



Evaluation of analysed data from the Europe-wide consultation

Report from the SP1 working group

Languages for language-related industries and
professions



‘We would like to find out more about the changing character of the “language-related professions” and to investigate the relevance of current higher education provision to the skills required by organisations such as yours. In order to start a dialogue with employers and graduates, we have launched a Europe-wide consultation, which takes the form of two brief and relatively simple questionnaires – one designed for employers, the other for alumni.’

Letter from Wolfgang Mackiewicz to representatives of the language industry.



The consultation was conceived against a background of expansion of the language-related industries and professions in the last two decades: new countries and new languages in the EU, new universities, new technologies (more translation using new communication media), more translation in an expanding European market (boom period in the 90s), etc.

Questionnaire for employers

Private and public enterprises whose primary output is (foreign) 'language-related', and which employ graduates in the area of languages.

Questionnaire for employers

- your organisation
- your organisation's primary activities
- [your] employees' qualifications
- [your] recommendations for improvements to the programmes and communication between the HEIs and organisations such as yours

Questionnaire for graduates

in the area of languages who are actively using foreign languages as a major part of their job, designed to find out more about the relevance of their HE qualifications to the skills demanded by their current work.

Questionnaire for graduates

- A. personal and academic background
- B. work situation
- C. higher educational experience
- D. recommendations for changes to HE programmes in the area of languages

Translating	13
Language-related project management tasks	10
Language-related database management tasks	9
Interpreting	8.5
Editing	8.5
Terminology work	7
Technical documentation	7
Editing of web pages	6.5
Other language-related work	6
Sub-titling	4
Dubbing/ voice-over	4
Preparation of web pages	4
Non-language-related work	1

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Translating	13
Editing	10
Technical documentation	8
Language-related project management tasks	8
Interpreting	7
Terminology work	7
Non-language-related work	7
Language-related database management tasks	6
Preparation of web pages	4
Other language-related work	4
Editing of web pages	3
Sub-titling	1
Dubbing/ voice-over	1

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Review and discussion of the consultation data for employers

- Most companies founded after 1990
- There is an uneven spread in responses
- PL and RO are proportionally over-represented
- Significant national differences are likely in sectors such as sub-titling and dubbing



Main changes:

- ✓ Increasing specialisation
- ✓ Impact of new technologies
- ✓ Customers' quality concerns
- ✓ Increasing demand for revision



Conclusion based on the data:

The degree of satisfaction with preparation for employment is proportional to postgraduate qualification. Presumably, where postgraduate qualifications are not offered, private institutions take over provision.

Employees' features that contributed the most

- ✓ Perfect command of foreign and mother tongue
- ✓ Subject-matter expertise
(domain-specific knowledge)
- ✓ Knowledge of terminology, etc.
- ✓ Precision (accuracy in translation)
- ✓ Practice
- ✓ The *Other* category of response contained very diverse answers



With regard to the employers' perception of their employees' shortcomings, HEIs cannot offer all domains needed in order to remedy all potential shortcomings contingent to the wide variety of their companies' activities.



Employers may have responded in accordance with the particularities of their company's situation.

Two essential needs come out of the data:

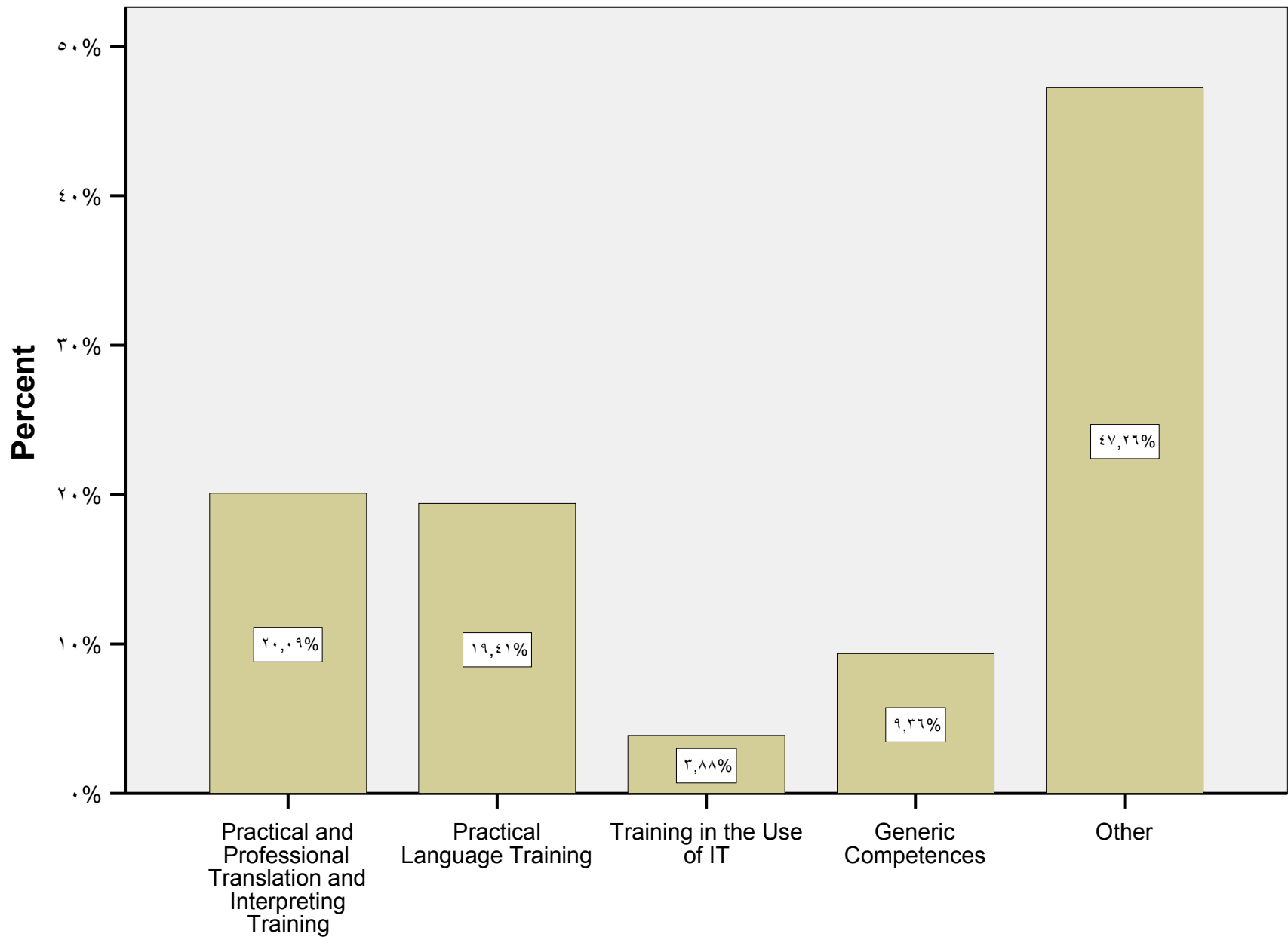
- The importance of practical training at university level
- Masters in translation and interpreting ('new' countries v. 'old'?)

Review and discussion of the consultation data for graduates

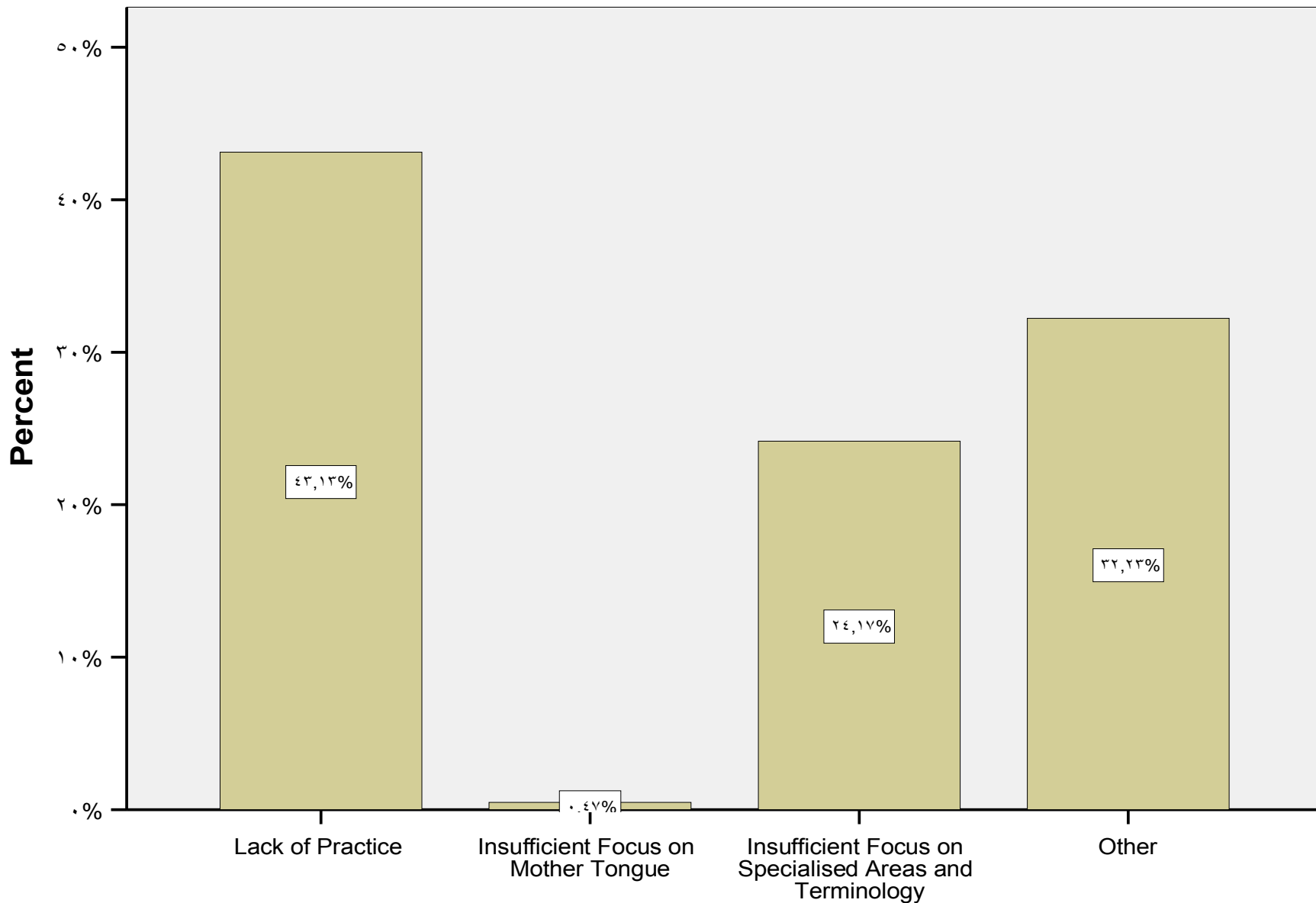
- The majority of respondents are young and female
- One in four (95/385) respondents have degrees from two different countries
- First degree: 1/4 T&I,
1/2 philology or foreign languages
- Second degree: 1/3 in each category
(adding “Other” as a category)



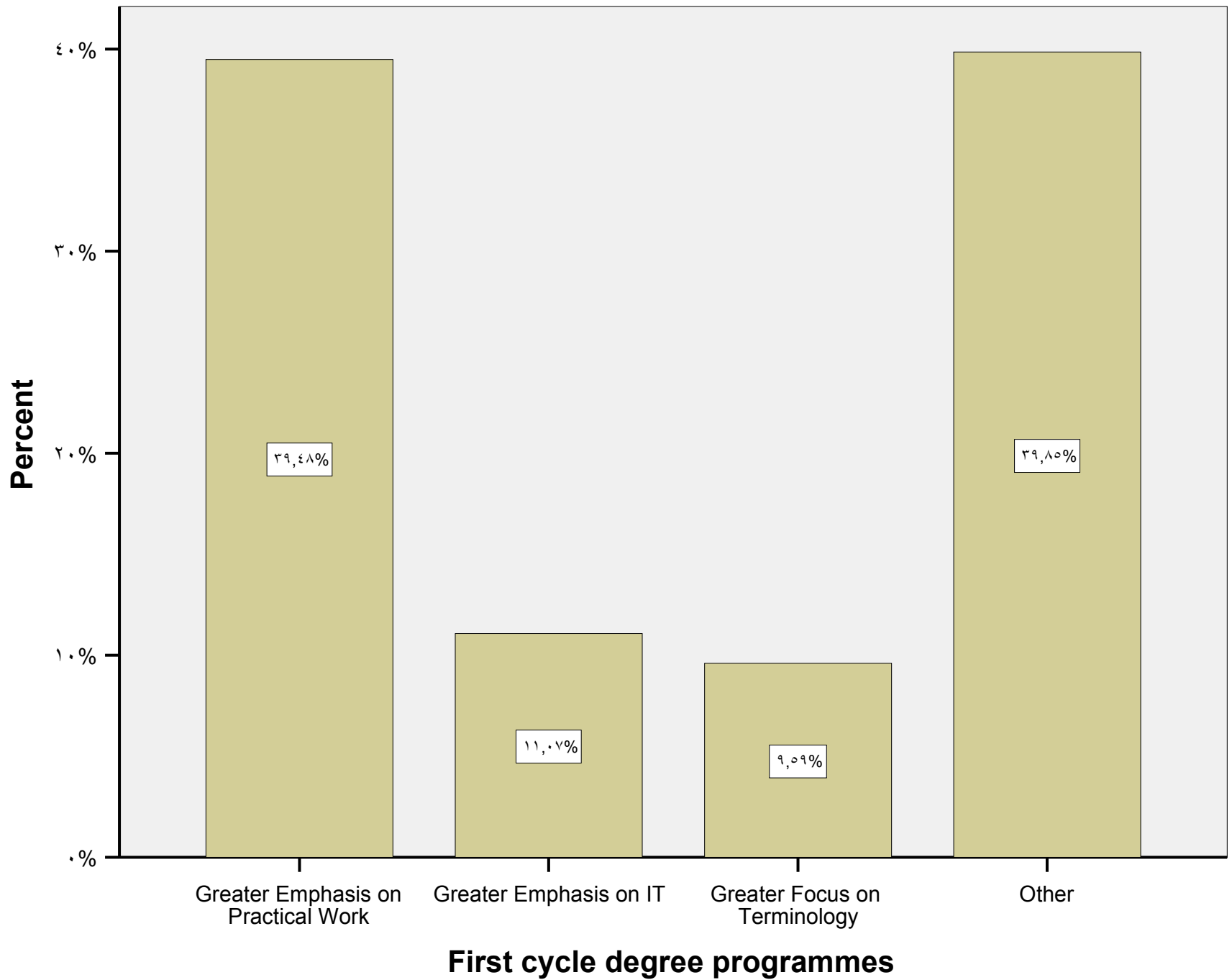
- ✓ Responses are generally positive regarding preparedness.
- ✓ Responses show what is often missing from course programmes and is much needed.

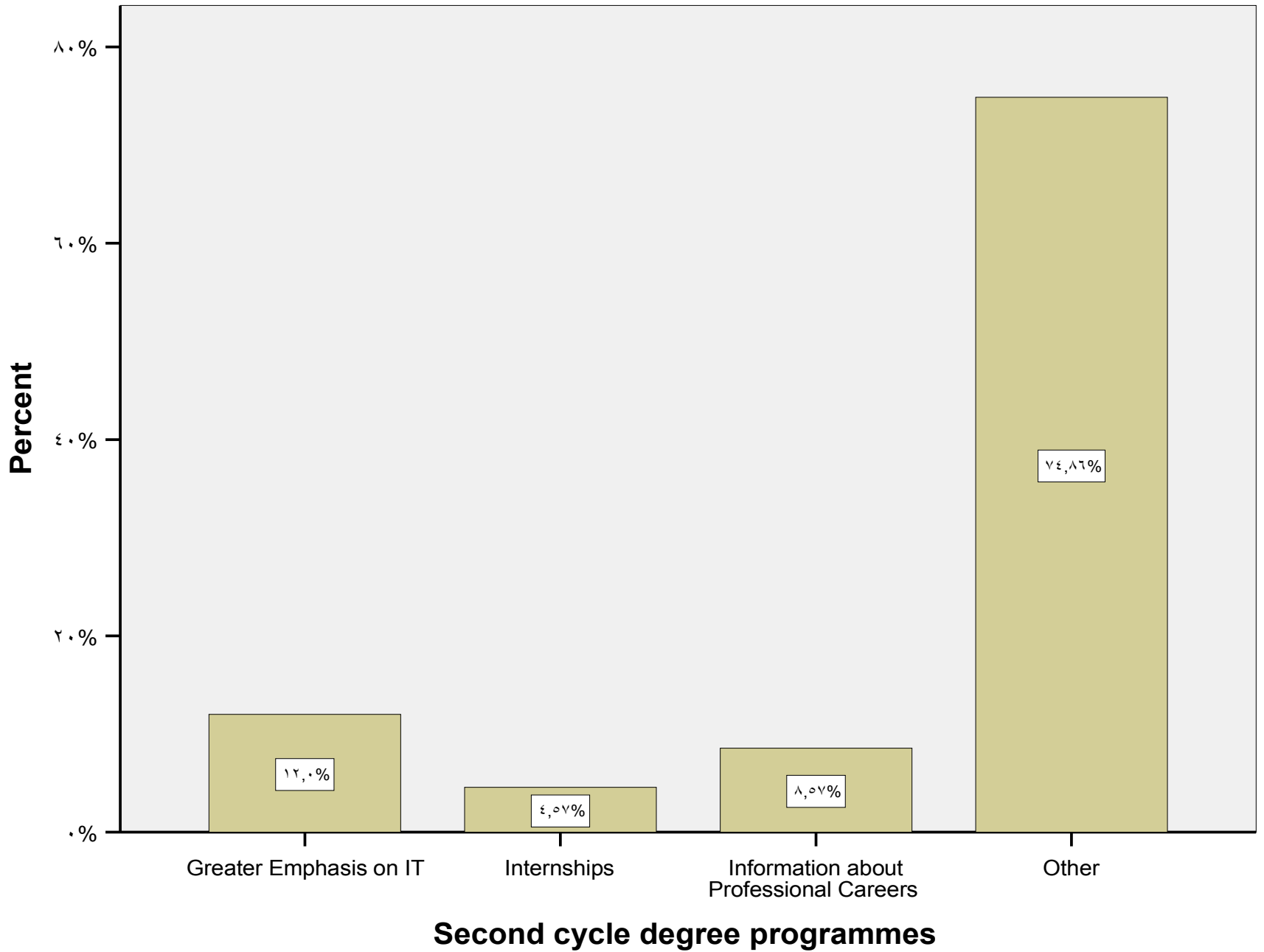


Up to 5 aspects of HE programme(s) which prepared you most effectively for your job



Most serious shortcomings of your HE programme(s) in relation to language-related skills





General observation

Highly subjective personal experiences and, in some cases, frustrations, appear to be recorded in some of the consultation data rather than the more objective comments and recommendations that were sought.

Comparisons of responses to selected questions

Qs.11 and 8.:

Translating and other language-related jobs which used to be done (quite a lot) by philology graduates are being taken over more and more by translation graduates.

Comparisons of responses to selected questions

Qs.13 and 18.:

Data Confirm Synthesis Report. Data show, for example, that lack of practical work in HE courses was noted particularly by those carrying out terminology work.

Final conclusions

The issues mentioned would be important for all degree programmes leading to competences under the label of "language expert", including T&I. Depending on the specific profile of the (2nd cycle) programme, focus should be on specific competences and skills (learning outcomes) that are the most important for that particular profile.

Final conclusions

These profiles may comprise elements from the other profiles (e.g. language revision and editing or subtitling as an element in a translation degree), but each programme should have a clear profile that enables students and employers to distinguish between the different programmes offered (at different universities).

We cannot produce a prototype curriculum that would go for all "language expert" degree programmes.