offered programmes at the University of Economics was the motif for 18% of the respondents. 16% of respondents wanted to acquire knowledge from the sphere of Sales management. Motif for 10% of interested in a programme was the possibility was to extend knowledge in the new field of study. As the programme was offered in the years 2008–2013 only on the basis of the enrolment to the concrete universities, motif for some students was the fee for the study programme (3%). Motifs are illustrated on the figure 2. to apply to the foreign market after finishing the programme.

**Figure 1. Evaluation of web-page that informs about study programme**



Source: own study.

Due to the fact that the programme is offered to all faculties at the University of Economics and other students interested who didn't study specialization of trade, for them the main motif

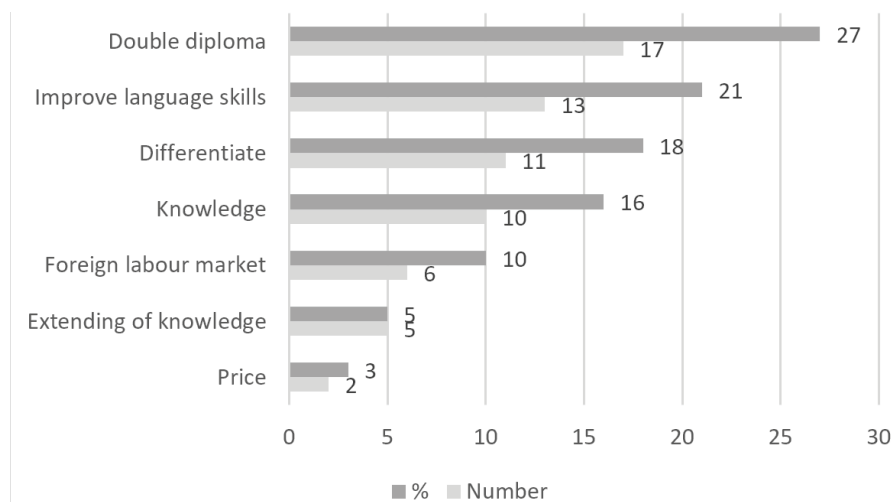
Research opinion of the students about the quality of the educational process creates only the part of evaluation of quality. In a broader context evaluation of quality of an educational process includes forming of new study programme, period of educational process and evaluation of accomplished results. Each of these elements requires a broader consideration. From the point of the article we emphasize only chosen aspects of the evaluation of quality of educational process. From this reason we were interested only in the opinions of the students about French teachers involved in the programme, organization of study, work of study department and arguments with which would recommend this programme to other students.

Through the knowledge of students opinions about leadership of the educational process can be formulated some conclusions about study programme. We were interested in students' opinions about this part of educational process which were led by French teachers and managers of French companies (figure 3). 39% of the respondents evaluate participation



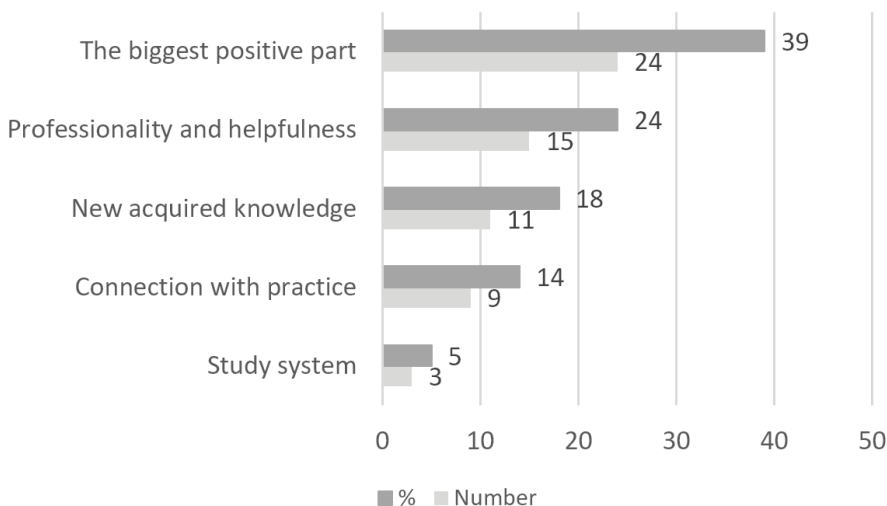
of French teachers and managers as the most positive part of the study programme. Teachers were characterized by a high level of professionalism, helpfulness, enthusiasm and friendly approach (24%) They enabled acquisition of new knowledge in the sphere of Sales management (18%) and they put emphasis on a practical application of taught subjects (14%). The way of teaching and evaluation of students made possible to become acquainted with the French study system (5%).

**Figure 2. Motifs of study**



Source: own study.

**Figure 3. Assessment of the contribution of French teachers**



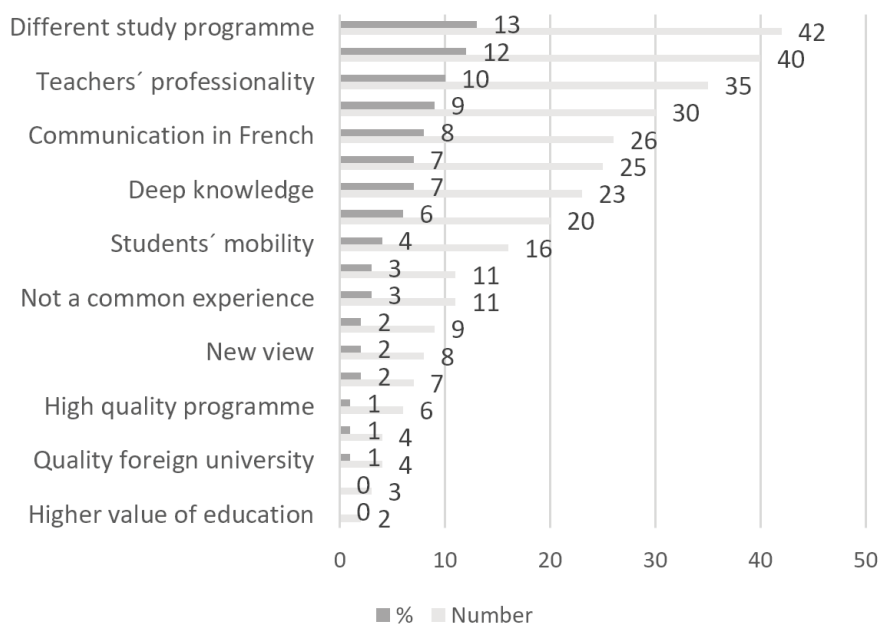
Source: own study.

As far as organization of the study 34% of respondents emphasize willingness of the teachers and friendly approach to the students. According to the fact that a part of programme was organized in a form of concentrated learning in blocks surveyed students highlight teachers willingness in organization of a study (24%). Operability of overcoming shortcomings linked with study programme is mentioned by 24% of respondents. Some students who took part in long study-stays in France respectively due to maternity leaves etc. had problems with passing extra exams (16%) 1% of students state that organization of a study was better than abroad.

Services to students linked with a study programme were provided by a concrete study department. Those students surveyed positively evaluated work of a study department, mainly willingness and patience and help with organization of a study (52%) hundred percent support in a study (16%), operative solution of problems of students and their requirements (15%), seamless provision of necessary information (11%). According to 6% of surveyed study department contributed to pleasant atmosphere in a study programme.

Arguments of graduates form a necessary part in describing a quality of didactical process in a study programme to recommend other students to study a concrete programme in French language (figure 4). Each of the surveyed students had an opportunity to formulate arguments which are stated in graph 2. It deals mainly with learning difference from learning in offered Slovak programmes (13%), understanding of the teaching issue through case studies (12%), professional and human approach of the teachers (10%), participation of French teachers in a programme (9%), communication in French language and everyday contact with language within a concrete subject of study (8%), complex view on the problems of sale and presenting francophone studies (7%), deep knowledge of the issue due to the specifically oriented content of a study programme and its practical orientation (7%), connection with practice because within the seminars there were managers from French companies who made it easier to get to closer practice in France (6%), students mobility within the frame Erasmus respectively study stays in French companies (4%), accepting of diploma by French companies (3%), experience which is not normally offered (3%), high theoretical contribution of offered subjects (2%), new view of a studied subject (2%), openness to a new culture and a form of education (2%), high quality of the programme (1%), education on a European level (1%), acquired knowledge from a foreign university of high quality without necessity to travel abroad (1%), personal and non-conventional access of the teachers (0,9%), obtaining a foreign diploma which increases the value of education (0,6%).

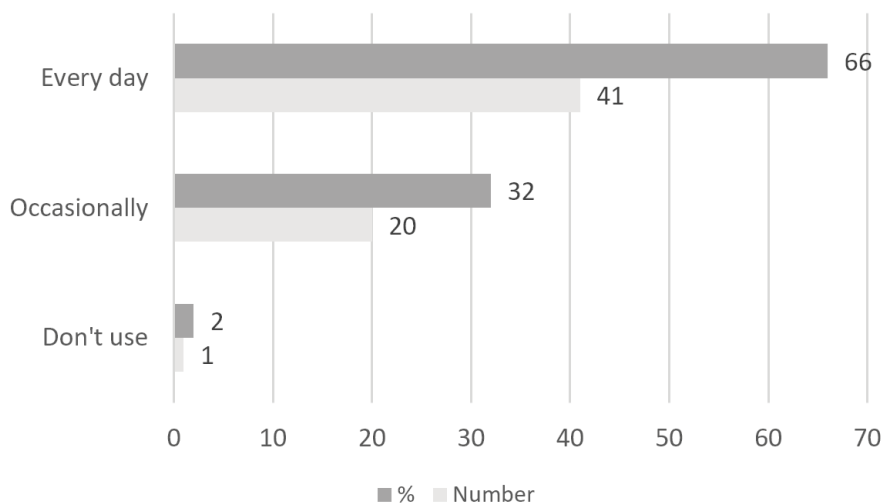
**Figure 4. Main arguments for study programme in French language**



Source: own study.

The third element of the research is the opinion of the graduates about use of French language, contribution of the programme to use it in practice and knowledge of current job positions of the graduates (figure 5). 66% of the graduates uses French language at work every day, 32% use French language occasionally (in personal contacts, respectively at work). 2% don't use French language because of maternity leave.

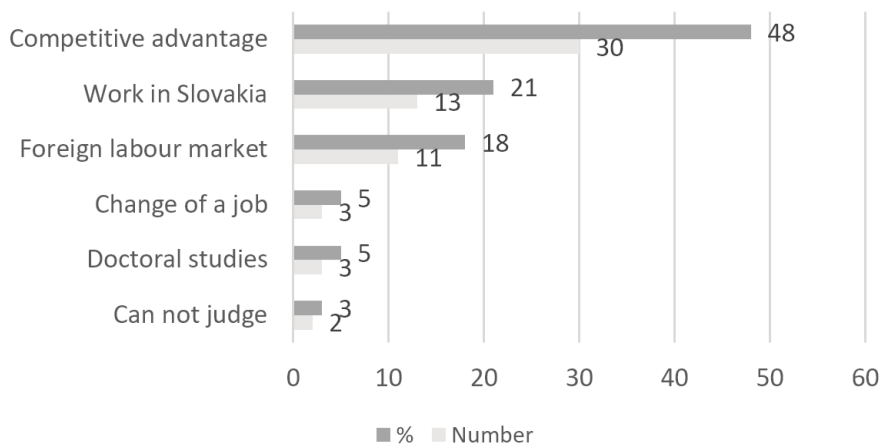
**Figure 5. Use of French language**



Source: own study.

According to the results of the research determination and courage to study in a foreign language creates a positive image among employers about future employee who hasn't obtained diploma in an easy way. Graduates who work in the spheres connected with study programme use acquired knowledge in practice and use them daily. The way of teaching according to the French educational system provides wider perspectives on the labour market and solved practical tasks. Graduates of the study programme from the point of view of the contribution of the programme for its use in practice (figure 6) emphasize that programme

**Figure 6. Benefit of a study programme for graduates in practice**



Source: own study.

Opinions of the students of concrete study programme are important for evaluation of its attractiveness through the students' application in practice and their other career. At the same time, they are one of the elements of innovation and improvement of the study subject in the future, based on cooperation with French universities as well as other universities in the European area. The attractiveness of the study programme is illustrated by the references of six former students.

Student 1: I chose a francophone study at the University of Economics because I was convinced that knowledge of a foreign language on a professional level is a good prerequisite for finding a good job abroad where I live and work.

Student 2: As a doctoral student at the Faculty of Trade at the University of Economics in Bratislava I use French language intensively during my research work. Among other things, francophone study has been a competitive advantage on the labor market and still helps me to differentiate myself from other young people who are already familiar with English.

Student 3: Study programme in French language sales management was the best choice from all other offered programmes in Slovak language. I convinced myself especially after finishing my studies when I was looking

for a job and found out that French language is highly valued on the labour market and I didn't have a problem to find a job. I have improved my professional language skills also thanks to study stay in France within Erasmus programme.

Student 4: To study on a francophone programme brings many advantages, new contacts, international experience with new culture and a new form of education. This experience increases an opportunity to find a good job abroad.

Student 5: I applied for a study at the University of Economics from the only reason – a possibility to study a francophone programme. Now, after finishing my studies I know that it was the best decision I have made.

Student 6: Francophone programme sales management enabled me to find an internship and later work in French technological park, Sophia Antipolis. Knowledge that offered me this programme has become a strong foundation for my position as a product manager. Practical skills that our French teachers have helped us during the study have been a great breakthrough in the professional field. Everyone who is looking for a career or study abroad is recommended to sign up for this programme. A double diploma is considered valuable in France and can open the door to multiple job opportunities

## Conclusion

Globalization of the market of educational institutions (Varghese, 2013, pp. 7–20), labour mobility in European Union, development of knowledge-based economy strengthen international and worldwide aspects of pedagogical activities of the Slovak universities.

Study in French language since 1994 at the University of Economics enable students to work in a francophone business world. Process of internationalisation of education supports cooperation between Slovak and French institutions and companies with creating synergies which lead to development of business and creative abilities of the students and create

innovative atmosphere (Kita, 2014, pp. 396-406) necessary for development of society (Soares, 2014). The importance of successful study programme in French language is highlighted by its link with European social fund, European higher education area (EHEA) initiated by Sorbonne declaration and Bologna process, Erasmus programme and strategy Europe 2020.

From this point of view the role of the university is to increase the quality and flexibility of education through pedagogical innovations and linking learning content to the needs of a knowledge society, support cooperation between universities, international research networks and private sector on the national and international basis. Ensuring quality of education strengthen academic values which create a mission of the university integrating its three essential functions: science, upbringing and education.

A system for studying students opinions is also an important element of faculty and university functioning because these opinions touch recruitment process, evaluation of didactical aspects of study programmes and are important elements of management. It provides information for decision making linked with image, brand of the faculty and university and their competitive position. It forms the core of internal relational marketing that links the faculty and the university with its students. It also affects commercial relationship of student and institution where the student becomes a client. Internationalization of education a study programme combining the French way of thinking with Slovak reality as a result of convergence in the sphere of culture and economy is not only contribution to the discussion about academic values and commercial aspects of the relationship student-institution but is also a concrete contribution to the increase of quality of education in foreign languages and education of students for multilingual and multicultural environment.

All subjects of the study programme are offered not only to Slovak students but also to the students within Erasmus programme and to students from the countries outside European Union. Study programme increases international openness of the University of Economics and develops mobility



which is a characteristic mark of the European space of university study according to which at least 20% of graduates must have study or professional preparation abroad. At the same time current cooperation with French universities creates the conditions for creating European universities which form network of universities from some European countries and create a system of education in which every student will study abroad and attend lectures at least in two foreign languages. Slovak universities are becoming places of excellent pedagogical innovations and research.

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