

Lexical Structure of Czech Students' Spontaneous English Utterance

Radka Jurásková

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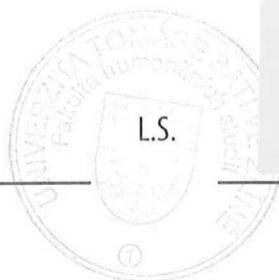
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Mgr. Libor Marek, Ph.D.
děkan



Mgr. Roman Trušník, Ph.D.
ředitel ústavu

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ABSTRAKT

Bakalářská práce s názvem „Lexikální struktura spontánního anglického projevu českých studentů“ se zaměřuje na porovnání vybraných lexikálních jevů v anglických ústních projevech českých studentů anglické filologie na začátku a na konci prvního semestru studia. V teoretické části práce je popsána lexikální rovina anglického jazyka s ohledem na analyzovanou problematiku. Při získání výzkumného materiálu byla použita metoda experimentu (pre-test, intervence, post-test) a při analýze materiálu metoda lingvistické analýzy diskurzu. V projevech studentů v pre-testu a post-testu byly detekovány a klasifikovány chyby zasahující lexikální rovinu jazyka a byl porovnán výskyt slov z hlediska jejich původu, délky a formálnosti.

Klíčová slova: anglický jazyk, lexikální rovina, čeští studenti filologie, ústní projev, analýza diskurzu, experiment

ABSTRACT

The bachelor thesis called “Lexical structure of Czech Students’ Spontaneous English utterance” focuses on the comparison of selected lexical phenomena in English oral utterance of Czech students of English philology at the beginning and the end of the first semester of their studies. The theoretical part describes the lexical level of the English language with regard to the analyzed issues. The experimental method (pre-test, intervention, post-test) was used to obtain the research material. Linguistic discourse analysis was used for the analysis of the materials. Mistakes affecting the lexical level of language were detected and classified in the pre-test and post-test utterances of the students. The occurrence of words in terms of their origin, length, and formality was compared.

Keywords: English language, lexical level, Czech Philology students, oral utterance, discourse analysis, experiment

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I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this bachelor thesis and that I have not used any sources other than those listed in the bibliography and identified as references.

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

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INTRODUCTION

Based on the author's own experience and peers' observation in English language learning, the initial level of an oral utterance of students of the 1st year of the English for Business Administration program at Faculty of Humanities TBU in Zlín is very different, but it is continuously improving during the study. "Speaking is the most salient aspect of the language ego (Guiora 1972, 539-553) and the most difficult skill to acquire in a foreign language (Young 1990, 139-150). Learner's speaking competence is thus very dynamic and subject to intensive changes during foreign language learning. Therefore, I decided to study the change in English philology students' spontaneous English utterances in the beginning and at the end of their first semester.

For my research, the recorded utterances of the first-year students had been transcribed. These utterances were recorded at the beginning and the end of the winter semester – September to December. I analyzed selected phenomena of the lexical level of their utterances in order to find out the progress. During the semester, none of the participants spent a long time (a week or more) in the English-speaking country.

The theoretical part is focused on the lexical level, it contains subchapters concerning lexical level structure, lexical level mistakes, and lexical level learning, which includes vocabulary acquisition. Another part of the thesis contains a methodology, which includes objectives of the research, research questions, describes who participants of the experiment are. Methodology, of course, deals with methods used while writing this thesis and the intervention, which is research experimental period of a winter semester.

Speaking skills of Czech students are affected a lot by the Czech school educational system. There is expected that there will be a lot of mistakes in students' utterances in the pre-test and the ideal result of the experiment is to see at least some small improvements at the end of the semester.

I. THEORY

1 LEXICAL LEVEL

Lexicology is taught in the summer semester of the first year, therefore I hope to see some changes in lexicology in the progress of students' utterances. Now, the terms and issues connected with lexicology will be defined, that they could be easily found in students' utterances to examine the results between pre-test and post-test.

Lexicology is a linguistic discipline that examines the vocabulary of a language and its use. Language vocabulary is a system whose units are words and fixed phrases.

According to professor Pavol Kvetko, the primary task of language is to serve as a means of communicating with one another. Language is a system of levels: phonic (pronunciation), lexical (vocabulary), and grammatical. Each of the levels has its system. The description of the lexical system or lexical components of a language includes lexicology and lexicography. Lexicology deals with the meaning and use of words and their mutual relations. On the other hand, lexicography is the practice and theory of gathering materials for dictionaries. (Kvetko 2005, 13)

Lexicology is the study concerned with the properties, usage and origin of words, and regularities and relations (behavior of words) in the vocabulary of a language. Traditionally it includes the *study of naming extralingual reality* (onomasiology); *study of proper names* (onomastics); *study of meaning* (lexical semantics, semasiology); a *history of words* (etymology); *word-formation* (lexical morphology), and as its specific part the *study of multi-word expressions* (lexical phrases, collocations, phrasemes/idioms – phraseology, idiomatics). Some linguists consider some of these parts as an independent. (Kvetko 2005, 13)

In other words, lexicology is the study of vocabulary usage. In my experiment, there will be examined whether students use the correct English vocabulary and to what extent they are influenced by their mother tongue – the Czech or Slovak language.

1.1 Lexical level structure

There are various types of lexicology, for example, *General Lexicology*, which concerns general problems of vocabulary. If the issues in any kind of language are taken into consideration, e.g. English, Czech, Slovak, then we talk about *Special Lexicology*. The evolution of vocabulary, its changes or development, studies *Historical Lexicology*. Another type is *Descriptive* or *Synchronic Lexicology*, which studies the structure of vocabulary, properties, and function of words in a certain period synchronically. *Contrastive* or *Confrontational Lexicology* compares differences in vocabulary or similarities of different languages (Kvetko 2005, 14).

Each type of lexicology deals with its issues and studies words from a certain point of view. Some of the phenomena which are accounted for in the field of lexical semantics are:

- A word can have more than one meaning: head (a part of the body, a leader, part at the top of an object)
- Different words can have similar/same meaning: thick – fat
- Some pairs of words have opposite meanings: pretty – ugly
- The meaning of some words is included in the meaning of others: plant (tree or flower)
- A group of words may have one meaning: make up one's mind (decide)
- The meaning of words can be analyzed into components: mother (human, female, adult) (Kvetko 2005, 14)

Our sentences contain lexical phrases. Lexical phrases are likely to have an increasingly prominent role when comes to vocabulary. It is believed that lexical phrases create a considerable part of a person's total vocabulary.

The reason lexical phrases are so common is that they are typically related to functional language use. For example, to make a long story short is often used in summarizing, and *Have you heard the one about...?* is reserved for beginning a joke or humorous story (Schmitt 2000, 101).

These lexical phrases are the most efficient and most familiar linguistic means which carries out language functions – they enable clear, relevant, and concise language use. Because of their functional usage, knowledge of lexical phrases is essential for pragmatic competence. There is a strong psycholinguistic basis for assuming that the mind stores and treats lexical phrases as individual units. The main explanation for this comes from the structure of the mind itself. It can store large quantities of information in long-term memory, but it is able to process only limited quantities of it in real time, as when one is speaking. In

effect, the mind makes use of a relatively abundant resource (long-term memory) to compensate for a relative deficit in another (processing capacity) by storing as individual whole units as frequently needed for lexical phrases. These can be easily accessed and used by word selection and grammatical sequencing without the need to write them. This means that the cognitive ability is less in demand as the lexical phrases are ready to be used and need just a little or no additional processing at all. The ability to use preformed lexical phrases allows better fluency in speech development. Usage of lexical phrases will support the listener too. Because lexical phrases can be identified as individual units, this will save the listener some of the processing efforts that are needed to perceive an utterance word by word (Schmitt 2000, 102).

Words are acting in unison and influence each other in discourse. The multi-words expressions had some recognizable element that helps to bind the words together in a unit, either with a single meaning (e.g. idioms) or an expression widely used to express a function (e.g. lexical phrases). One of the latest insights to emerge from corpus study (studies based on large collections of real-life language use) is that lexical patterning extends beyond these recognizable elements, and is likely to influence the usage of most words in discourse (Schmitt 2000, 102).

There are some variations for the lexical patterning of the word e.g. *sorry*. The basic forms are:

Person (be) *so sorry* unfortunate situation exists

Person (be) *so sorry to* cause inconvenience

Person (feel) *so sorry for* a person (Schmitt 2000, 104)

1.2 Lexical level mistakes

There is nothing to be surprised about that many lexical mistakes can occur in the English utterances of Czech students. The most common are lexical errors that occur when using the wrong prepositions. The very frequent issue is that even some words are confused by Czech speakers. If there is an utterance with many incorrectly used or even nonexistent expressions, misunderstanding between speakers can happen even more easily than if the mistakes would be created in morphology. Three most common groups of mistakes occur when creating collocations, confusibles, and faux amis/false friends.

1.2.1 Collocations

The English level of advanced learners, who don't make any grammatical errors and they can correctly select words, may often be marked as foreign because they combine terms that differ from the standard lexical rules. These differences are often made while using collocations. Chosen words combinations can still be used appropriately in the given context and clearly recognizable by some native speakers, but still, native speakers would use a little bit different combination of words – different collocation in some context.

Collocations are a subclass of what is known as set phrases; therefore, they have to be defined in terms of their differentiae specificae with respect to set phrases that are not collocations. People speak in set phrases – rather than in separate words; hence the crucial importance of set phrases. At the same time, set phrases, or phrasemes, represent one of the major difficulties in theoretical linguistics as well as in dictionary making (Cowie 1998, 23).

So, the collocation is some habitual cooccurrence of individual lexical terms. It can be predicted very easily. Czech learners typically do not value the predictability of collocations that make them “natural” to native speakers, since they are not used to collocations in texts or utterances as much as native speakers. There might potentially become some errors when comes to word combination properties.

There is a problem with collocations when translating them. For example, the collocation “to break the ice” which means “prolomit ledy” in Czech, requires the Czech noun to be in a plural form. There is a thread by putting the plural form to the English translation, which would be incorrect. “*to break the ices”. Creating of potentially false friends collocations consists of a lexical change of one or both constituents and is typically attributable to different paradigms of the constituents in both languages (Cowie 1998, 29). As an example, I can use the collocation “to dance the soles off”. This expression is translated as “protančit boty” to Czech, so an exact word-by-word translation would become

a typical Czenglish mistake “*to dance the *shoes* off”. Another frequent mistake created by the Czechs is “*go to the sea”. They, of course, mean their summer vacation, but a native speaker would rather use the collocation “go to the seaside”. Also, as many of Czech are unaware, “kámen” corresponds to the English word “brick” in “as hard as a brick” collocation. If the Czech learners don’t know this fact, they can say “*as hard as stone” – and this is the often Czenglish mistake, that sounds very strange to native speakers.

1.2.2 Confusibles

“Confusable” is a “semi-technical term for one of two or more words that are commonly or easily confused with one another” (McArthur 1992, 256). Originally, it was used to identify terms that create difficulties for English native speakers. Confusibles are a very common struggle that bothers not only Czech or other learners of the second language but also native speakers. Needless to say, confusibles are not the same for the native speakers and the Czech or Slovak learners. It is appropriate to mention them because confusibles are a very important part of language acquisition. Many English teachers can find many examples of confusibles used by Czech learners. According to Sparling, among the frequently used confusibles are the pairs of words such as “sensible”/”sensitive”, “loose”/”lose”, “interesting”/”important”, “same”/”some” and many others (Sparling 1990, 119).

The similarity of the words is not the only confusion that may occur. The students can also often confuse words that are similar when comes to the meaning and the form. For example, words as “latest”/”last”, “economic”/”economical”, “lay”/”lie” or “imply”/”infer”. When it comes to spelling, the confusibles may be “desert”/”dessert”, “personal”/”personnel”. Of course, with these two, it is different also from the pronunciation.

In some cases, Czechs confuse more than two expressions. Sparling is writing about the struggle with “food”, “dish” and “meal”. It can be very difficult for Czech or Slovak learners to determine which one is the right word because all of them refer to “jídlo” in our language. Sparling shows the following examples: “*We had roast duck for the main dish.” or “*Lunch consisted of three dishes, including the sweet.” English terminology in the area of dining and cooking often differs from Czech. The most common term for something to eat is “food”. A “meal” is one of the daily meals. “You should eat three meals a day.” “Course” is the translation of Czech “chody” – “Lunch consisted of three courses, including the sweet.” “We had the roast duck for the main course.” For the translation of “pokrm” we use “dish” – “My favorite Czech dish is plum dumplings.” He mentions another issue connected to this topic and that is a confusion of “kitchen” and “cuisine” as the Czech expression “kuchyně”.

“*Czech kitchen is delicious, but not very healthy.” In these conditions, the word “kuchyně” is correctly translated as “cooking” or “cuisine”. This incorrectly translated expression can be also seen in many Czech restaurants (Sparling 1990, 95). Another example can be words such as “travel”, “journey” and “way”. All of them refers to “cesta” in Czech and students may have trouble distinguishing the meaning in English. All of them are also described by Sparling (1990, 263).

Also, the verbs “learn” and “teach” are very often confused. The explanation why Czech learners are confused is that “teach” corresponds to “učit” and “learn” to “učit se” and the learners may hardly see the difference between them (Sparling 1990, 128).

1.2.3 Faux amis

Faux amis ("false friend") is a “term in language teaching for a word that has the same origin and general appearance as a word in another language so that learners mistakenly assume that both have the same meanings and uses” (McArthur 1992, 400). The main issue is that most learners are using these *false friends* in their English language in the same way they use them in the Czech language. This indicates the words that occur in Czenglish are actually English words but have a different meaning from the one they were intended to express. The most classic example of the *faux amis* phenomenon is the English word “actual”. If a Czech speaker tries to translate “aktuální”, they often translate it as “actual” into English. However, a correct translation of the Czech word “aktuální” is “current, topical”. Sometimes the two almost identical words may belong to completely different word classes, for example, the English adjective "historic", while in Czech the word “historik” is a noun (Sparling 1990, 119).

Another example is the use of the term “monuments” referring to “sights” (Sparling 1990, 143). The term “monuments” means sights-works of art or other antiques, monuments, and so on. English does not have a comparable term. It uses more precise expressive means. In Czech, the word “památka” is used and can also be translated as “monument”. As a result, Czech speakers might translate “památky” into English as “monuments”, which is not correct, because the term specifically means “memorial”. Another expression that can be used instead of “monument” is a “historic building”.

I would say that also the word “brigade” is one of the most incorrectly used words by Czech students. This word is actually used differently in English and differently in Czech. In the English-speaking world is the word “brigade” used for some army brigades, fire brigades, and so on. Czech students are therefore tempted to use the word “brigade” because

it sounds the same as Czech “brigáda”. But the real English equivalent for “brigáda” is “summer-job” or “temporary job”. Then as well the word “specific” might be used incorrectly very often. Czech learners might use it in the sense of “special” or “characteristic”. **This mushroom has a specific smell.* is incorrectly used adjective. The correct sentence is *This mushroom has a distinctive smell.* While in English the word “specific” means “detailed”, “exact” or “accurate” (Sparling 1990, 228).

Another group of possibly misused terms—false friends—are words, whose meaning is not completely different, but their usage is somehow limited. Hladký’s talks about “brutální”/”brutal”, “incident”/”incident” and “precizní”/”precise”. According to him, these are representatives of this group (Hladký 1990, 5). This phenomenon is not so much based on the meaning but more of the frequency of use, which makes it a stylistic issue, which doesn’t have to be understood by English native speakers. Sparling, on the other hand, gives an example of the word “psychic(al)”. The most commonly used English word for our inner mind is “mental”, not “psychical” (Sparling 1990, 195).

Hladký also discusses a group of Czech words that appear to be English words but they are not English at all (Hladký 1990, 5). Sparling as an example of this phenomenon mentions a “happy end”. Although the words come from the English language, English native speakers use the expression “happy ending” more often. *Everybody enjoys films with a happy ending* (Sparling 1990, 108). Such expressions are called pseudoanglicisms – these are borrowed from English but are not readily known or understood by a native English speaker in any way.

1.3 Lexical level learning

Vocabulary learning and teaching are very crucial while studying English; nevertheless, vocabulary was an undervalued area in foreign language teaching for several years. To improve the communicative skills of the students, language teachers should enable them to learn as many words as possible. English for specific purposes (ESP) is a recent phenomenon in English language teaching and it includes, for example, scientific English, technical English, or this study program – English for Business Administration. The students should become aware of the importance of vocabulary learning strategies and use the vocabulary accordingly.

Students may experience many difficulties while learning new English vocabulary. Words, especially ESP words, are difficult to learn because they are words of low frequency and are not heard very often. The acquisition of vocabulary is progressive, which means that words are not mastered immediately but are acquired over a period of time. So studying for half of the academic year at our faculty should help in improving the student's vocabulary.

“No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wider range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way” (McCarthy 1990, 13).

Professor Schmitt highlights that “the object of vocabulary learning is to transfer lexical information from short-term memory, where it resides during the process of manipulating language, to permanent long-term memory” (Schmitt 2000, 131).

Short-term memory is also called working memory. Working memory is a kind of portal that passes the information to long-term memory. Working memory is linked to human consciousness and its characteristic is that for a limited period of time it retains a limited amount of knowledge. In this case, the function of the working memory is to retrieve, for example, visuals that are important for ongoing comprehension, but the ability of the working memory is often limited.

Long-term memory serves as the storage place where the information is kept. There is no idea what is the amount of information people carry in their brains, all we know is that the information can be stored for a long time. Nevertheless, instead of alphabetically representing words, the terms are expressed to each other according to their associations. A typical example is the word “blue” and what usually comes to our mind is the blue sky that is closely associated with this color. The “red” or “pink” colors are usually associated with love (Schmitt 2000).

1.3.1 Vocabulary

An important aspect that is examined while comparing students' utterances is vocabulary. The vocabulary of a language is an integral part of lexicology. According to Pavol Kvetko, vocabulary is all the lexical items (words and multi-word expressions) that are used in a particular language. In other words, it is the total stock of words we use. It is the least stable system, so it is an open system and it has a relatively unlimited number of items in it. It is not possible to give the exact number of words in a language (Kvetko 2005).

There are several different forms of knowledge involved in being able to use words effectively and correctly in a foreign language. One of the common divisions is to separate word knowledge into *receptive* or *passive* knowledge and *productive* or *active* knowledge. It is commonly known that *receptive* knowledge includes words that are recognized when they are heard or read. *Receptive* knowledge of words is much broader than students' *productive* knowledge. Productive knowledge means words that stick in our mind and we are able to use them while speaking or writing.

Vocabulary is created not only by single words but also by multiword expressions. Words are used in the environment of context – without context words or multiword units (MWU) don't carry any meaning. Words tend to cluster together in systematic ways. This can be seen in the collocational patterning of words. But in some cases, the patterning becomes so regular and obvious that the expression seems to be just a combination of simple words with collocational ties. So sometimes, words take on aspects of a single entity, it means that a combination of words acts as a single lexeme with a single meaning. Those lexemes are called *multiword units (MWUs)* (Schmitt 2000).

Multi-word expressions (MWUs) are complex lexical units, for example, verbal idioms (bite the bullet) or frozen adverbials (all at once). Others, such as particle verbs (stick out) or complex nominals (daycare center), indicate a close relationship between MWEs and word-formation units (Müller 2011).

A lot of MWUs exists. There are some examples:

no way	to smell a rat
as far as I know	how do you do?
if I were you	bottoms up

An MWU must be recognized in a speech community, that is, everybody must recognize it as a unit that occurs in language and carries the same meaning all the time. MWUs are also fixed to some degree. For example, idioms tend to be the most fixed of MWUs. *Don't judge*

the book by its cover would lose its meaning if any component were changed – *don't critic the book by its cover*. The same thing happens if the idiom is somehow modified, for example with a plural grammatical market or an adjective (*don't judge books by its cover*, *don't judge the small book by its cover*). On the other hand, it is better to think that idioms are just relatively fixed rather than being absolutely frozen. There are always some exceptions in language.

There are few categories of MWUs which need to be accounted for, for example, *compound words* (firework, bookstore), *phrasal verbs* (mix up, take off, give away), *fixed phrases* (ladies and gentlemen; morning, noon, and night; back and forth), and previously mentioned *idioms* (kick the bucket, to bite the dust). Correct usage of idioms is one of the things that sets apart fluent speakers of a language, therefore the students are often keen to learn how to use them.

In order to accomplish the main objective of learning, every learning process requires a manner or technique to be adapted. Among the important things in the process of learning issues *what* we should use for learning and *how* to use it. While human beings are engaged with many different strategies when they are learning a language, some of these strategies are giving the ultimate benefit, still, some other strategies are not successful. The term learning strategies means different things and it has been defined in several ways by the researchers (Hardan 2013, 1713).

2 METHODOLOGY

An *experiment method* and *discourse analysis method* have been chosen to discover the results in spontaneous students' utterances.

2.1 Objectives

The primary objective is to compare the lexical structure of Czech philology students' spontaneous English utterances before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the first semester of their university study – during their first seminar in September and the last seminar in May. Their lexical mistakes, the origin of words, length of words, and the formality of their lexicon were detected.

The testing of the vocabulary is extremely difficult because there is not known which words are to be selected for measurement, examination, or counting. According to Milton James, there is no method to be used for checking whether learners know or can use newly learned words (Milton 2009, 20).

In this context, the following *research questions* were asked:

1. Is there any difference in the number and type of lexical mistakes between the pre-test and the post-test utterances?
2. Is there any difference in the prevailing origin of words between the pre-test and the post-test utterances?
3. Is there any difference in the average length of words between the pre-test and the post-test utterances?
4. Is there any difference in the level of vocabulary formality between the pre-test and the post-test utterances?

One *research hypothesis* was formulated:

1. There are fewer lexical mistakes in the post-test utterances than in the pre-test utterances.

2.2 Sample

35 Czech first-year students of the university program English for Business Administration were the participants in the experiment. They were informed about the purpose and conduct of the experiment and asked for permission to record their utterances both in the pre-test and in the post-test. The recordings of an average length of 275 words were then transcribed for further analysis. My samples contain transcribed utterances. I have collected utterances from

the first year of their studies. Samples from the first seminar in September of the students are called pre-test and samples from the last seminar in December are called post-test.

2.3 Methods

The method of *experiment* with pre-test, post-test, and intervention was used in collecting the research material. The experimental method has a key position among the quantitative research methods. This is because it can show the causal consequences of pedagogical practice, as the only research method. It can demonstrate how one teaching phenomenon influences another. The experiment is important since it is used to determine the effectiveness of educational activities (educational program, intervention, training, textbooks, etc.). That cannot be done directly by other research methods. Observation, for example, just shows how the educational impact is realized but not if it is successful. Only by contrasting it with another educational effect can we prove its – and that can only be achieved in the context of an experiment.

Neither observation, questionnaire, interview, scaling, sociometry, or test have the potential of an experiment – these methods of research are used to describe the educational reality or the change, but not to determine its effectiveness. Therefore, the experiment is an important method of study to implement educational improvements and developments, and in carrying out transformations or reforms. (Gavora 2010)

The material was then analyzed by the method of *linguistic discourse analysis*. Discourse analysis, also called discourse studies, was developed as an academic field during the 1970s. Discourse study is a broad term for researching the ways people use language, both in written texts and in spoken contexts.

In discourse analysis, both the context of a conversation and what's being said are taken into account. This context may include a social and cultural framework, including a speaker's location at the time of the speech, as well as nonverbal indications such as body language, and may also include images and symbols in the case of textual communication. (Gee 2005)

Actual analysis, of course, usually develops in detail only a small part of the full picture. However, any discourse analysis needs, at least, to give some consideration, if only as background, to the whole picture. Essentially a discourse analysis involves asking questions about how language, at a given time and place, is used to construe the aspects of the situation network as realized at that time and place and how the aspects of the situation network simultaneously give meaning to that language – reflexivity. (Gee 2005, 92)

2.4 Procedure

The *intervention* was a winter semester of first-year students of English for Business Administration study program. It is necessary to add that none of the participants spent a long time (a week or more) in the English-speaking country during the semester.

The syllabus of the winter semester might affect students' utterances in some way. It is believed that the knowledge that students gain throughout the one semester will improve their language skills and that the lexical structure of their utterances will be much better. There are subjects in the syllabus which are taught in English and they might or might not influence the results of the experiment.

There are eight compulsory courses and one optional course in the winter semester. Five of the eight compulsory courses are taught in English: British studies, Language studies 1, Phonetics and Phonology, Introduction to Language studies, and Basics of Writing.

The British studies course aims to gain an overview of the social system of Great Britain – so this course is not going to affect much of the linguistics abilities. The students can obtain knowledge of language from reading some articles, listening to the professor, or speaking. The speaking part of this particular course is not that huge.

In the case of Language studies 1, students can practice more their grammar knowledge by completing exercises from books. That course aims to acquire a wide range of language skills and to learn to use them appropriately in specific situations.

In Phonetics and Phonology, things can get more interesting, because this course is a primary linguistics discipline. This course tries to show the contrastive approach between English and Czech phonetic and phonemic systems, which means differences at the level of sounds, syllables, words, and sentences. The aim is also practical training of individual phonetic phenomena in both perceptual and production levels and also in the transcription.

Another course is Introduction to language studies, which is a course that finally introduces information about lexicology itself. After passing this course, students will understand basic linguistic terminology. They will be able to apply the acquired knowledge in a deeper study of individual linguistic disciplines, such as in Lexicology in the following summer semester, or morphology and syntax in the second year of studies. Basics of Writing, a course which aim is to teach students how to create a successful argument and to gain knowledge of the basics of academic writing in English.

All components of the program might contribute to natural, contextual, and meaningful application of the English language and thus develop the lexical competence of the participants.

Four lexical parameters were analyzed in students' English pre-test and post-test utterances: number and type of lexical mistakes, the origin of words, length of words, and the level of formality. It has been proved that the mother tongue significantly influences the production in a foreign language. Therefore, it is hypothesized that students' English spontaneous utterances will be heavily influenced by the Czech language. There can be some mistakes in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, or syntax. This phenomenon called *Czenglish* can be often observed in the speeches of Czech people while using English as their second language.

A lexical mistake occurs when the choice of the words is wrong for the context, so it does not make any sense for native English speakers. The speaker does not know the true meaning of the word, so learners used it incorrectly.

Lexical mistake: *Can I get a **cup** of water?* Correct: *Can I get a **glass** of water?*

If a lexical mistake is made, it can be simply replaced by one word with the correct meaning. If a grammatical mistake is made, the missing part must be added or the whole sentence must be rearranged in order to make sense.

The number of lexical mistakes was detected both in pre-test and post-test utterances and the mistakes were categorized into the groups: interference and non-interference.

The origin of words was determined using an etymological dictionary and the prevailing sources were found out both in pre-test and post-test utterances.

The average length of words (in syllables) was calculated both in pre-test and post-test utterances.

The formality of words (in categories: informal – neutral – formal) was investigated and the dominant occurrence was stated.

The pre-test and post-test results were summarized and compared.

II. ANALYSIS

3 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The participants' transcribed spontaneous utterances from the beginning and the end of the first semester were analyzed. Firstly, lexical mistakes were identified in utterances of 35 students, in a total of 70 recordings. Further, the origin of words, the length of words, and the level of formality were studied in the texts.

3.1 Lexical Mistakes

As can be seen from Table 1, these are the results from students' utterances. The number of lexical mistakes in post-text recordings (2.97 mistakes per recording on average) was considerably lower than in pre-test recordings (4.54 mistakes per recording on average).

Participant	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST	Participant	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST
1	6	7	19	6	1
2	3	5	20	5	2
3	0	3	21	9	3
4	6	0	22	3	2
5	10	3	23	0	4
6	5	0	24	1	1
7	2	4	25	1	0
8	11	8	26	7	1
9	4	2	27	0	3
10	6	7	28	7	2
11	0	2	29	0	1
12	1	1	30	7	1
13	3	1	31	2	2
14	2	7	32	4	2
15	5	5	33	18	12
16	2	2	34	0	1
17	3	1	35	5	1
18	15	7	TOTAL	4.54	2.97

Table 1 – Number of Lexical Mistakes

From the results it can be stated that in terms of the number of lexical mistakes, there was considerably better progress in the post-test – students had fewer mistakes in the post-test than in the pre-test.

In the pre-test, 11 students had *more* lexical mistakes in the post-test than in the pre-test, 19 students had *fewer* mistakes in the pre-test than in the post-test and only 5 students had *the same* number of mistakes as at the beginning of my experiment. The results from the post-test are more positive, when comes to the number of lexical mistakes. The number of students who had fewer lexical mistakes is lower than the number of students with more lexical mistakes. But only the number of lexical mistakes is not enough. After analyzing all the mistakes, five categories that repeated the most in students' utterances were created.

1. Lack of necessary words
2. Extra words
3. Czenglish mistakes
 - a. Collocations
 - b. Confusibles
 - c. Faux Amis
4. Nonsense expressions
5. Wrong preposition

The first group of mistakes that is essential, when it comes to lexicology, is the lack of necessary words. This group of mistakes belongs to lexical non-interference mistakes. It was very common for students to omit words in certain phrases. In the examples below, the missing word is put in the brackets. Without these words, the sentences do not make any sense. These examples were collected:

“The connection is here and (then) I went back to sleep.”

“We added (each other) on Instagram.”

“you know (we had) a lot of fun with my classmates”

“I choose a place where usually (there) is no one”

“and (we) were supposed to take a trip to Belgrade”

“Well, two years ago, (I had) my first real experience with the UK, or more specifically England.”

“I want (to) talk about...”

“Kind of pain (is) coming up.”

“We felt (we) are strong and...”

„(It) happened last week near (to) the old shopping mall.”

“So he (has) broken his wrist.”

To the second group belongs only a few examples. This group of mistakes also belongs to lexical non-interference mistakes. In these cases, when another unnecessary word is used, it does not have to be fully understandable for native speakers. Of course, this can be

understandable by Czech teachers, because they can see what students meant by using some extra words. The mother tongue of teachers is usually Czech or Slovak, so they can clearly see the structure of sentences based on a Czech sentence structure. There are two examples with the usage of extra words and again, the unnecessary word is put into brackets.

“(Do) we added each other, we chatted...”

“We went (for) hiking.”

“I expected (what) much more from this city.”

As it was expected, the biggest group of students' mistakes contains Czenglish mistakes. Collocations, faux amis, and confusibles are included in Czenglish mistakes. This group of mistakes belongs to lexical interference mistakes. Most of these mistakes were made in the pre-test. This shows that students have made such progress and that they have started to think in English. This is the point of learning and improving yourself while acquiring knowledge of the second language. The examples can be seen below. The mistake is indicated in italics, the correct word is always put in the brackets right after the sentence.

CONFUSIBLES

“We took the bus and then metro.” (underground)

“We search for someone who operates the camera system.” (are looking for)

“We go there. (went)

“They came to my home.” (house)

“I accidentally split my *granko*.” (I spilled my cocoa drink)

“...*like* this funny story.” (as)

“We forgot about that *dish*.” (food)

“It was all torn up so I have to carry it in my hand. It was quite *difficult*.” (heavy)

“I just *loose* track of the time.” (lost)

“I took this little bucket from my *home*.” (house)

“Science class was the most boring *hour* of my life.” (lesson)

“I *forgot* my concert ticket at home.” (left)

“I want to *speak* about...” (talk)

“I have to *tell* that some days it was so funny.” (say)

“The road was full of *sudden* turns. (unexpected)

“...even if 90 is *approved* on the road.” (allowed)

“I think he didn't *count* his distance.” (calculate)

“We didn't have *spare transport*. (to slowing down the traffic)

COLLOCATIONS

- “As I was thanking him a lot...” (I thanked him very much.)
- “So, at the airbnb, we had a *book*.” (booked room or reservation)
- “He *has* underwear.” (was wearing, in Czech “Měl spodní prádlo.”)
- “I used *many* them.” (a lot of/ many of them)
- “I *was* in formal clothes.” (I was wearing formal clothes.)
- “It was opened *for some* miracle.” (by some miracle)
- “We talked to them and *had* some photos.” (took some photos)
- “My friends *started a game* called I dare you.” (started to play a game)
- “We *had* one of the most hottest chilli peppers.” (tried/ate)
- “I will *play good*.” (in Czech “Budu hrát dobře.” – play well)
- “I *was boring them* to death.” (I bored them to death)
- “We went *to bath in the sea*.” (bath in a bathtub, swim in the sea)
- “She did not *know English*.” (speak English)
- “*We have there* a man that every day comes.” (there is)
- “We *go* to Bulgaria every year.” (travel)
- “I am waiting for my parents *to go home*.” (return back home)

FAUX AMIS

- “But *actual* reason was...” (the real)
- “...somewhere with *hobos* (with homeless people)
- “It is really nice *nature*.” (There is really nice landscape.)
- “It has a *magic* atmosphere. (magical)
- “I was really bored and tried to look for some *actions* on the internet.” (events)
- “My *speaking* will be about travelling.” (speech)
- “I do not know, some *programs* by the swimming pool. (entertainment)
- “So we kept *buying*.” (shopping)
- “I was on *brigade* at swimming pool this summer.” (summer-job)
- “Finally, there is a *happy end*.” (happy ending)
- “And the socks *came* perfectly.” (arrived)
- “There was a lot of *homelesses*.” (homeless people)
- “Dubrovnik is really great city because it is very *historical*.” (historic)
- “The bus driver *got fee*.” (received a fine)
- “Two people were or had *care* from some nurses.” (treatment)

The fourth group contains non-sense expressions. This group of mistakes belongs also to lexical interference mistakes. This aspect also greatly influences the lexical structure of utterances because the overall sentences make no sense. So, for the native speakers, this cannot be understood completely.

NON-SENSE EXPRESSIONS

“Where I should go and *mind you* I had a big suitcase”

“He is my friend that likes to cook *much*.” (a lot)

“It fed *up me*.” (It fed me up.)

“And we got a *good laugh from it*.” (We laughed a lot.; in Czech “Dobře jsme se u toho nasmáli.”)

“We went home to sleep because *we couldn't be bothered*.” (We didn't want anyone to bother us.)

“We had a lot of fun and *drinks just wouldn't stop coming*. (They kept giving us drinks.)

“I told no one I *go* there.” (went)

“*Their* were living next (to the) forest.” (they)

“*I wasn't one of playing games* during the class.” (I wasn't the one who played games.)

“I did really well *for* my excitement.” (because of)

“We *go* and suddenly...”(continued)

“This day *comes* early that I expected.” (came earlier; than)

“I didn't know what *expected* from San Diego.” (what to expect)

And finally, this is a group with a wrongly chosen preposition. This group of mistakes belongs again to lexical non-interference mistakes. By the wrong usage of the preposition, the true meaning of the utterance is changed and not understood clearly for the native speaker. Some prepositions are even used in fixed phrases only, so this structure must be followed according to the rules.

WRONG PREPOSITION

“We end up in the park laying *in* the ground.” (on)

“I met a guy *in* the train.” (on)

“...to travel back *for* Serbia.” (to)

“I and my brother were bored *in* the summer holidays.” (on)

“So my story happened *at* one weekend in December.” (on)

“I could not attend school *at* that day.” (on)

“Last day *on* my secondary school.” (at)

“It happened *with* me *in* this summer.” (to)

“I was *on* festival.” (at)

“It was *on* August.” (in)

“I put the suitcase *in* the bus.” (on)

Another interesting aspect is the percentage of unique and difficult words used in students' utterances. A word count tool was used to calculate how many unique and difficult words were used from the student's vocabulary. A unique word is considered a word that appears only one in the whole text – so the word that is not repeated. Another aspect was counting the difficult words, so how many difficult words the student have used from their vocabulary. Difficult words are these which do not belong to the list of 3000 familiar words in an average vocabulary of a learner.

Participant	PRE Unique w.	POST Unique w.	PRE Difficult w.	POST Difficult w.	Participant	PRE Unique w.	POST Unique w.	PRE Difficult w.	POST Difficult w.
1	52 %	54 %	23 %	25 %	19	43 %	39 %	28 %	20 %
2	53 %	57 %	16 %	20 %	20	35 %	32 %	15 %	12 %
3	47 %	52 %	20 %	12 %	21	39 %	42 %	19 %	19 %
4	37 %	49 %	18 %	17 %	22	40 %	58 %	20 %	21 %
5	44 %	46 %	12 %	26 %	23	56 %	39 %	30 %	14 %
6	51 %	58 %	16 %	20 %	24	48 %	49 %	13 %	18 %
7	63 %	70 %	14 %	20 %	25	54 %	58 %	17 %	16 %
8	41 %	37 %	19 %	19 %	26	39 %	42 %	24 %	23 %
9	49 %	53 %	11 %	13 %	27	36 %	40 %	14 %	19 %
10	46 %	48 %	15 %	11 %	28	59 %	70 %	20 %	24 %
11	47 %	51 %	21 %	27 %	29	49 %	39 %	16 %	11 %
12	54 %	47 %	21 %	27 %	30	55 %	59 %	19 %	19 %
13	51 %	60 %	16 %	23 %	31	36 %	42 %	18 %	26 %
14	28 %	62 %	17 %	26 %	32	47 %	50 %	19 %	17 %
15	52 %	60 %	21 %	30 %	33	49 %	63 %	22 %	23 %
16	43 %	45 %	20 %	22 %	34	48 %	65 %	21 %	23 %
17	57 %	64 %	14 %	17 %	35	38 %	42 %	17 %	26 %
18	41 %	51 %	10 %	18 %					

Table 2 – Unique and Different Words

When comes to the unique words used in the utterances, the results from the post-test are much better. 29 students achieved a *higher* percentage number of unique words used and only 6 students had a *lower* percentage number. As far as difficult words, the results from students in the post-test were very impressive. 22 students had a *higher* percentage number

of difficult words in the post-test than the pre-test, only 3 students had *the same* percentage number of difficult words and 10 students had a *lower* percentage number. So overall, it can be stated that most students from the experiment made huge progress in terms of uniqueness and difficulty of chosen vocabulary in their utterances.

3.2 Origin of words

To find out what is the percentual usage of the origin of words used in student's utterances, all the nouns and adjectives from texts were collected and an online etymology dictionary was used for the classification. There are stated averaged results from all these collected data in the following Figure 1.

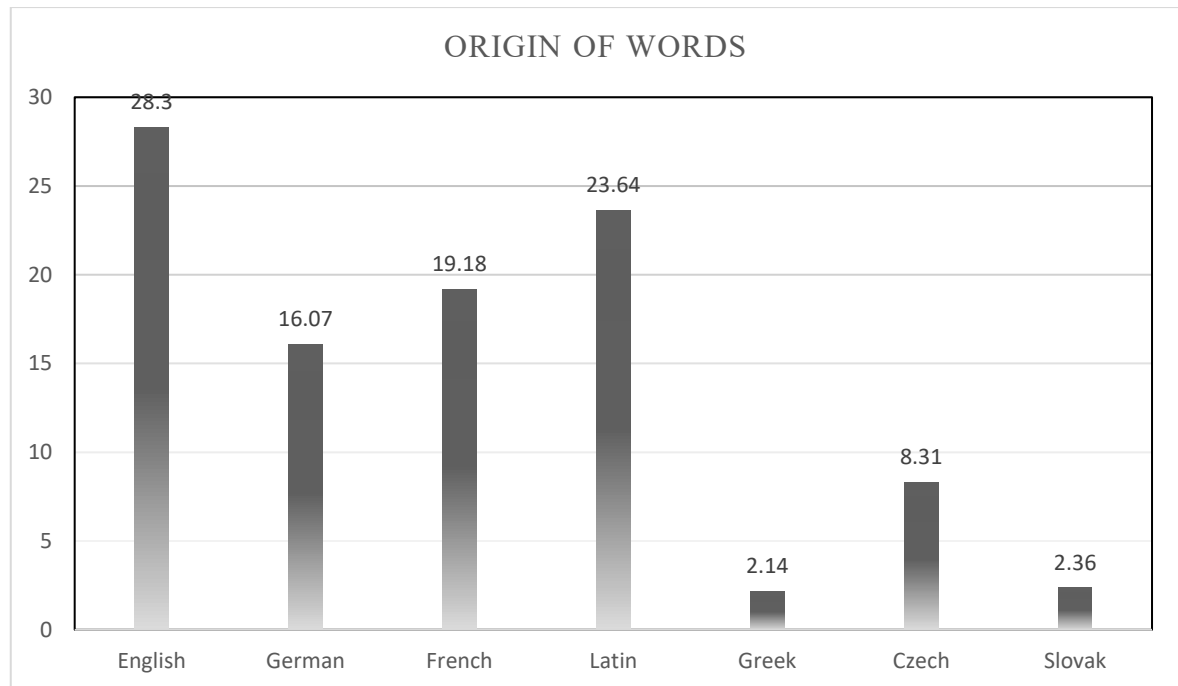


Figure 1 – Origin of Words

The most extensive group in student utterances were words of English origin. This is the result that was expected because generally, this is the biggest group in the English language when comes to etymology. The most frequent words that repeated all over, were, for example, words *life, room, connection, sea, summer, holiday, lunch, home...*

The second largest group from the research was the Latin origin of words. This is natural because many European languages have their roots based in Latin and they use many words from this old language. The most often used word with Latin origin in my samples were words such as *important, series, fortune, frustrated, family, February, direction, picture, family, culture, people, minutes, dish...*

Another frequently used group were words with a French origin. Words with French origin that have been used in students' utterances were, for example, *survival, specific, mushroom, interest, music, guitar, persuade, machine, brake, station, experience, story, question, religion, people, moment, gay, gentleman, village...*

The fourth group was the German origin, where the most interesting words used were *lobby* and *kindergarten*.

The next group contains words with Czech and Slovak origin, as the experiment was made with Czech and Slovak students' utterances. The word *metro* was misused in one of the utterances, the student probably didn't know that it is translated as "underground" in English. Of course, Czech names for cities such as *Prague*, *Zlín*, etc. also belong to this group. Another example of a used word with Czech origin was the word "teda", when one student made a mistake and spoke Czech instead of English. From the Slovak origin of words, there were some Slovak names as *Laci*, and also the names for some cities, *Nitra*, *Košice*, general word *pálinka* end so on.

From the Greek origin, there appeared words such as *police*, *olives*, *jealous*, *chair*, *paper*, and *hour*.

3.3 Length of words

The length of words was measured in syllables. The total number of syllables in pre-test utterances (414.14) was higher than the total number of syllables in the post-test (342.0). However, the average length of words was identical in pre-test and post-test recordings (1.38) (Table 3). The average tells us what the average number of syllables per word is. The average was calculated from all words used in the utterance of each student.

Participant	PRE Syllables	POST Syllables	PRE Average	POST Average	Participant	PRE Syllables	POST Syllables	PRE Average	POST Average
1	431	263	1.5	1.5	19	709	611	1.5	1.4
2	244	276	1.3	1.4	20	783	727	1.3	1.3
3	337	172	1.4	1.4	21	626	502	1.4	1.4
4	461	346	1.3	1.3	22	819	326	1.4	1.5
5	302	341	1.3	1.3	23	240	611	1.5	1.3
6	234	212	1.4	1.3	24	201	289	1.2	1.3
7	238	155	1.5	1.4	25	219	222	1.3	1.3
8	608	748	1.3	1.4	26	461	739	1.3	1.5
9	247	205	1.3	1.4	27	663	451	1.5	1.4
10	299	264	1.3	1.3	28	190	118	1.4	1.3
11	346	236	1.4	1.4	29	307	367	1.4	1.3
12	299	447	1.4	1.4	30	248	181	1.4	1.4
13	294	214	1.5	1.4	31	710	466	1.4	1.4
14	993	204	1.3	1.4	32	461	264	1.4	1.3
15	300	228	1.4	1.4	33	439	226	1.5	1.6
16	396	410	1.3	1.4	34	304	207	1.4	1.4
17	118	167	1.3	1.3	35	434	456	1.3	1.3
18	534	319	1.4	1.4	TOTAL	414.14	342.0	1.38	1.38

Table 3 – Length of Words

The average word length in English is 3.7 characters with an average length of 1.66 syllables in a colloquial style. When comes to the length of all syllables, the pre-test utterances had a higher number of syllables than the post-test. Utterances of 12 students contained *more* syllables in the post-test than the pre-test and utterances of 23 students contained *fewer*

syllables in the post-test. This means, that in most cases the utterances in the post-test were much shorter than in the pre-test.

Another aspect that was compared was the average number of syllables per word. So, in the pre-test 9 students had *a longer* average number of syllables per word in the post-test than the pre-test, 9 students had *a shorter* average number of syllables per word and 17 students had *the same* average number of syllables per word. So at least the majority of the students had at least the same average number of syllables per word or sometimes a longer average number of syllables. This shows that the length of words mostly stayed the same at the end of the experiment – students had kept their knowledge about the usage of advanced vocabulary during the intervention.

3.4 Formality

Within the category of formality, the attributes “formal, neutral and informal” were distinguished. An overall formality level was considered in each text. Both in pre-test and post-test, most utterances could be evaluated as neutral according to the vocabulary formality (20 texts). Twice as many utterances were evaluated as formal in post-test (4 texts) than in pre-test (2 texts) and fewer utterances were evaluated as informal in post-test (11 texts) than in pre-test (13 texts) (Table 4, Figure 2).

Participant	PRE Formality	POST Formality	Participant	PRE Formality	POST Formality
1	Neutral	Neutral	19	Formal	Formal
2	Informal	Formal	20	Informal	Neutral
3	Neutral	Neutral	21	Informal	Neutral
4	Neutral	Neutral	22	Neutral	Neutral
5	Neutral	Neutral	23	Neutral	Informal
6	Neutral	Neutral	24	Neutral	Neutral
7	Neutral	Neutral	25	Informal	Informal
8	Informal	Informal	26	Neutral	Formal
9	Neutral	Informal	27	Neutral	Neutral
10	Neutral	Informal	28	Neutral	Neutral
11	Neutral	Neutral	29	Informal	Neutral
12	Informal	Informal	30	Informal	Informal
13	Informal	Neutral	31	Formal	Formal
14	Informal	Informal	32	Informal	Informal
15	Informal	Informal	33	Neutral	Neutral
16	Neutral	Neutral	34	Neutral	Neutral
17	Informal	Informal	35	Neutral	Neutral
18	Neutral	Neutral			

Table 4 – Formality

There are 3 levels of formality of a text or utterances, and these are formal, neutral, and informal style. Every situation requires a different style. Situations that require a formal style of language are these with a serious topic, or situations that include communicating with people we do not know well. In formal style, there is a non-usage of contractions or abbreviations. The formal speech should not be personal, therefore the passive voice is used there. Formal language is usually used in writings, however, there are some exceptions,

people use a more neutral or informal style, for example, in personal emails or messages to friends.

The level of formality people use is affected by a certain situation in which they are. Participants were in the class, talking with their peers. But, the level of stress might come up, when a time of recording came, and they had to tell their stories in front of the recorder. Students were expected to use the neutral style of formality in their utterances the most.

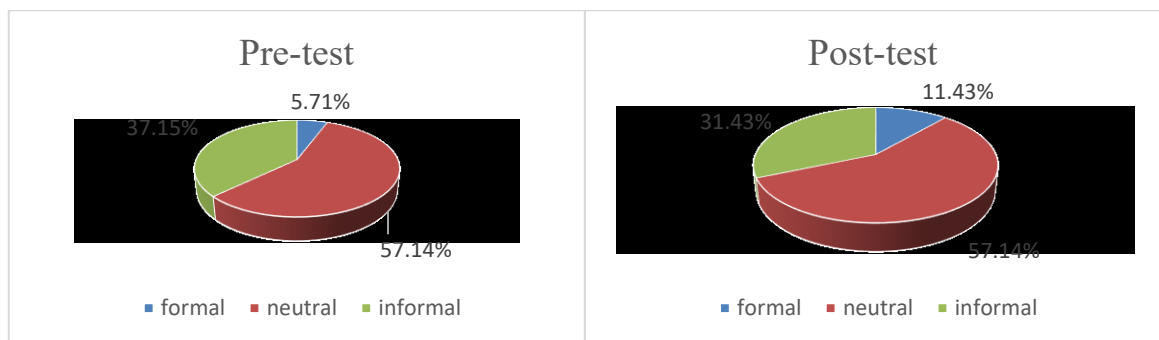


Figure 2 – Formality of Vocabulary

At the end of the semester, 9 students achieved *progress* in terms of formality of vocabulary used, 23 students had *the same level* of formality of vocabulary used and the vocabulary of only 3 students *worsened*. The classification of the utterances from the aspect of the formality was done according to the amount of formal, neutral, or informal statements. There were many abbreviations such as “kinda”, “wanna”, “gonna” used in informal utterances. Slang words, figures of speech, or very simple sentences contained utterances with informal style.

However, most of the students’ utterances were neutral, which are non-emotional utterances that usually stick to the facts. Students spoke with their peers, but still, there was a professor present in the class, so they should not be speaking in an informal style much. The usage of neutral style is very justified.

CONCLUSION

This bachelor thesis has demonstrated whether the intervention of the first semester of university studies helped students to achieve progress while considering the lexical structure of their vocabulary. The research has helped to confirm the hypothesis – utterances from the post-test had fewer lexical mistakes than in pre-test. 19 of 35 students had fewer lexical mistakes in the post-test than the pre-test. The reason for the improvement of students in their utterances is, undoubtedly, that during the first semester they were constantly listening to English spoken utterances from their professors, thus gathering the information about the correct lexical structure of sentences. The origin of words used by the students stayed basically the same in both tests. The largest part was taken up by words of English origin, others were Latin, French, German, Czech, Slovak, and Greek (sorted descending).

In terms of length, the utterances in the post-test were much shorter than in the pre-test in most cases. It was expected that students' utterances will be slightly longer after the intervention. This result of shorter utterances in the post-test could be caused by various issues. There could be a possible situation when students might be very nervous. They might worry about ending up with worse results in the post-test than the pre-test, so they were careful about their utterance and did not want to make it too long. The longer utterance is, the more mistakes can occur there, especially when comes to first-year students at the university. On the other hand, the average number of syllables remained the same in both tests.

The level of formality during the intervention was also improved to a certain level. 9 of 35 students have increased their formality level and 23 students remained the same level of formality, more specifically neutral level. This is the result that was expected. Students should use a rather neutral or even formal level of formality in utterances since we are in a university environment.

An implication of this thesis is to confirm that the continuous learning of the language in the English for Business Administration study program leads to the improvement of students' utterances in the English language, in terms of the occurrence of lexical mistakes and level of formality. For even better improvement, I would recommend professors to communicate even more with students, to leave them more space for expressing their thoughts and for developing their speaking abilities. Also, frequent listening to a foreign language is very essential for the right choice of vocabulary in students' practice.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- ESP English for Specific Purposes – is a subset of English as a second or foreign language. It usually refers to teaching the English language to university students or people already in employment, concerning the particular vocabulary and skills they need for the job position.
- L1 First language – mother tongue, it is a speaker's first language.
- L2 Second language – the foreign language acquisition
- MWUs Multiword units – unit of language that consists of more words than one

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