

# **The Specifics of Speaking English in Czech Business Administration (The Needs of Speakers)**

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## **ABSTRAKT**

Cílem této bakalářské práce je identifikovat jazykové potřeby mluvčích angličtiny v české manažerské praxi. Teoretická část práce je zaměřena na výuku angličtiny jako cizího jazyka v České republice, dále charakterizuje obchodní angličtinu v mezinárodní obchodní komunikaci a popisuje její roli v českém kontextu. Praktická část vychází z průzkumu jazykových potřeb studentů firemních kurzů obchodní angličtiny, doplněného o rozhovory s absolventy oboru Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi jako lidmi z praxe. Výsledky studie mohou sloužit jako základ pro tvorbu studijního plánu lektorům obchodní angličtiny nebo vedení řízení lidských zdrojů a vzdělávání ve firmách.

Klíčová slova: angličtina jako cizí jazyk, obchodní angličtina, jazykové potřeby, česká manažerská praxe, obchodní komunikace

## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this bachelor's thesis is to identify English language needs of speakers in Czech Business Administration. The theoretical part is focused on learning English as a foreign language in the Czech Republic, the characteristics of Business English in international business communication and its role in the Czech context. The practical part is based on the research conducted on language needs analysis of Business English company course students, complemented of interviews with professionals and university graduates of the study program English for Business Administration. The findings of the study may serve Business English teachers or Human Resources Management as a base for creating the syllabus.

Keywords: EFL, BE, Language needs, Czech Business Administration, business communication

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, intercultural communication is bread and butter in the world of business. The English language is a vital tool of business communication and is considered as language of science, technology and media. Regarding the Czech Republic, the EU member country located in central Europe, with ten million inhabitants speaking Czech, the knowledge of at least one international language is, for the Czech people, necessary to stand successfully in today's highly competitive labour market. As a reaction, English company courses became a big trend in recent years, aiming to engage more employees in learning and using foreign languages as a tool in business communication, to become a recognized company with a respectable, wide portfolio of satisfied customers from all over the world. Therefore, the needs of speakers must be identified to meet the demands effectively.

This thesis is divided into two parts. The theoretical part is focused on determination of two main topics. Firstly, the concept of learning English is outlined, including chapters regarding English as a lingua franca, defining learning English as a foreign language in the Czech Republic and providing the overview of most common mistakes made by Czech learners. Secondly, the phenomenon of Business English as an essential part of business communication is characterized, followed by chapter presenting the function of English for Business Administration in the Czech context.

The practical part consists of methodology and results section. In the methodology section there are defined methods, introduced participants, chosen instruments and the procedure described for this research. In the result section there is data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews discussed and analysed.

The aim of the practical analysis is to identify English language needs of speakers in Czech business administration. The focus group are English learners, who are already part of the workforce. They are students of Business English company courses. For the practical part, three hypotheses and two research questions are stated. The main objective of this study is to validate or refute the following hypotheses (H) and find answers for the following research questions (RQ):

H1: The speakers who spent some time abroad in contact with native speakers have more self-confidence in their English communication abilities.

H2: The speakers prefer using short and concise structures to get the message across in business communication.

H3: The most common mistakes of speakers are made with grammar.

RQ1: Does the study program English for Business Administration provide the graduates with a solid base for work in Czech business administration in an international context?

RQ2: What are the needs of speakers in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation?

## **I. THEORY**

# 1 LEARNING ENGLISH

## 1.1 English as a Lingua Franca

Since English language is spreading all around the world and becoming a global or an international language during last decades, it can be perceived as a lingua franca. Seidlhofer (2011, 7) defines English as a lingua franca (ELF) as “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option”. It stands for a language, which is agreed, adopted and used as a common language between speakers whose mother tongues are different. Nowadays, especially in international business communication, ELF serves as a bridge in interaction between communities.

Seidlhofer (2011, 2–3) suggests that English became the international language in two different ways. Firstly, as a result of colonization, it has been spread by native speakers to many regions of the world. Secondly, English has been acquired by people from all over the world learning it as an additional one to their first language. Both have helped English to become the predominant international language of 21<sup>st</sup> century, being included in the school curricula globally.

Additionally, English is the third largest language by number of native speakers, right after Mandarin and Spanish. According to Crystal’s data from 2003, there were 320–380 million people who spoke English as a first language (also known as native speakers), approximately 300–500 million people who spoke English as a second language and finally almost one billion people who spoke English as a lingua franca or foreign language. Until today, the figures are still growing, and it is expected to continue increasing. What is also important to mention is the fact that these figures are roughly estimated and cannot be accurately defined due to lack of data, poorly stated criteria and methods for research. Moreover, the key indicator showing the assessment of knowledge of language is not defined clearly. There are also many varieties of English, languages derived from English such as creole or Pidgin, which are variable and these speakers cannot be counted (Crystal 2003, 67).

However, the existence of global language is necessary, even though there are three arguable points of view shared among people regarding this fact. Firstly, people, whose mother tongue is English, can feel proud but also anxious, realizing its power to be spread. Secondly, people, whose mother tongue is any other language than English, can sense a big opportunity in learning this language, providing them with a better position and a higher

paying job. Language skills are perceived as valuable and often people who have them are given preference over people who do not. Thirdly, people, whose mother tongue has been pushed down by English and now no longer exists, feel anger and fear of English, destroying their cultural heritage (Crystal 2003, 2–3).

## **1.2 English as a Foreign Language**

These two following key concepts are widely used in linguistics and English language teaching community. For learning and using English as an additional language in non-English speaking country the term is English as a foreign language, abbreviated as EFL. The acronym related to this one is TEFL which means teaching English as a foreign language. As an example, speaking about Czech people, learning English in the Czech Republic, where English is not generally spoken as a main language of communication, for them it is adequate to use term EFL learners. Basically, the EFL notion can be also applied in the Middle-East countries, midland Europe or China. In most European countries, English is generally the first foreign language taught at schools (Crystal 2003, 2–3).

Under the term English as a Second language (ESL) it is as understood learning and using English in an English-speaking country, usually by people, whose mother tongue is not English. These can be immigrants, visitors or foreign workers in countries such as Great Britain, the USA, Australia or Canada. The appropriate acronym for teaching English as a Second language is TESL (Crystal 2003, 2–3).

Many sources point out that there is a significant difference between EFL and ESL which should be stated, as these two terms are frequently interchanged and thus can be misunderstood. The main distinction between EFL and ESL teaching are the methods, which must be correctly selected and used to meet the objectives of the course and fit the students' profile. In EFL classrooms, students share a common language other than English and they can communicate with each other without using English. The fact which is disadvantageous is that these students are limited in their use of English outside the classroom, so an essential priority is to focus on student's engagement in lessons. In contrast, students in ESL classroom usually come from different backgrounds and do not share a common language. They are faced with everyday use of ELF, both inside and outside the classroom, so they are externally motivated to gain new practical language skills to make their living in an English-speaking country easier and integrate into society (LinguaServe GbR 2013).

### 1.2.1 EFL vs ELF

The difference between these two concepts regards the speakers present in communication. On the one hand, EFL can be actively learnt and studied by non-native English speakers (non-NESs), both as a language as such and cultural associations related to it. EFL learners are usually driven by their own desire to understand foreign cultures, have a passion for acquiring foreign language in order to be able to communicate with native English speakers (NESs) (Jenkins 2015, 44–5).

On the other hand, ELF is guided by quite different needs and wants. It is spreading in various and varied forms and adapted to the needs of intercultural communication, used in situations such as business meetings attended by several participants from different countries. The common language is shared by all interactants and the main goal is to provide them with the most comprehensible communication in order to achieve the objectives of the meeting (Seidlhofer 2011, 17–18). Thus, in ELF communication it is expected that non-NESs learn English to use it in intercultural communication which can but does not have to include NES. As a result of this interaction in an intercultural environment, it is suggested that NESs usually lack the intercultural skills so the non-NESs are favoured (Jenkins 2015, 44–5).

## 1.3 Learning English as a Foreign Language

Krashen in his *Theory of Second Language Acquisition* states that “language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules and does not require tedious drill” (Gallagher 2015). Researchers claim there are two distinct concepts of studying language in adulthood; Language Learning and Language Acquisition. Language learning is typical for a conscious study of grammar, definitions and vocabulary. On the contrary, language acquisition is done by experiencing language subconsciously and understanding intuitively through context (Educareer 2013). Krashen argues that “acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding” (Gallagher 2015).

Speaking of second language acquisition, Krashen (1981, 100) suggests that in language teaching programmes, there are usually four components or skills distinguished, namely writing, speaking, listening and reading through which is the foreign language taught. These four skills of language learning define the language competence of an

individual, allow the person to comprehend and produce the language for effective interpersonal communication, they are interconnected and cannot be separated. According to English EFL, the initial purpose of language learning is to improve these four skills of speakers. The final purpose is to enable the speaker to use the language and practice (English EFL 2014).

The four language skills are classified according to the direction of communication (in and out) also known as input (reception) and output (production), and the method of communication (spoken and written). These four language skills are sometimes called *macro skills*, whereas grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary are called *micro skills* (EnglishClub, n.d.). Morehouse (2017) described the four language skills as follows:

Listening is a receptive skill which individuals acquire first in their native language, requiring usage of their ears and brain for the comprehension of spoken language to them. In terms of foreign language learning, listening activities enlarge learner's vocabulary and listening comprehension.

Speaking is a productive skill which individuals acquire second in their native language and it means a production of language through sound. In foreign language learning it relates to listening, as the learner communicates with speaker and responds in a dialogue or communicative activities and learns how to express his thoughts.

Reading is a receptive skill which individuals acquire third in their native language and it means comprehension of a written text. In foreign language learning, learners are gaining information through reading activities, learn the speed of speech when reading out loud and see the structure of the language (Morehouse 2017).

Writing is classified as a productive skill which individuals acquire fourth in their native language. It means that written symbols represent the spoken language. In foreign language learning, writing activities such as translation, text rewriting, shortening or enlarging are very helpful for text understanding and production.

Regardless of the skills learnt in the classrooms and language courses, Krashen claims that "in the real world, conversations with sympathetic native speakers who are willing to help the acquirer understand are very helpful" (Gallagher 2015).

The concept of language needs was originally presented in the first works of the Council of Europe, in those by R Richterich (*A model for the definition of language needs of adults learning a modern language*, 1972) and later by R Richterich and J-L Chancerel (*Identifying needs of adults learning a foreign language*, 1980). It refers to the linguistic resources which language learners need to successfully cope with the forms of

communication in which they are going to be involved, either in the short or medium term. The needs identification is a process of gathering data from learners, regarding what uses will be made of the language learnt. This data obtained then serves as the priority base for creating a content what should be taught and what is required in courses. Especially when speaking of needs identification process in adult language courses which are not part of the school education. This leads to creation of tailor-made courses in order to meet the requirements and expectations of learners. Nevertheless, the analysis of language needs should be done by specialists (Council of Europe, n.d.).

As for the techniques used for the language needs analysis specification, it can be a questionnaire given to learners, an interview done with the learners or native speakers who are in contact with them, or samples of their speaking or writing production in the context concerned. These techniques mentioned above are vital for needs identification considering professional activities, which means analysing competences needed for a given job or professional assignment. There are two approaches of needs identification which should be considered by teachers. The first one is from the point of view of business managers, who as promoters of employee education expect immediate and practical results so an effective methodology should be chosen. The second one is from the point of view of the learners, who tend to approach their needs based on previous experience of learning and educational culture, if there was any. Finally, the aim is to balance the outcomes of these two approaches involving varied expectations, language needs interpretation and find an objective solution (Council of Europe, n.d.).

### **1.3.1 Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

Majority of Business English courses take place directly in companies and the lessons are taught by either Native English-Speaking teachers (NESTs) or non-Native English-Speaking teachers (non-NESTs). The non-NESTs are these, for who English is a second or foreign language, who work in an EFL environment, whose students are monolingual groups of learners, who speak the same native language as their students (Celce-Murcia 2001, 433). Naturally, there are certain distinctions between these two kinds of teachers which must be considered. Consequently, the teacher's performance can vary and be perceived as different by students. In this section, the differences in teaching behaviour between NESTs and non-NESTs perceived by students based on a survey carried out by Reves and Medgyes in 1994 will be described. This survey included 325 teachers from 11



countries, 86% of them were non-NESTs, 14% were NESTs. Table 1 taken from Celce-Murcia (2001, 435) demonstrates the perceived differences in teaching behaviour.

Table 1 - Differences between NESTs and non-NESTs

NESTs	non-NESTs
Own use of English	
Speak better English	Speak poorer English
Use real language	Use bookish language
Use English more confidently	Use English less confidently
General attitude	
Adopt a more flexible approach	Adopt a more guided approach
Are more innovative	Are more cautious
Are less empathetic	Are more empathetic
Attend to perceived needs	Attend to real needs
Have far-fetched expectations	Have realistic expectations
Are more casual	Are stricter
Are less committed	Are more committed
Attitude to teaching the language	
Are less insightful	Are more insightful
Focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fluency</li> <li>• Meaning</li> <li>• Language in use</li> <li>• Oral skills</li> <li>• Colloquial registers</li> </ul>	Focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accuracy</li> <li>• Form</li> <li>• Grammar rules</li> <li>• Printed word</li> <li>• Formal registers</li> </ul>
Teach items in context	Teach items in isolation
Prefer free activities	Prefer controlled activities
Favour group work/pair work	Favour frontal work
Use a variety of materials	Use a single textbook
Tolerate errors	Correct/punish for errors
Set fewer tests	Set more tests
Use no/less L1	Use more L1

Resort to no/less translation	Resort to more translation
Assign less homework	Assign more homework
Attitude to teaching culture	
Supply more cultural information	Supply less cultural information

#### 1.4 Czech EFL learners

Currently, English language is taught and learnt as the main foreign language in the Czech educational system (MŠMT 2013, 120). Nevertheless, the political and historical conditions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had a significant impact on learning foreign languages. The situation regarding learning foreign languages was different till 1989 due to the Communist era. At that time, mainly Russian and German languages were taught at schools as compulsory foreign languages (Nekvapil and Sherman 2009, 125). However, in 2006 the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport created a new concept of language learning called *The National Plan*, which states that foreign language is compulsory from the third to the ninth grade of primary school education and the second foreign language is compulsory to begin no later than the eighth grade (MŠMT 2013, 120). For maturita exam, which is the final graduation exam at high schools, it is aimed to achieve B1 (intermediate) level in English as the general objective (MŠMT 2014, 5). Besides that, English language is also taught at pre-schools and leisure time centres due to a high demand and on the impulse from the parents' side.

The Czech Republic is a monolingual country so there is only one official language, Czech. The Czechs are EFL learners, so teachers must use appropriate teaching approach, method and technique in compliance with TEFL. As can be seen in the previous chapter 1.3.1 providing the table demonstrating differences in teaching of NESTs and non-NESTs, it is suggested that Czech learners as EFL learners might be also affected by these attitudes and it can have an impact on their language performance.

Regarding the language skills of Czech adults, Falvey (2011) claims that Czech people have an above average need for foreign language, however, their language skills may not be good enough. He also claims that there might be more jobs than there are linguistically qualified job-seekers to take them. The English First English Proficiency Index compared the level of English proficiency among adults in 88 countries based on data obtained from EF Standard English Test 2017. According to data from 2018, the results show that the Czech Republic ranked 20<sup>th</sup> worldwide with the classification of 'high

proficiency'. In comparison with other European countries, the Czech Republic ranked 17<sup>th</sup> out of 32 European countries included in the index. Compared to data from 2013 and 2014 when the Czech Republic was classified as 'moderate only', it is suggested that the Czech adults have improved the most (BD Staff 2018).

#### 1.4.1 Most Common Mistakes of Czech EFL Learners

For non-NESs and EFL learners is very common to make mistakes during the learning process. This might be caused by the subconscious implementation of rules from their native language. On the other hand, this issue can occur vice versa, meaning they might accidentally use English rules in their language, which can negatively influence the whole learning process. There are two articles discussing this issue from 2012, *20 Common English Mistakes Made by Czech People* by English Current and *A Few Common English Mistakes Made by Native Czech Speakers AND How to Fix Them* by Derek Patterson. Both were written by NESTs. In these are presented the 20 most common mistakes made by Czech learners observed by NESTs during period of teaching English in the Czech Republic.

Based on the data provided, it can be assumed that the most commonly made mistakes refer to grammar errors. Without any commitment, both authors pointed out that Czech people use the present continuous too often, mistake definite for indefinite articles, have issues with prepositions of place and subject verb agreement. Also, they mentioned mistakes regarding countable and uncountable nouns and pronouns.

Lexical errors occurred as the second most common on the list. Czech learners mistake verbs teach for learn and say for tell. Besides that, there are pairs of words such as popular/favourite, check/control, borrow/lend, loose/lose and arm/hand which are often used incorrectly in the context. Collocations and phrasal verbs appeared to be very problematic also.

Considering phonetics and phonology, many mistakes are made by Czech people in pronunciation of specific English sounds such as /v, w/ and /ð, θ/. According to Patterson (2012, 9), the most troublesome words which are frequently mispronounced by Czech people are *parents, suit, war, desert* and *hotel*. The other author states that Czech people cannot distinguish two distinct sounds /v, w/ in words such as *village, volleyball* or *wave* (English current 2012).

Finally, very common mistakes are related to syntax, such as wrong word order in indirect questions or to stylistics, such as difference between words fun and funny. These

findings were considered for stating research questions and hypotheses. All these aforementioned issues are quite relevant to Business English, due to the fact these problems still occur in the day to day business communication between company representatives. Business English as a phenomenon will be discussed more in depth in the following chapter 2.

## 2 BUSINESS ENGLISH

English is recognized as an international language for business. Recently, English has been used for communication across cultures in professional and workplace settings, therefore many studies have been done to examine cross-cultural and intercultural business interactions (Koester 2010, 122). As a result of globalization, Crystal argues that “the need for a global language is particularly appreciated by the international academic and business communities, and it is here that the adoption of a single lingua franca is most in evidence, both in lecture-rooms and board-rooms, as well as in thousands of individual contacts being made daily all over the globe” (Crystal 2003, 13).

Because of the importance of using one shared tool in business communication around the globe, companies require English knowledge from their employees. 91% of employers in international companies stated that English is highly relevant in their performance (Martins 2017, 61). Some of the employers require foreign language skills at certain level of proficiency from their employees while entering the company. The others are willing to offer company language courses in order to make improvements. These company courses are either fully paid by the employer, so they are considered employee benefits, or the employees contribute with some amount of money.

### 2.1 Characteristics

Business English (BE) is a form of English which is suited to and used in business environments and plays a significant role in business situations. It differs from the so-called General English in many linguistic features which will be described below. It is a part of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which means teaching and learning specific skills needed for a particular purpose. To be more exact, BE differs from other varieties of ESP in the fact, that it is often mix of specific content (related to a given area or job) and general content (related to ability to communicate more effectively in business situations) (Ellis and Johnson 1994, 3). BE is a specialism within English language learning and teaching, a variant of international language, which focuses on vocabulary and topics related to and used in the business world, finance, banking, import/export, insurance, trade, international relations and various industries (Jiang 2015, 29). For setting a BE course, the needs analysis, syllabus design, course design and materials selection are an important part of the process (Ellis and Johnson 1994, 3). BE is studied mainly by non-NESs, who need to do business with English speaking countries or non-English speaking countries using English as ELF. However, Business English as a lingua franca (BELF) is considered

different from English as a native language and thus native speakers must learn it (Martins 2017, 62). In fact, it is estimated that approximately 75% of business communication worldwide is done between non-NESs (EnglishClub, n.d.). Jiang (2015, 30) suggests that BE also serves as communication between companies, so it provides them with a better understanding of one another.

The typical situations in which BE is used in are business meetings, sales presentations, negotiations, business correspondence, business reports and executive summaries (EnglishClub, n.d.). Therefore, the learners of BE should be taught the following skills. As for the speaking skills, topics related to small talk, socializing, speaking on the telephone, presentations, meetings and negotiating should be covered. As for the writing skills, techniques and vocabulary for business correspondence, contracts, reports, CVs, agendas and minutes should be introduced to learners. Besides that, intercultural training is a necessary part of BE lessons (Frendo 2005, 61–95).

As for the needs of BE learners, Ellis and Johnson (1994, 5) suggest two types of students to be distinguished. The first group are the pre-experience learners, defined as students and university graduates with incomplete knowledge gained from books, lacking connection between theory and practice and not aware of their language needs, regarding the communication in business real-life situations. The second group are the job-experienced learners, who possess some practical experience and are influenced by their educational backgrounds. This second group of learners can, thanks to experience gained in job communication, perceive their strengths and weaknesses so they might be able to specify them and work on their improvement.

Regarding the specific linguistic features of BE, these are based on the purpose of BE use. As stated above, BE is mainly used in business communication so it shares specific features. Business is competitive, time is money and so is BE. According to experienced business writing coach Spencer (2017), clarity in communication with use of words and basic grammar structures is crucial. In business writing, it is vital to be as clear as possible, leave no space for interpretation in order to achieve the goal, to do business. The other feature of BE is directness and shortness. The vocabulary used in business context is usually straightforward and direct. The last feature is simple grammar, time and money saving but effective, using time indicators to make sure actions are done in the correct order.

## 2.2 Czech Context

Since English is the official language in many multinational corporations with branches in the Czech Republic, the knowledge of English of professional level is needed in order to be successful in the labour market as an individual. It is also said that English as a widespread language is a language of technology, business, research and media. For that reason, Czech tertiary education system reacts on the demand as follows.

English for Business Administration is a full-time bachelor study program, the only available in the Czech Republic of this kind. Faculty of Humanities, which was founded in 2007, at Tomas Bata University in Zlín, has been granted the accreditation for this study program and it has been valid since 2004. English for Business Administration is taught at Department of Modern Languages and Literature (Portal IS/STAG, n.d.). This three-year long program offers a balanced combination of philological courses and business subjects which will be presented in more detail below. The philological subjects are mainly taught in English and the business ones are taught in Czech. Selected subjects are taught by native speakers. This study program is intended to be attended by the Czech and Slovak students.

The educational goal of this study program is stated as the aim to graduate students both with a C1 (advanced) English language level of spoken and written competence and knowledge in management-related fields. Among the gained competences belong communication skills and the broadest familiarity with culture of English-speaking countries as possible (Portal IS/STAG, n.d.).

Regarding the graduate profile, the graduates are expected to be able to translate economic texts, conduct business meetings in English or assist as interpreters at such meetings. They should be able to use their language and cultural competences for any kind of professional communication in multilingual or multicultural contexts and environments. As mentioned above, the combination of the knowledge of language and economics should enable the graduates to lead and participate at meetings with foreign business partners, to promote and present a company, product or service, and produce business documents in foreign language at the appropriate level. For the future employment, the graduates are given basics to put theoretical knowledge into practice either in further master's study program or for entering a profession (Portal IS/STAG, n.d.).

As for the positions suggested as suitable for graduates, they can apply for a job in private companies or state institutions where they can apply acquired knowledge and skills and work as assistants, managers or executive officers. Further, graduates can apply for

jobs in local and state administration, international companies, financial institutions, foreign trade, tourism, advertising or event agencies, communication agencies or companies and institutions communicating mainly in English. Finally, the graduates can find positions in a lower management, endeavour to start a career as translators or interpreters in mainly economic field or start their own business as freelancers (Portal IS/STAG, n.d.).

As for the admission requirements, the applicants are accepted based on the achieved results of National Comparative Tests in a specialized English test provided by Scio company. Nevertheless, the test can be replaced by a certificate at least B2, not older than 5 years, or matura exam in English, also not older than 5 years (Fakulta humanitních studií 2018).

Considering the philological courses, they can be divided into three groups: linguistic, literary cultural studies and practical.

The linguistic courses are namely Phonetics and Phonology, Introduction to the Study of Language, Lexicology, Morphology, Stylistics, Syntax and Analysis of Technical Texts. All these courses are compulsory, and the goal is to provide students with deeper insight how the language itself works, what are the origins, functions and use from the linguistic point of view (Portal IS/STAG, n.d.). These courses are essential to complete and serve as a base for further studies.

The literary cultural studies compulsory courses are namely British Studies, American Studies, Introduction to Literature and Film, British Literature Survey and American Literature Survey. In the third year, the students choose from several optional courses such as American Drama, American and British Short Story etc. Completing these courses helps students to understand historical and cultural context of English-speaking countries (Portal IS/STAG, n.d.).

The practical compulsory courses are namely two semester Practical English, Presentation Skills, four semester Business English, Basics of Translation, Translation Seminar, Practical Training, Project, Commercial Correspondence and Computer Aided Translation. In the third year, students choose three subjects in total from several optional courses such as Intercultural communication, Verbal manipulation in communication, Basics of Interpreting or CAE Preparation Course (Portal IS/STAG, n.d.). Acquired skills and gained knowledge by completing these subjects serve as a springboard to the successful future career.



Considering the business courses, there is a wide range of subjects from management and economic field such as Economics, Management, Enterprise Economics, Marketing, Basics of Accounting, Psychology for Management Profession, Basics of Finance and Personnel Management (Portal IS/STAG, n.d.).

Additionally, throughout the three years of study, the students choose from German, French, Russian and Chinese as their second foreign language (Fakulta humanitních studií, n.d.). With advanced English skills, the students have knowledge and ability to speak additional language, so it makes them more attractive on the labour market.

## **II. ANALYSIS**

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

The aim of the methodological part of the thesis is to present information on conducting research. Firstly, the participants of the research are introduced. Secondly, the suitable method and instruments chosen for the study are determined. Finally, the procedure of the research is described.

#### **3.1 Participants**

The research includes 60 participants whose mother tongue is either Czech or Slovak. They are adults, both female and male employees of four various companies based in the Zlín region. All the participants regularly attend company Business English courses which are either taught by a native English-speaking teacher who is qualified by TOEFL certificate or a Czech teacher who is qualified by bachelor diploma of English philology. However, the length of study of English language of participants differs, which is shown later in the results section. The participants are expected to use English on everyday basis as a part of their job in business administration, even though they work on different positions and in various sectors of the corporations.

#### **3.2 Methods**

As Dörnyei (2007, 44) states, there are three types of method approaches:

- a) Qualitative Research
- b) Quantitative Research
- c) Mixed methods Research

The last type of method approaches mentioned above is defined as “some sort of a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods within a single research project” (Dörnyei 2007, 44). He also argues that by using both qualitative and quantitative approaches can be brought out the best of both paradigms, herewith combining quantitative and qualitative research strengths (Dörnyei 2007, 45). For this study was chosen a mixed methods research, aiming to gain as accurate, valuable and specific results as possible.

##### **3.2.1 Questionnaire**

The first instrument used was a questionnaire, one-page sheet consisting of 13 questions in total, created by the researcher. From the point of data analysis, eight questions are

considered as quantitative, five questions as qualitative. The questionnaire is divided into three sections:

- Demographic data
- English language competence
- Stay in English speaking country

In the first section, there are seven questions aiming at demographic data, such as gender (Q1), age group (Q2), highest education (Q3), current specialty (Q4), number of years learning English (Q5), contact with a native speaker (Q6) and frequency of contact with a native speaker (Q7). Questions 1, 2, 3 and 6 are closed questions with only one correct answer; Q1 and Q6 are dichotomous, Q2 and Q3 are of multiple choice, Q4, Q5 and Q7 are open-ended questions. The data from the first section were analysed quantitatively.

The second section consisting of four open-ended questions is dedicated to English language competence of participants data, more specifically searching for information regarding the problematic aspects of using English (Q8), certain aspects of using English (Q9), the most common mistakes made in English (Q10) and the needs of speakers in business English communication classified according to four language systems (Q11). In this section, the participants were asked to express their opinion shortly, accurately and clearly. The data from the second section was analysed qualitatively.

The third section is focused on the stay in English-speaking country data. It includes two questions. The first one is a closed-ended question asking about experiencing either study or work stay abroad (Q12). The second one and so the last one is a contingency open question following the previous one inquiring about concrete beneficial findings of the stay abroad (Q13). Q12 was analysed quantitatively, Q13 was analysed qualitatively.

### **3.2.2 Interview**

Interviews are classified as a type of a qualitative research method. According to Dörnyei (2007, 134–6), there are four main types of interviews:

- a) Single or multiple sessions
- b) Structured interviews
- c) Unstructured interviews
- d) Semi-structured interviews

For this research, a semi-structured interview method was chosen. This type of interview method is characteristic of a set of pre-prepared guiding questions and prompts; however, the format is open ended, and the interviewer not only guides and directs, but also makes the interviewee develop and elaborate on certain issues (Dörnyei 2007, 136). Considering this method, the interviewer prepared a few supplementary questions in advance and arranged the dates for meeting for interviews.

### 3.3 Procedure

The participants were given a questionnaire personally as a part of the lesson in December 2018. The questionnaires were in the Czech language in order to avoid any misunderstandings, to enable participants to express their opinions more easily and clearly and not to be limited by lack of vocabulary because of different language competence of participants. The teachers distributed the forms and they along with the students together went through each question to make sure all students understood it. Students then had 30 minutes to complete the survey in a written form. They were asked to answer each of the questions openly, honestly, truthfully and as well as they could. As agreed, the participants were asked to put their name on the paper. However, they were assured the surveys will not be published anywhere and the data will stay anonymous, as the questionnaire was created for academic purpose only. The completed surveys were collected and handed over by teachers to a researcher on the same day for further processing and evaluation. The results will be presented in the English language.

Thereafter, two respondents were chosen for an interview based on the findings from the questionnaire. It was found out that respondent n.11 and n.20 are graduates of the study program English for Business Administration at TBU in Zlín and they currently work in companies on the position related to business administration. The researcher contacted the two respondents, the date and time for the interviews were arranged, both were held in the first week of April 2019. Each interview took an hour; however, it was conducted in the Czech language. The interviews were recorded for further processing of the content as a research data. The recording was agreed on with the participants in advance. These two respondents, whose names were agreed not to be published, met personally with the researcher in Zlín and were asked these five main following questions:

1. How do you evaluate the study program overall?
2. What specifically did this study program give you that you need to use in practice?

3. Do you find the study program lacked some aspects that you need to use now in practice?
4. What would you change regarding the structure of the study program so it would be more beneficial to you now in practice?
5. Which of the things you learnt have you found the most helpful?

With each of these questions, they were asked several follow-up questions to develop their answers.

## 4 RESULTS

In this part of the thesis there will be demonstrated results from conducted research about the needs of learners of English in Czech business administration. As mentioned above, the study included 60 participants. Firstly, the questionnaire results divided into three main parts will be published and discussed. Secondly, the data and findings based on interviews conducted with the two participants will be presented. The purpose of this chapter is to validate or refute three stated hypotheses and answer two research questions.

### 4.1 Demographic Data

The first main part of the questionnaire investigated personal information about the participants. The participants were given seven questions regarding demographic data.

Figure 1 shows results from Q1 about gender. The sample included 39 male and 21 female participants.

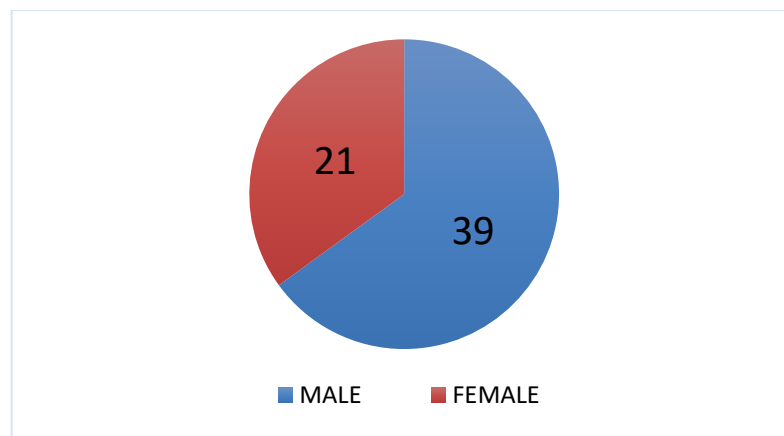


Figure 1 - Gender of participants

Figure 2 shows results from Q2 about age group. There was a scale containing five options of the age range. The most participants, exactly 27 belong to the age group between 26–35. Then 20 participants belong to the age group between 36–45 and 9 participants belong to the age group between 46–55. The least participants, exactly 2 belong to the age group between 18–25 and other 2 participants are older than 55.

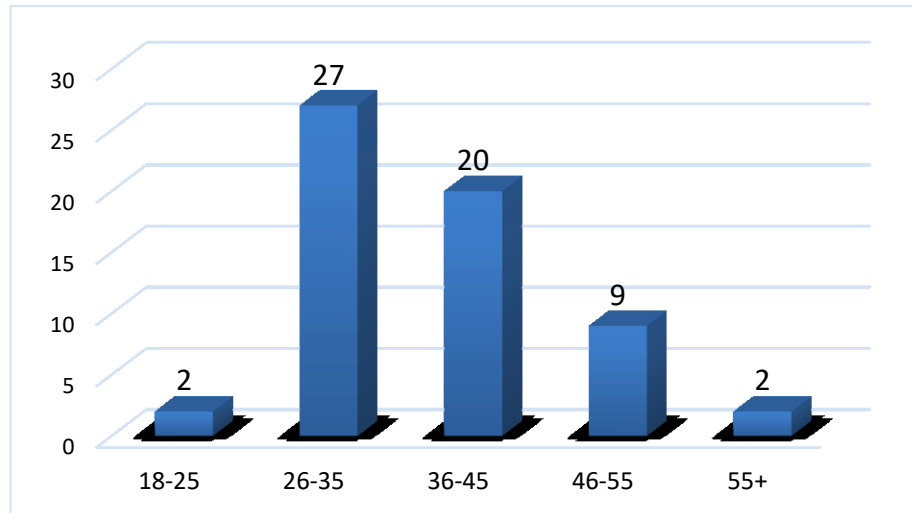


Figure 2 - Age group of participants

Figure 3 shows results from Q3 about the highest education. There was a scale containing five options. The most participants, exactly forty-four have a university degree. Fourteen participants have a high school diploma. Two participants have a higher education qualification. There were no participants with a basic education or with a vocational certificate participating in the study.

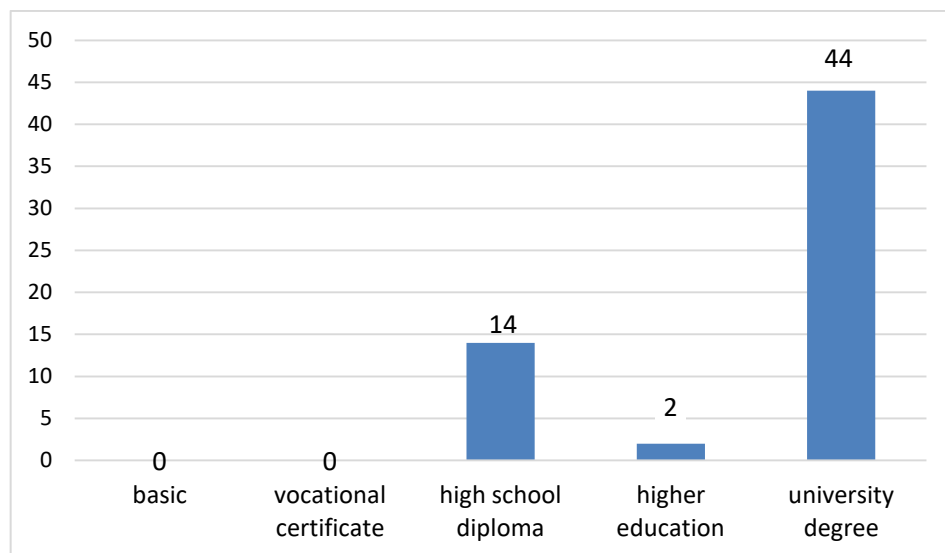


Figure 3 - Highest education of participants

Q4 inquired current specialty of the participants. Since it was an open-ended question, the answers were classified into eight categories according to shared characteristic features of the positions stated. The results show a quite wide range of positions. Figure 4 demonstrates that the most participants, exactly 13, work in the field of sales, export and



business. 12 participants work in the technological field, 11 participants work in mechanical engineering, 9 participants work in an IT field, 7 participants work in the economics or finance field, 3 participants work in marketing, 3 participants work in management and the least participants, exactly 2, work in human resources.

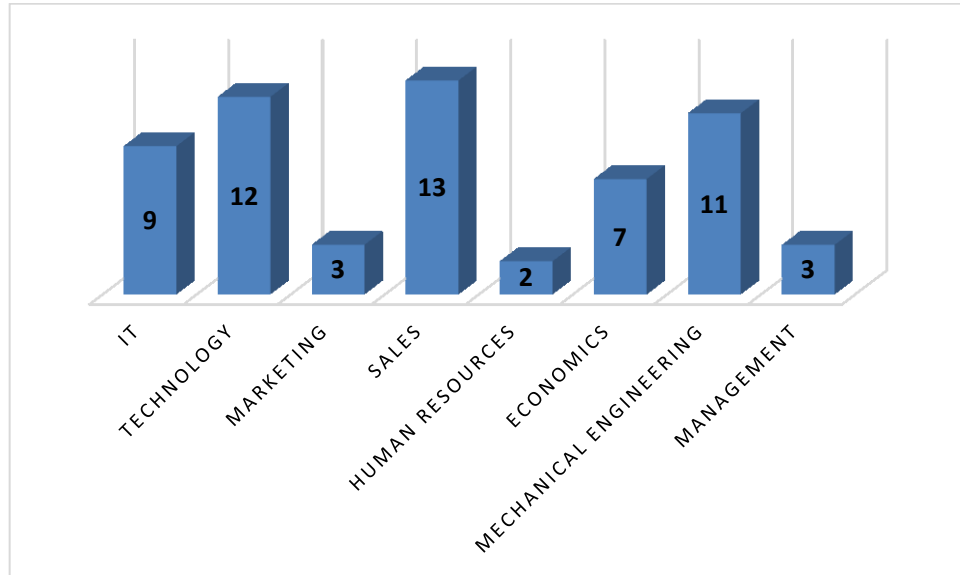


Figure 4 - Current specialty of participants

Q5 considered how many years the participants have learnt English. Due to very diverse answers obtained, it was suggested to introduce the border data and the average. Figure 5 shows that the top border is 35 years whereas the bottom border is 3 years only. The average length of learning English is approximately 17 years, as illustrated in Figure 6. Considering the average of 17 years shown in Figure 6, it is assumed that participants obtain at least elementary English language skills.

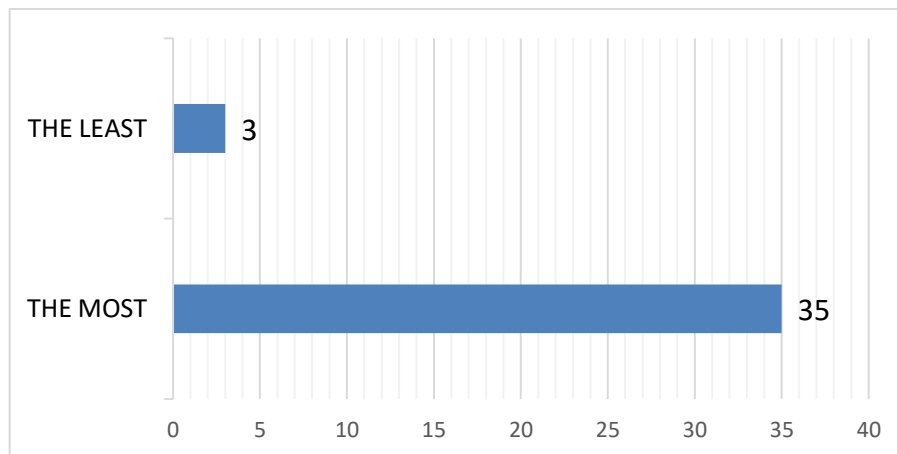


Figure 5 - Border data - years of learning English

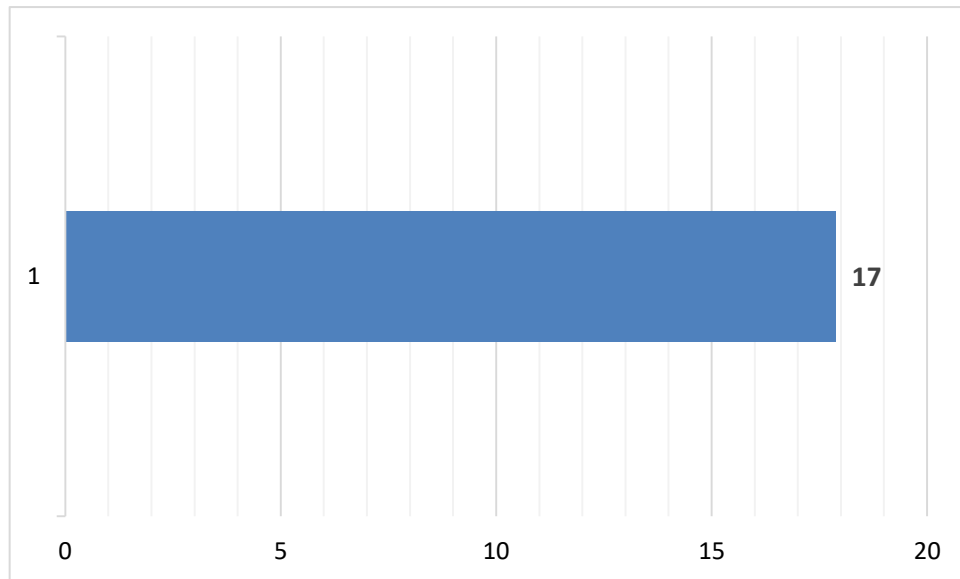


Figure 6 - Average of years learning English

In Q6, the participants were asked if they have contact with a native speaker. It was found that majority of the participants have contact with a native speaker, exactly 56 stated yes. Figure 7 demonstrates the clear predominance.

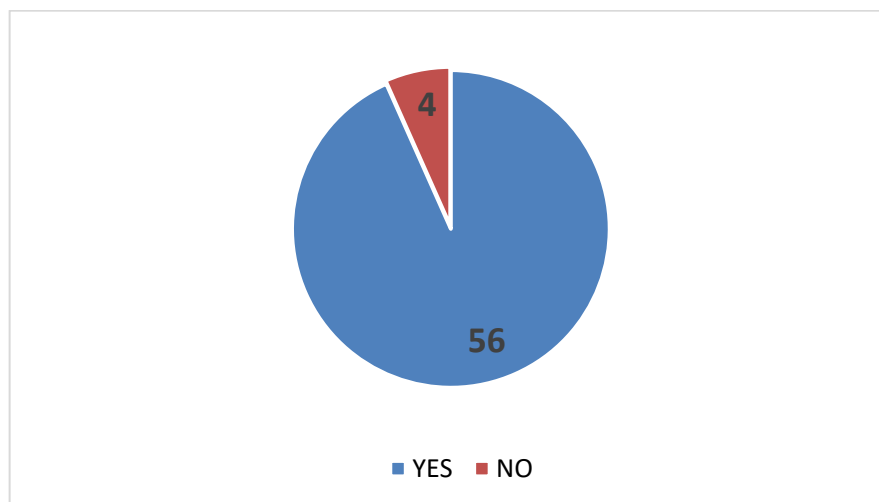


Figure 7 - Contact with a native speaker

The last question from this section is connected to the previous one regarding contact with a native speaker. Q7 was thus answered by 56 participants, who stated yes in Q6. In fact, they are all taught by a native speaker. Figure 8 shows that the most participants, exactly 45, have contact with a native speaker once a week during the lesson. The results

suggest that there are 11 participants who have contact with a native speaker three times a week.

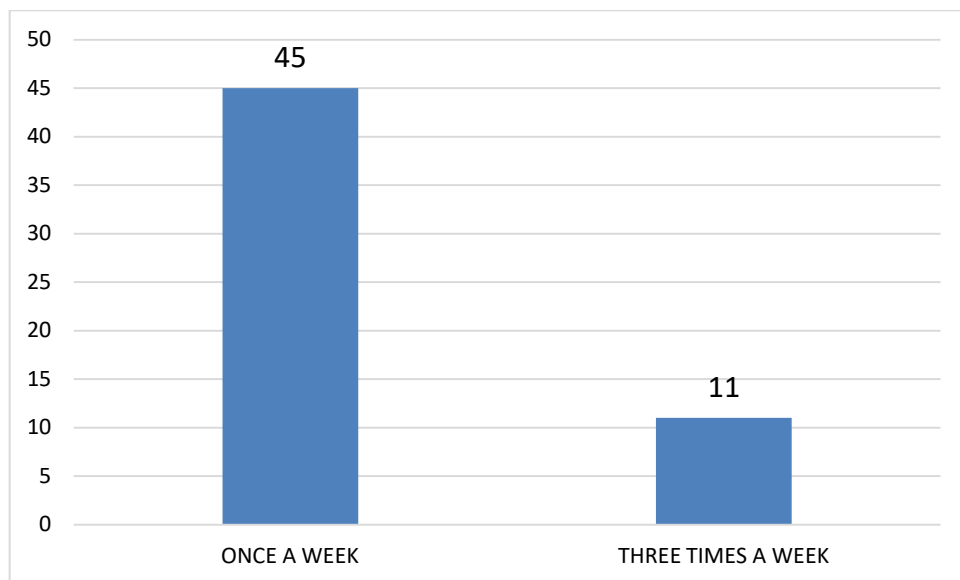


Figure 8 - Frequency of contact with a native speaker

## 4.2 English Language Competence

The second part of the questionnaire was focused on the English language competence of Czech speakers. It contained four questions, which aimed for obtaining information about the most problematic aspects of the speakers (Q8), aspects that the speakers are very sure of (Q9), areas in which the speakers make the most mistakes (Q10) and what are their needs within business English communication (Q11) in terms of pronunciation (Q11a), grammar (Q11b), vocabulary (Q11c) and other (Q11d). All these questions from this section were created in order to obtain self-reflection of participants based on their English language competence. All the answers are evaluated qualitatively, some data is demonstrated by figures. The four language systems such as phonological, morphological, syntactical and lexicological as well as the four language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing were considered while distributing the data into sections.

### 4.2.1 Problematic Aspects

The data from Q8 was evaluated in two ways. Firstly, Figure 9 introduces frequency of problematic aspects perceived by participants. Some of the participants specified their answers more clearly.

The results show that the most frequent problematic aspects according to speakers is vocabulary, which was mentioned 24 times. The most common problem is the lack of vocabulary. Respondent No. 11 stated, *“I have a limited vocabulary.”* Respondents No. 54 and 60 stated, *“My problem is the lack of vocabulary.”* Respondents No. 21 and 23 stated, *“I forget words very often.”* Respondent No. 35 stated, *“My vocabulary is very poor.”* Respondents No. 49, 51, 52 and 53 stated, *“I have problems with technical English vocabulary.”*

Another frequent problematic aspect is grammar, which was mentioned 22 times. Respondent No. 33 stated, *“I have problems to put theory into practice with grammar.”*

Another issue faced by speakers is listening, which was mentioned 11 times. There were more issues regarding listening mentioned. Respondent No. 1 stated, *“I cannot hear the words; I can only catch the words when I read it from the transcript at the same time.”* Respondent No. 33 stated, *“I have problems with listening comprehension, to catch the message.”* Also, the pace of the utterance is crucial for comprehension. Respondent No. 55 stated, *“I have problems with listening to the radio in English, it is very fast.”* Respondent No. 59 supported the previous issue, *“I have problems with listening comprehension of original English recordings by native speakers, when they use slang.”*

The problematic issue of speaking was mentioned 9 times. Respondents No. 7 and 12 stated, *“I have problems with speaking English, I am not able to participate in a conversation with foreigners.”* Respondent No. 30 stated, *“Speaking English is problematic for me because I do not have enough opportunities to speak.”* Respondents No. 57 and 60 stated, *“My problem is to be fluent, to sound natural.”*

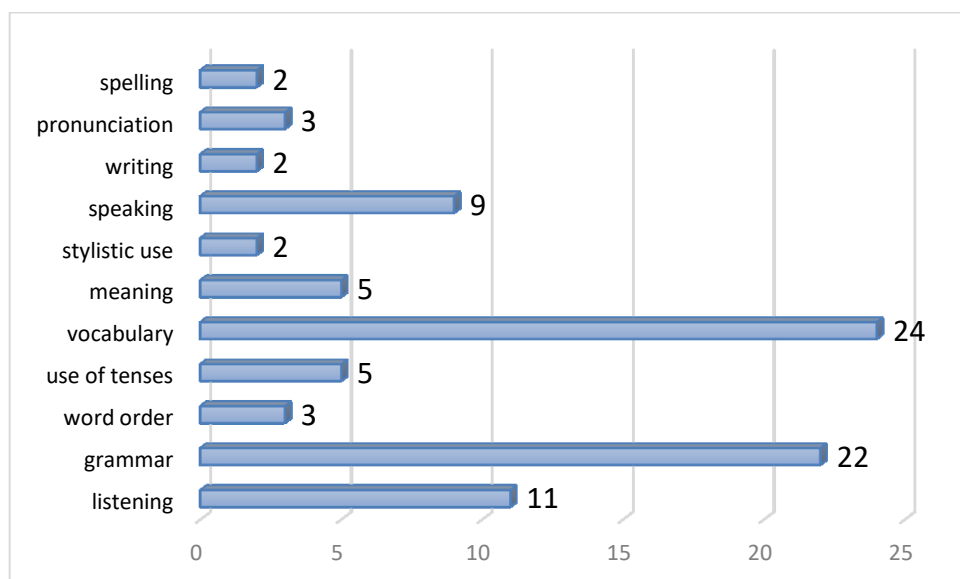


Figure 9 - Problematic aspects

Considering the four language systems, Figure 10 shows the classification of aspects of commanding the English language perceived by the speakers as the most problematic. The morphological and syntactical amount to the almost same figure as the most problematic systems. The least problematic aspect perceived is phonological.

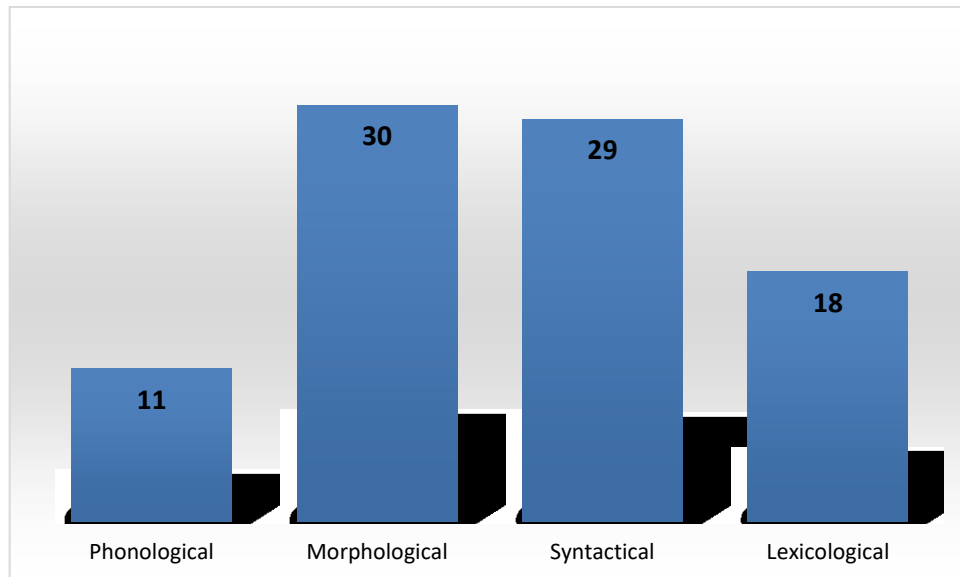


Figure 10 - Problematic aspects - language systems

#### 4.2.2 Confident Aspects

Q9 from the questionnaire was related to the aspects of English the speakers are the most capable of and very sure of based on their self-reflection. Some of the participants expressed their strengths more specifically. Figure 11 shows the frequency of answers.

The most frequent answer was the ability of speaking which was mentioned 18 times. The participants specified their answers. For example, respondent No. 11 commented, “*I am sure of my fluency in speaking and expressing myself.*” Respondents No. 23, 35, 49, 51 and 52 said, “*I am capable of participation in informal conversation, using basic language and simple structures to express myself.*” Respondent No. 56 stated, “*I am confident in my ability of everyday communication with foreigners.*”

The second most frequent answer was the ability of reading which was mentioned 15 times. This can mean in the field of business administration ability of reading comprehension of business emails, technical documents, reports, guides, manuals and meeting minutes. Respondent No. 59 stated, “*I am very sure of reading and understanding the written texts.*”

The third most frequent answer was the ability of writing which was mentioned 13 times. Respondent No. 58 stated, *“I am very confident in my ability of email correspondence, writing emails to customers or colleagues.”* Business correspondence is a vital part of business communication, so every employee can acquire business writing skills by practice.

The fourth most frequent answer was vocabulary, mentioned exactly 9 times. Participants usually expressed their confidence in using of specific terminology and vocabulary related to their position and field of job. Respondent No. 13 stated, *“I am very sure of using business English.”* Respondent No. 18 stated, *“I am confident about IT terminology.”* Respondent No. 23 stated, *“I am sure of basic economic terms in English.”* And respondent No. 47 stated, *“I am confident in my ability of using specific terminology related to my position.”*

It is important to point out that answer *none of the aspects* was also frequent, exactly mentioned 6 times. Respondent No. 44 commented, *“I am never sure, and I will never be sure of any English skills.”* Such an opinion can be caused either by a low self-confidence of the speaker or by the lack of opportunities to practice or even a lack of predispositions to learn and acquire a foreign language.

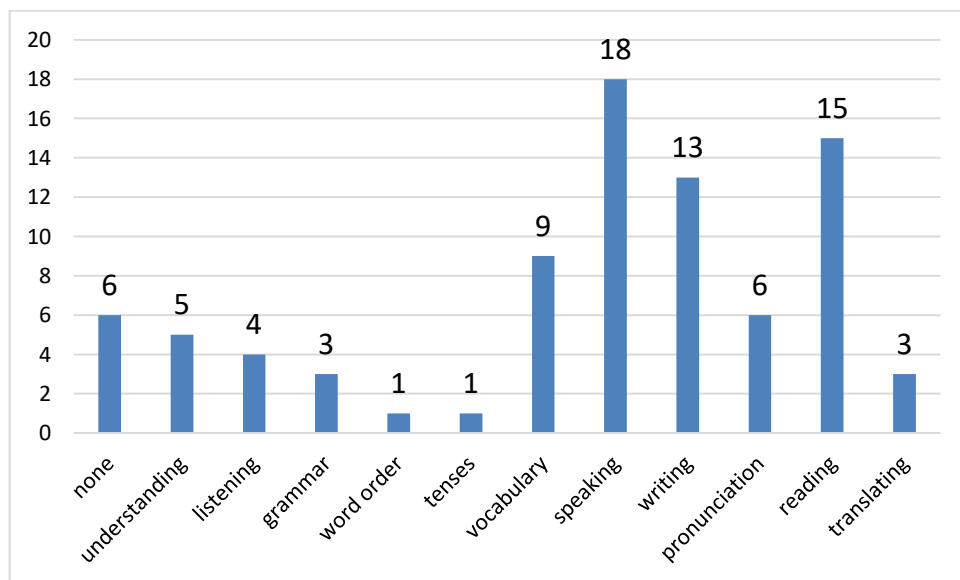


Figure 11 - Confident aspects

### 4.2.3 Mistakes

Q10 in the questionnaire was focused on the areas in the English language in which Czech speakers make the most mistakes. This self-evaluation can be based on a self-perception of speakers as well as on test results experience. Figure 12 demonstrates the areas.

The most frequent answer in this section considering the most common mistakes made was the grammar area, which was mentioned 23 times. This result verifies the hypothesis 3. The participants stated that the two main issues regarding grammar mistakes are prepositions and articles. Respondent No. 21 admitted, *“I usually make mistakes in grammar, concretely with articles and prepositions. I also forget those grammar structures I do not use very often, for example conditionals.”*

The second most frequent answer was also connected to grammar as it was tenses. It was mentioned 21 times. This result also verifies the hypothesis 3. Some of the participants have problem with the grammar rules of the structure of tenses. Respondent No. 15 expressed, *“I keep mixing up present and past tenses.”* Some of them struggle with the use of tenses, as expressed by respondent No. 40, *“I make mistakes in tenses and their correct use in sentences.”* Respondent No. 60 stated, *“I make most mistakes in using incorrect tenses in oral communication.”*

The third most frequent answer regarded vocabulary, which was mentioned 13 times. Participants mainly stated problems with use of correct vocabulary in the situation as expressed by Respondent No. 55, *“I make mistakes with choosing appropriate word to be used in conversation.”* Respondent No. 36 stated, *“I have problems with vocabulary, mainly idioms and phrasal verbs.”* Respondent No. 23 pointed out, *“I fear to make mistake by using unacquired words, so I avoid using them.”*

As the results show, very problematic grammar area is word order, which was mentioned 9 times. Respondent No. 3 stated, *“I make mistakes in word order of questions.”* Respondent No. 60 explained, *“I am aware of making mistakes in word order in oral communication.”*

Lastly, some participants stated they make mistakes in all areas, exactly 6 times. Respondent No. 16 stated, *“I keep making the same common mistakes again and again.”* However, there was a solution suggested by Respondent No. 5, *“I personally think I need more practice to avoid making same mistakes again.”*

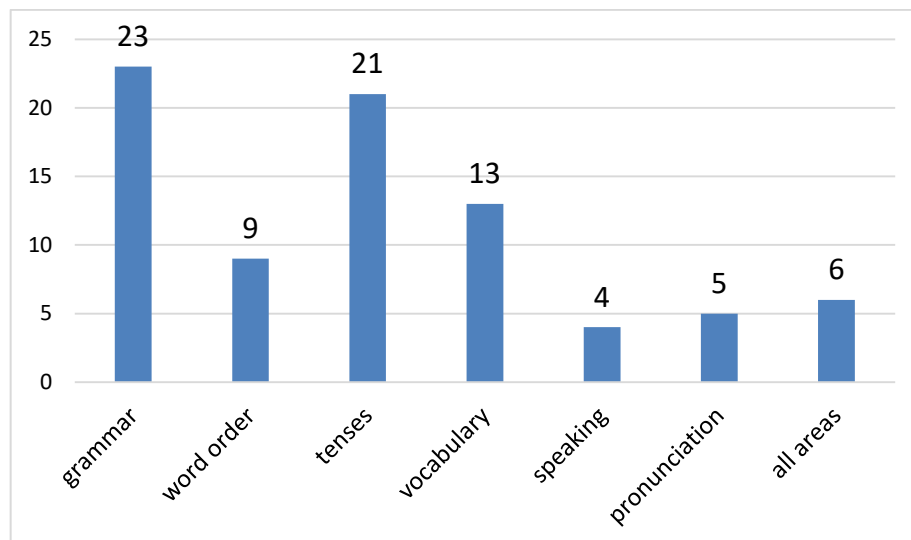


Figure 12 - Mistakes

#### 4.2.4 The Needs

Q11 was focused on the specific needs of speakers within business English communication. It consisted of four sub questions, considering the needs in terms of pronunciation (Q11a), grammar (Q11b), vocabulary (Q11c), and others (Q11d). Some of the participants answered all the four sub questions, however, most of them chose only one or two of them and expressed their needs. The answers for RQ2 were found in this section.

##### a) Pronunciation

The phonological language system was considered for evaluating answers from Q11a. The participants expressed various needs in business communication which were divided into two main sections, namely understandability and accent. The frequency can be seen in Figure 13. Regarding understandability, the most frequent specific need according to many participants was expressed as *“I need to understand and to be understood.”* Regarding accent, many participants stated, *“I need to pronounce clearly and properly to avoid misunderstandings.”* Respondent No. 13 stated, *“I need to eliminate and disguise Czech accent.”* Respondent No. 28 stated, *“I need to learn British or American English accents to understand native speakers and to sound more natural.”* Respondent No. 46 stated, *“I need to focus on practicing pronunciation of specific English sounds such as /θ/ in the word think which are not typical for Czech language.”* Many participants closely specified the situations in which they need to use a proper pronunciation. Respondent No. 60 stated, *“I need to pronounce comprehensibly during phone calls with customers and*



*teleconferences.*” Respondent No. 10 stated, *“I need to pronounce well at job interviews, when meeting the applicants or when meeting visitors.”*

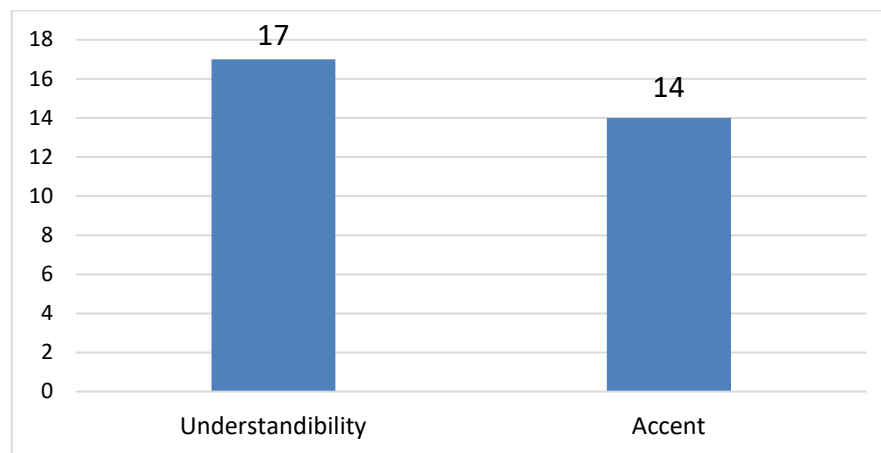


Figure 13 - Needs with pronunciation

#### b) Grammar

The morpho syntactic language system was considered for evaluating answers from Q11b. The specific needs of speakers from the field of grammar were expressed and explained closely by participants. Based on the data obtained, it was found that speakers had two attitudes towards grammar language needs.

The first one was to know and command simple grammatical structures of language and use them correctly, both in written and spoken form, in order to convey the message and understand each other in intercultural business communication and avoid misunderstandings. These participants preferred communication on a basic level. Respondent No. 47 stated, *“I need to know how to make simple, correct and comprehensible sentences.”* While Respondent No. 8 added, *“I need to command basic grammar very well for my job.”*

The second attitude was to command more difficult grammatical structures, use tenses correctly in spoken and written form with right word order and to avoid making mistakes. These participants preferred communication on a professional and more advanced level. Respondent No. 12 stated, *“It is always better to express yourself clearly and without mistakes.”* Respondent No. 4 stated, *“I need to use tenses in emails correctly, when making quotes to customers.”* Respondent No. 49 stated, *“I need to command grammar very well for my presentations.”* Figure 14 demonstrates the frequency of answers. The needs of the advanced grammatical structures are more frequent than the needs of the simple structures.

This statement strongly refutes the hypothesis 2 which states that the speakers prefer using short and concise structures to get the message across in business communication.

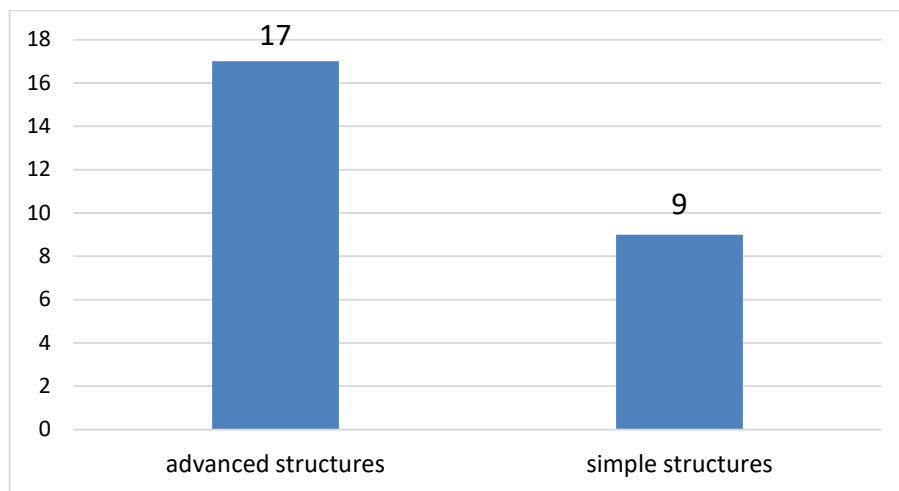


Figure 14 - Needs with grammar

### c) Vocabulary

The lexical language system was considered for evaluating answers from Q11c. The participants expressed their specific needs in the field of vocabulary. This sub question was answered by the most participants, so the data provided was very rich and diverse.

The most frequently stated answer by participants was the need of knowledge of specific vocabulary related to their positions. The data showed that knowledge of vocabulary from the fields of marketing, logistics, automotive, production and IT is required by speakers. The participants specified this answer more closely. The data showed that there was a need of technical vocabulary stated 8 times, as respondent No. 51 specified, *“I need to know technical vocabulary and how to use technical terms and phrases for writing technical documents.”* Other data showed that speakers had a need of business English vocabulary, as expressed by respondent No. 60, *“I need to learn more vocabulary related to emails, calls, offers, demands, orders and booking hotels.”* Respondent No. 10 added, *“I need specific vocabulary to lead an interview and examine foreign job applicants properly.”* Data also revealed that vocabulary related to communication within the company is needed. *“I need to learn and adjust to a very specific company vocabulary which is used here,”* stated respondent No. 49. It was found that speakers experienced and faced the phenomenon word retrieval, which means difficulty to retrieve words and use them in communication. Respondent No. 50 stated, *“I find myself expressing the word in other words, because I cannot remember the correct*

term.” Also, respondent No. 1 supported, *“I find myself paraphrasing quite often, I need to study vocabulary more to avoid it.”*

The data showed that need of expanding mental lexicon of speakers is required, as expressed by many participants. Respondent No. 5 stated, *“I need to expand my vocabulary, for example by polite expressions.”* Respondent No. 55 added, *“I need to react more quickly and use proper vocabulary for the particular situation.”* Finally, Respondent No. 46 admitted, *“I should use dictionary less often for help with choice of vocabulary.”*

Figure 15 demonstrates the frequency of needs of speakers expressed within vocabulary.

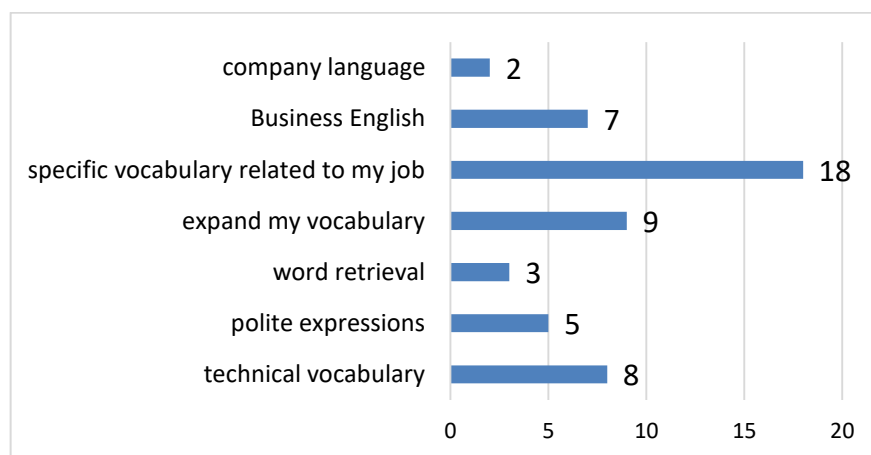


Figure 15 - Needs with vocabulary

#### d) Others

Q11d enabled participants to express their language needs within business English communication openly regardless the language systems. However, only few participants answered this sub question, the most participants did not provide any data. The results showed that the most frequent answers were a need of reading, listening and speaking comprehension. Participants also mentioned their needs to be able to react quickly in stressful situations and to improve writing skills.

### 4.3 Stay in English Speaking Country

The last main part of the questionnaire was focused on stay in English speaking country, more specifically as a study language stay or a work stay abroad. The participants were given two questions. Figure 16 indicates that 44 participants spent some amount of time

working or studying abroad, 16 participants did not. Notably, respondent No. 60, who answered *no*, suggested, “*I find it as a big disadvantage for my language competence.*”

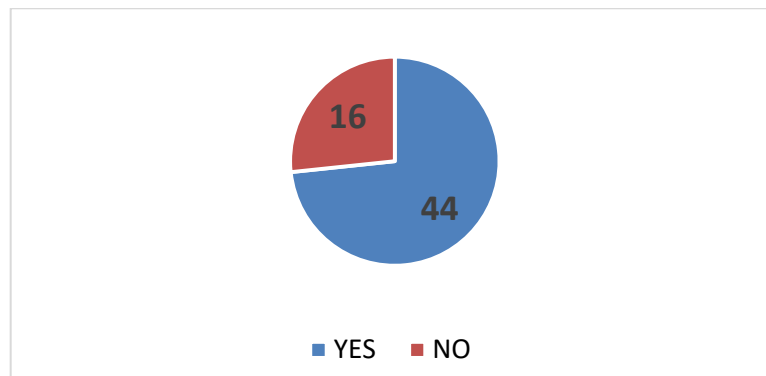


Figure 16 - Stay in English speaking country

Since Q12 was created as an open-ended question, it was proposed to evaluate the data more specifically. The participants closely specified if and eventually where they spent some period abroad either working or studying. Figure 17 demonstrates that all 44 participants spent period abroad for business purposes, for example they went for a business trip or they were employed there. On top of that, Figure 17 shows that 5 of them claimed they spent some amount of time studying abroad as well, mainly on Erasmus study stay.

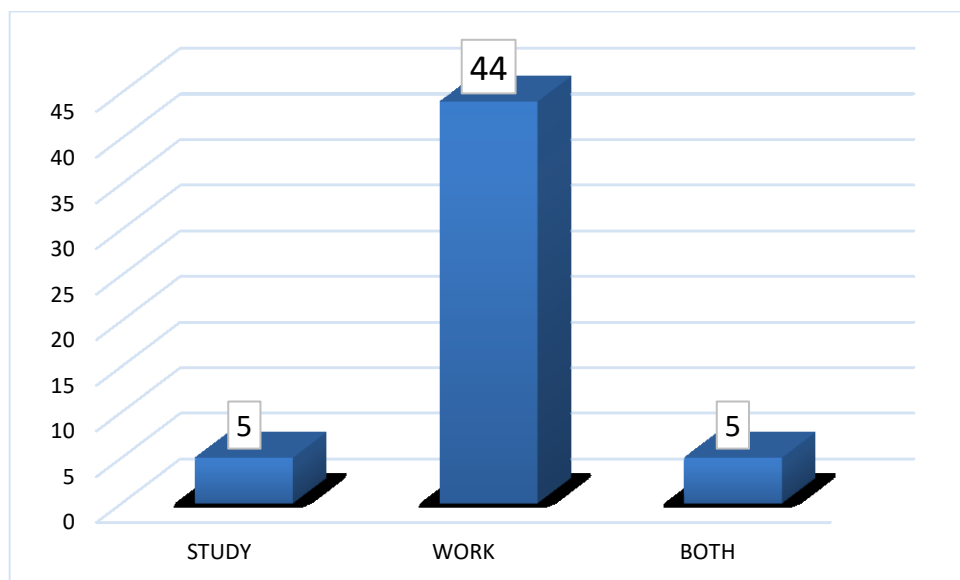


Figure 17 - Purpose of stay abroad

The last Q13 aimed at self-reflection of the participants based on the experience from the stay abroad. The participants, who answered *yes* in the previous question, were asked if they perceive working or study stay abroad as helpful for their language skills, and if so, to

specify how. It was found that all the participants except one found the stay abroad as very beneficial. Respondent No. 53 expressed his disagreement based on his personal experience from working stays in Spain, France and Portugal, *“I did not find it helpful; it was little bit difficult to understand the people there because their level of English was lower than mine.”*

Figure 18 shows the most frequent answers which were provided by the participants. As can be seen in Figure 18, according to the most participants, the stay abroad was the most beneficial for improvement of their speaking skills, which was mentioned 37 times. This fact strongly confirms the hypothesis 1, which states that the speakers who spent some time abroad in contact with native speakers have more self-confidence in their English communication abilities. Participants specified the beneficial factors regarding speaking skills more closely. From the point of view of use of English as a mean of the intercultural communication, it was found that experiencing communication with customers and colleagues on everyday basis was highly beneficial. Respondent No. 29 stated, *“I spent one year working in the USA, I was forced to communicate in English only, nobody spoke Czech there. I learnt how to express myself clearly.”* Furthermore, it was revealed from the data that participating in real life situations, expressing thoughts and dealing with basic tasks in multicultural environment, putting theory into practice and the opportunity to speak English were crucial for improvement. Respondent No. 19 stated, *“I lived 8 months in Wales, so I had to find a job there and use English for everyday communication at work. I did not have any other choice; nobody spoke Czech there.”* Experiencing a stay abroad also led to a loss of anxiety, fear elimination and gaining of self-confidence. Respondent No. 11 stated, *“I go for business trips abroad quite often. It enables me to practice English and helps me to eliminate my fear of speaking.”* The participants stated that spending period abroad surrounded by native speakers had a good influence on their pronunciation, accent and listening skills, which was mentioned 13 times. As for the pronunciation, respondent No. 55 stated, *“I spent three months attending a language course abroad and I worked in the UK as an au pair. I found both stays abroad very beneficial for my language skills. Especially for speaking and listening, when you meet native speakers, who speak only English. It is important to keep in touch with them even after coming back to your homeland.”* As for the accent, respondent No. 42 stated, *“During my stay in the USA I realized that there are many more accents and varieties in English, I experienced real English, the pace is very quick.”* The participants also admitted they found themselves thinking in English after some time spent abroad, later realizing

making mistakes and being able to correct themselves. Respondent No. 6 stated, *“I studied in Leeds, England. It was beneficial for me. It changed my thinking into English. I became self-confident very soon.”* Finally, the idea of expanding vocabulary was suggested 5 times. Respondent No. 34 stated, *“I go for business trips quite often but unfortunately only for 3 days maximum. Even though it is a short time, I always learn new words and expressions and expand my vocabulary.”*

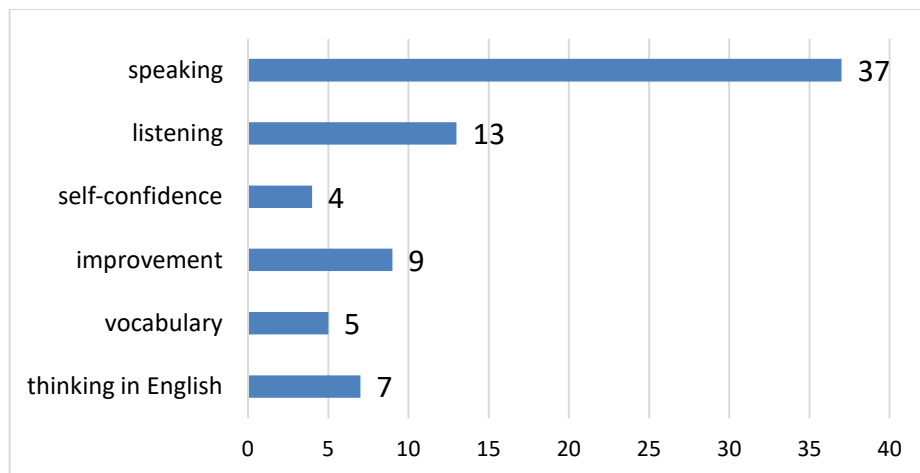


Figure 18 - Benefits of stay abroad

#### 4.4 Interview

The semi-structured interview was conducted with two respondents, respondent No. 11 and 20. Both are graduates of the study program English for Business Administration at TBU in Zlín. They were asked to express a view on this study program, to evaluate the skills and knowledge they gained during studies, to compare what their language needs are in practice now and what they learnt at university and how did the study program prepare them for career, so the answers for the RQ1 were found in this section. Based on the interviews with respondents No. 11 and 20 (April 3, 2019), the following data was found.

Firstly, the language needs of speakers related to their professions were discussed, and more data was obtained. As stated in questionnaire, respondent No. 11 works as a sales export manager and he communicates in English with customers and clients from other European countries on everyday basis and he also frequently travels abroad for business. The respondent n.20 works as a technical planner, she uses English for business correspondence and phone calls with colleagues from foreign countries almost daily.

Respondents were asked to evaluate what they have learnt so they can express what they use in practice. Respondent No. 11 admitted that he finds the knowledge gained in linguistic courses involving word formation, origin of words, understanding connections in

language based on language analysis as very useful and beneficial for his managerial practice. He sees studying English philology as a part of the bachelor study program as a big advantage for his future career, even though it was sometimes very challenging. He claimed that the study program provided him with a great base of English skills and knowledge for practical use, however, he considered that as an EFL speaker he will have to continue learning more by himself to expand his professional vocabulary. Consequently, respondent No. 20 pointed out that even though she graduated from university with C1 level of English according to CEFR scale, she feels the outside pressure to learn more, so she decided to attend company Business English courses to keep her level of English. Additionally, she complimented the structure and content of these lessons lead by a NEST, who tailors the lessons to students' needs, so they are enriching and fundamental for the future language development of employees.

Respondent No. 11 expressed his idea about some subjects which he finds the most beneficial for his practice. The most practical subject as for the skills gained he mentioned Presentation Skills, where he was given useful tips how to make a presentation for business purposes, prepare himself for the presentation mentally, deal with anxiety and to use appropriate expressions, phrases and linking words in English language as well as he learnt proper body language. He admitted he uses these tips and profits from them till now since giving presentations is integral to his job. Respondent No. 20 also appreciated this subject as for its learning outcome. She added that delivering a presentation was a constant requirement in many courses during her studies which had an impact and improved her skills. She conceded she faced public speaking anxiety all three years of studying and owing to this subject she managed to overcome it and sees it as the most beneficial skill for her career, because she experienced giving presentations at international conferences. In comparison with other colleagues, she considers her presentation and public speaking skills as a big advantage.

As for the speaking and listening skills, both respondents claimed they gained excellent level of pronunciation during the studies. Not only the linguistic subject Phonetics and Phonology itself, but also the fact they were in contact with and taught by professional teachers as some of them were native speakers, who had a beneficial effect on their speaking skills development. Respondent No. 11 prided himself he experienced recognition in his career due to his outstanding speaking skills. However, he confessed that he experienced misunderstandings with business partners as they had lower level of English. On the other hand, respondent No. 20 admitted she has had difficulties with

listening comprehension since the first year of study, however, she found the years of practice throughout the studies very helpful for her self-confidence and now she deals with phone calls without problems. She also stated that understanding how the sounds in English language work helped her with speaking.

Considering subjects providing students with a knowledge of business English vocabulary in the context of economics, management and finance, both respondents are profiting from these courses still today. Respondent No. 11 claimed he uses business terminology regarding sales, finance and economy actively every day as a part of his job. Nevertheless, both respondents agreed they had to learn specific vocabulary related to their job and the field of company, but it was not anything unattainable. Besides that, respondent No. 20 pointed out she also had to learn a very specific language used for internal communication in the multinational corporation she works for.

Regarding the writing skills, both respondents evaluated the subjects Commercial Correspondence interconnected with Translation seminars as very practically oriented, providing them with a manual how to build the text of documents, reports and emails, to address clients and target customers, to express themselves clearly and to effectively communicate within the company administration. Apparently, majority of their business communication is done via emails.

Respondents were asked to evaluate the study program overall. Respondent No. 20 stated she really considers the structure as for the combination of philological and business subjects as meaningful, balanced and well-arranged, providing a valuable base for future career in managerial practice. She studied at TBU eight years in total. After finishing master's degree in technology, she became aware of the need for language, so she decided to expand her horizons and began to study English for Business Administration. However, if she could change something about it, she suggested that all the economical subjects could be taught right from the beginning in English, as she could see it personally more useful. For the question what this study program gave her, she answered, "*It gave me the job.*" She explained that because of her advanced language skills she was the most successful candidate at the job interview. Besides that, similar answer was obtained from respondent No. 11, who stated that within his compulsory Practical Training done in the company, he impressed his boss by the language skills as well as basics of business, so he was offered and given a job in the company right after the graduation. He sees his level of English together with grounding in business as a big competitive advantage on the labour



market. At the end, both respondents confirmed they would certainly recommend this study program for its practical application in this global world of business.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to identify the English language needs of speakers in Czech business administration with focus on Business English learners. The theoretical part provided with the background information on learning English as a foreign language in the Czech Republic, presented most common mistakes made by Czech learners and discussed the role of Business English in the Czech context. The content of the theoretical part included data which was necessary for the analysis.

Regarding the practical part of the thesis, the main objective of the research was to validate or refute the three hypotheses and to answer two research questions stated. The hypothesis No. 1 “The speakers who spent some time abroad in contact with native speakers have more self-confidence in their English communication abilities” was strongly verified. EFL learners, who are for some time exposed to dealing with everyday situations in an English-speaking country where they are in constant contact with native speakers, so they need to express themselves, consider this experience as highly beneficial for their speaking skills connected with self-confidence. Moreover, listening comprehension skills are also improved due to more opportunities to practice.

The hypothesis No. 2 “The speakers prefer using short and concise structures to get the message across in business communication” was not confirmed. Although the communication in business administration is mostly done using Business English, which is characteristic for its brief and short structures in order to send the message clearly and to avert interpretations, the data showed that speakers, in practice, tend to use advanced grammatical structures. It can be caused by the specialty or position of speakers, which can require more advanced level of English in business communication. These speakers will probably not deal with technical documents only, but they will be expected to produce more formal and cultivated structures according to the context.

The hypothesis No. 3 “The most common mistakes of speakers are made with grammar” was verified, demonstrated by more examples of grammar mistakes perceived by participants. There are more problematic features of English grammar, however, for Czech learners is generally the most problematic that grammar phenomenon, which is not existent in Czech language so they cannot rationalize it. In this case it was articles or tenses.

The aim of the research question No. 1 was to assess how effective the study program English for Business Administration taught at TBU in Zlín is, from the graduate’s point of

view. According to both respondents as people of practice, they consider this program beneficial due to great combination of two main subjects, providing them with a considerable base of English language skills and more thorough insight into system of language as well as basics of business. Among the most enriching skills are presentation and public speaking, writing official correspondence, listening comprehension and pronunciation, since they emphasized the regular contact with native speakers as teachers. They admitted that their advanced language skills gained played a significant role in their employment opportunities.

The research question No. 2 was focused on self-evaluation of participants regarding their language needs in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation. The most common needs within pronunciation are to pronounce clearly and properly, to understand and to be understood and disguise Czech accent, in order to avoid any misunderstandings, which is naturally crucial in business communication, as it is often done between EFL speakers. Considerably, it is usually numbers, prices, quotes, data and industry specific information that is negotiated. The language barrier problems in intercultural business communication, which could arise, would be highly undesirable and could result in major issues in business dealings and create unpleasant situations the speaker might not want to face. Therefore, they could avoid using English in the future. Considering vocabulary, the most frequent need is for specific vocabulary and terminology related to speaker's specialty. Even though all the participants work in business administration, each of them works in a different sector, thus their vocabulary needs all varied. There might be core terminology useful for all of them equally, however, the requirements of each individual should be always evaluated at the beginning of the course, to provide the learners with adequate vocabulary.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ESL – English as a Second Language

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

TESL – Teaching English as a Second Language

TEFL – Teaching English as a Foreign Language

NEST – Native English-Speaking Teacher

non-NEST – non-native English-Speaking Teacher

ELF – English as a Lingua Franca

BELF – Business English as a Lingua Franca

ESP – English for Specific Purposes

NES – Native English Speaker

non-NES – non-native English Speaker

BE – Business English

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## Appendix I: Questionnaire in Czech

**Specifika mluvení v angličtině v české manažerské praxi (potřeby mluvčích)  
Dotazník**

Tento dotazník byl vytvořen pro účely akademického výzkumu k bakalářské práci. Všechny Vaše odpovědi a poskytnuté údaje slouží výhradně pro potřeby tohoto výzkumu a jsou důvěrné. Děkuji za Váš čas a ochotu při vyplňování.

1. Pohlaví:  
 muž       žena
2. Věková skupina:  
 18-25       26-35       36-45       46-55       55+
3. Nejvyšší dosažené vzdělání:  
 základní       středoškolské s výučním listem       středoškolské s maturitou  
 vyšší odborné       vysokoškolské
4. Jakého typu je Vaše odborné zaměření?
5. Kolik let se učíte anglický jazyk?
6. Máte kontakt s rodilým mluvčím?  
 ano       ne
7. Pokud ano, jak často?
8. Které aspekty ovládnutí anglického jazyka u sebe vnímáte jako problematické?
9. Ve kterých aspektech anglického jazyka jste si naopak jistý/á?
10. V čem děláte nejčastěji chyby?
11. Jaké jsou Vaše jazykové potřeby v rámci obchodní komunikace v angličtině
  - a) v rámci výslovnosti
  - b) v rámci gramatiky
  - c) slovní zásoby
  - d) jiné
12. Absolvoval/a jste studijní či pracovní pobyt v zahraničí?
13. Pokud ano, vnímáte jej jako přínosný pro Vaše jazykové dovednosti? V čem konkrétně?

## Appendix II: Questionnaire in English

**The Specifics of Speaking English in Czech Business Administration (The Needs of Speakers)  
Questionnaire**

The following questionnaire was designed for the purpose of academic research. Your responses will not be shared with anyone but the researcher who is conducting this study and will be kept confidential. Thank you for your time and participation.

1. Gender:  
 male       female
2. Age group:  
 18-25       26-35       36-45       46-55       55+
3. Highest education:  
 basic    vocational certificate    high school diploma    higher education  
 university degree
4. Which is your specialty?
5. How many years have you learnt English?
6. Do you have contact with a native speaker?  
 yes       no
7. If yes, how often?
8. Which aspects of commanding the English language do you personally perceive as the most problematic?
9. In which aspects are you very sure of your English ability?
10. In which area do you make the most mistakes?
11. What are your needs within business English communication
  - a) with pronunciation
  - b) with grammar
  - c) vocabulary
  - d) other
12. Have you ever attended a language course or business working stay abroad?
13. If yes, did you find it helpful for your language skills? How specifically?