

# **The Specifics of Speaking English in Czech Business Administration (Lexical Level)**

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## **ABSTRAKT**

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na chyby v lexikální jazykové rovině studentů angličtiny pro manažerskou praxi. Cílem této práce je zjistit příčinu daných chyb pomocí studia lexikální úrovně a následné analýzy nahrávek studentů a jejich projevů. Teoretická část se zaměřuje na vymezení termínu lexikální struktura, jazyková interference, představuje několik běžných lexikálních chyb a úvod do metodologie. Praktická část se zabývá samotnou analýzou, jejíž výsledky jsou prezentovány v grafech. Grafy označují divize, ve kterých studenti chybovali nejvíce. Nadále také shrnuje a udává příklady nejčastějších chyb. A poslední, závěrečná část se zabývá příčinou a možným vysvětlením těchto chyb.

Klíčová slova: lexikální struktura, jazyková interference, interferenční chyby, lexikální chyby

## **ABSTRACT**

This Bachelor Thesis focuses on mistakes at lexical language level made by Business English students. The aim of this thesis is to discover the reason behind lexical mistakes by means of studying the lexical level and therefore performing an analysis of given recordings which comprised of student's short business speeches. The first part of this thesis is focused on defining the term lexical structure, language interference, provides several examples of common lexical mistakes and also introduces methodology of the analysis. The second part of this thesis deals with the analysis and its results are presented in forms of graphs. These graphs point out where students made the most mistakes and also includes a provision of mistakes. The third, final part of this thesis is dealing with the results, describing the origin of the mistakes.

Keywords: lexical structure, language interference, interference mistakes, lexical mistakes

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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

Language interference is one of the common sources of mistakes and misunderstandings in intercultural communication. It can be that some words sound the same in a foreign language but differ in meaning thus it can confuse speakers and lead to improper use. Nevertheless, interference is not only about similar words but also about different language systems which differs from one another. Speaker might often get confused while trying to switch between two language systems and make lexical mistakes. It occurs at any language level from lexical or grammatical to phonetic. Kráľová (2011, 11) describes interference as a diversion from the synchronous language standard. In addition, the more bilingual an individual becomes, the more interference occurs. It arise primarily from the wrong use of words which for instance does not exist in other languages or have different meanings. Lekova (2011, 320) claims that language interference is one of the current problems in foreign language teaching. It happens usually without speaker's awareness. It happens often to speakers with not enough command of a foreign language, however speakers with a good command of a foreign language are not entirely excluded. Speakers with not enough command of a foreign language, often seek support from their mother language and replace or misuse words more often. On the other hand, speakers with a good command of a foreign language might do mistakes less often, thanks to their vocabulary there is no need for them to seek support. Yet, there are mistakes spotted in their communication. These mistakes are not specifically of a grammatical origin, but of lexical. How it is possible that interference occur even among bilingual individuals? This thesis will provide an Error Analysis based on this question and aim to explain but also find out the origin with a reason behind these mistakes. As a method for this research was chosen the Error Analysis of over 50 recordings presenting English Business students, which means bilinguals and their business speeches. This analysis is focused on errors made by individuals learning a foreign language and therefore, it is possible to point out the problematic parts where they do the most errors. Furthermore, the language level of analysis was set to be lexical thus the focus is on mistakes of lexical origin such as expansion or narrowing of a word or forming non-existing suffixes.

## **I. THEORY**

## 1 LEXICAL LEVEL

First chapter of this thesis will be dealing with lexical level of language important for an analysis to be carried out.

Firstly, it is relevant to start from language discipline it originated from, the discipline is lexicology. Lexicology is the study of lexis, which can be understood as the total stock of words in language, and lexicon. Words are the main focus in the study of lexicology. Words rely on information derived from morphology that is the study about word forms and semantics that is the study about word meanings. Lexicology can be used as one level of language analysis, right next to semantics, morphology, syntax, and phonology. Furthermore are all these language levels connected and interact with one another. (Jackson and Zé Amvela 2007, 2-10)

### 1.1 Structure of lexical level

It is possible to distinguish at least two types of structure in the lexicon, if language is considered as a structure of independent elements and system of signs. These two types are internal and external with paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations. Where words can be substituted, combined or used in opposition concerns external structure. In internal structure, words can be morphologically simple and allows word-formation, metaphors, metonymy or complex which considers suffixation and compounds. (Lipka 2002, 12-93)

Paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations are represented in the following schema:

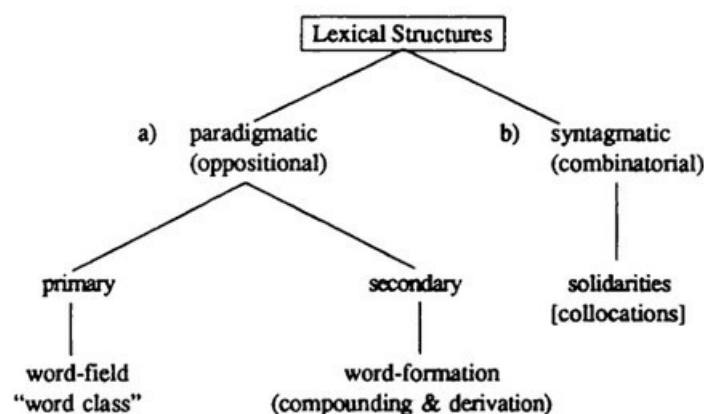


Figure 1: Lexical Structures division, illustrated by Lipka (2002, 18)

Lexical structures can be divided into paradigmatic and syntagmatic words. Paradigmatic words are these words that can be substituted at specific place in a sentence and also be oppositional. Furthermore, they are divided into primary paradigmatic words, which considers word class or word-field and secondary, that considers word-formation. Word

class are words that carries the same general semantic features and word-field are words with direct oppositional meaning to each other. On the other hand, syntagmatic words can be combined, thus combinatorial and solidarities such as collocations. Syntagmatic words represents a relationship between words, which are combined in a sentence. (Lipka 2002, 18-19)

## 2 LANGUAGE INTERFERENCE

Second chapter of this thesis will be dealing with language interference. Language interference can happen to an individual studying his first foreign language but also to a bilingual individual. Language interference comes to existence when an individual's studying of a foreign language is interfered by their mother language or a previously learnt foreign language. Thus, the individual's speaking or writing of that foreign language can include, for instance, phrases or suffixes typically found in their mother language, but not in the foreign language. Language interference is a known phenomenon among linguists and psycholinguists, whom are actively conducting research on this subject. Based on their research, methods to overcome it in foreign language teaching have already been offered. These methods will be explained in further details in this thesis.

From a linguistic point of view, interference is an interaction or a change in linguistic structures and structural elements. It appears to be a deviation from linguistic norms in the spoken and written language.

From a psycholinguistic point of view, it is a negative transfer of language habits and skills from the mother tongue or from a foreign language to another foreign language.

Language interference can occur on different language levels, while there are many subtypes, the three main language levels are lexical, grammatical and phonetic. Other types of interference are: morpho-syntactic and lexical-semantic. (Lekova 2009, 320-323)

### **Lexical Level**

Interference on a lexical level occurs during the misuse of certain words, when the meaning of a word is narrowed or expanded, but also when non-existing lexical items using foreign suffixes are formed. For instance, "*That is typical for him.*" instead of "*That is typical of him.*"

### **Grammatical Level**

Interference on a grammatical level occurs when there are changes in the structure and the structural elements in the foreign language. It is caused by semantic and formal resemblances and distinctions between the native and the foreign language system. For instance Czech individuals tends to use the word "graduation" incorrectly in sentences as "*I graduated high school in 2015.*" instead of "*I was graduated from high school in 2015.*" It is acceptable and widely used in Czech, whereas wrong in English language.

### **Phonetic Level**

Interference on a phonetic level affects the improper pronunciation of phonetic sounds in the second language caused by the existence of different phonetic structures present in the mother tongue or the first foreign language. (Lekova 2009, 321) This means that an individual's pronunciation of certain words can be affected by their mother tongue, or for bilingual individuals, previously learnt foreign language. For instance Czech individuals tends to pronounce "event" as "even" because of the short and long Czech letter "T".

### **Divisions of interference mistakes**

Because an individual is lacking knowledge or tries to adapt to the new foreign language's system, they often fill the blanks using their mother language. However, the language system is often fundamentally different, therefore the support from the mother tongue is not always relevant and helpful, because it can lead to for instance incorrect pronunciation of a word and potential mistakes in the word order.

Three main divisions of interference mistakes can be divided into lexical, grammatical and phonetic.

## **2.1 Types of interference**

There are two types of interference, namely interlanguage and intralanguage interference. Furthermore, intralanguage interference is less common in comparison to interlanguage interference. (Lekova 2009, 321)

### **Intralanguage interference**

Intralanguage interference occurs when an individual studying a second foreign language makes mistakes under the influence of previously acquired language and habits they established in it. This means that if someone is studying French as a second foreign language, they can keep the habits and influence from the first language he learnt, for instance English.

### **Interlanguage interference**

Interlanguage interference occurs when the individual's negative habits are transferred from the native language or from the first learnt foreign language to the second foreign language they are studying. To give a more precise example, we take a Czech student, whose first foreign language is English, and whom is currently studying French as a second foreign language. A negative transfer of habits means there that certain habits, such as word order, articles, persons or even suffixes that can be used in the incorrect form while the student

Czech is speaking French. This can be because they have a good command of the English language and are thus transferring the rules into French.

In addition, the opposite can happen, there can be a positive habit transfer, since some languages have very similar systems. For instance, an Italian person would have far fewer issues learning writing French rules compared to a Czech person.

Language interference has its types, but also forms, which are implicit and explicit.

### **Implicit interference**

Implicit language interference is characterised by an individual that does not make mistakes because they avoid using complex grammar and vocabulary. This results in correct sentences, but the drawback is that they are very simple and poor, making it lose its expressive and idiomatic aspect. (Lekova 2009, 321)

### **Explicit interference**

Explicit language interference is characterised by mistakes individuals do in spoken and written foreign language expression by transferring their language habits from a native to a foreign language, thus ignoring the norms of foreign speech. (Lekova 2009, 321)

### **Mother language and foreign language**

Mother languages are acquired by every one of us. It is our first language learnt, first language spoken and might even be the language we excel in the most. Whereas a foreign language is what an individual learns subsequently. The purpose of studying foreign languages may be to become bilingual, for the sake of traveling etc. Mother languages are important to mention when speaking about language interference, as it is precisely our mother language which might interfere into our foreign language speaking or writing before reaching good command of the language level.

### **Mother language**

As it was previously said, a mother language is our first language learnt, and our first language spoken. It is taught very often by parents to their children, and the surroundings where children grow up will have a certain impact on how the language is used. However, this impact will be mainly felt on differences of dialect, accent or slang. A mother language does not have to be always the language of the country the child is born in: for instance a Japanese couple living in Czech republic might prefer for their children to have Japanese as



their mother language, because it is the language the parents both know and speak, unlike Czech which is a foreign language to them.

### **Possibility of two mother languages**

According to Gary Coen (2016), a working class linguist, having two mother languages is unlikely – but possible. He emphasizes strongly that each bilingual individual is different. Gary Coen claims that there are “certain hypotheses which postulate the existence of a mental device that switches from one language system to another, although they differ with respect to where this switch is located.”

### **Foreign language**

Foreign languages, in difference to the mother tongue as it was previously said, is taught or learnt on purpose, predominantly due to society standards. Nonetheless, individuals must make a conscious choice in order to develop and improve their speaking skills in a foreign language. For instance in Czech Republic, children must learn English, Russian or German (English is the number one choice by a wide margin) as their foreign language until they finish high school.

It is important to note that foreign languages are the languages of abroad countries and their different cultures, all of which are never concentrated in one place.

## **2.2 Lexical interference**

Lexical interference mistakes occur when an individual does not have a good command of the language and uses words which a native speaker would not use. For instance “tiny” and “thin” is often misused when talking about body types, whereas “tiny” is used to describe someone whom is very short, “thin” is used to describe someone who is skinny, for a lack of better term. Yet, sometimes “tiny” can be witnessed being used for both small and skinny individual, which is wrong. The words might look similar, but differ in meaning.

Interference at lexical level, is often associated with the term Czenglish.

### **Czenglish**

This phenomenon occurs when a Czech individual combines their mother language with English as a foreign language. In a lot of cases it is caused by individuals looking for support from the mother language, so they can express what they want to communicate. On the other hand, those mistakes can appear regardless of an individual’s attention. In short individuals can speak Czenglish without being aware of it. Mistakes can come from other places than

Czenglish, however the aim of this thesis is to focus on the reason of the lexical level mistakes made by Czech speakers. Don Sparling in his book about Czenglish mentions a lot of Czenglish mistakes made among Czech speakers. For instance, “\**That was a perfect example how not to behave.*” Is wrong because it is missing a preposition, the correct version should be “*That was a perfect example of how not to behave.*” Omitting or choosing the wrong preposition is one of the classic mistakes perhaps after the violation of word order. The reason can be seen in the Czech version of this sentence “*Tohle je dobrý příklad, jak se nechovat.*” There is no preposition, and this code makes us think (often without noticing) that there is no preposition needed. Another example from the field of violating the word order is “\**Why you are here?*” whereas the correct version is “*Why are you here?*” In Czech, it would be said the same way: “*Proč jsi tady?*” The word “*jsi*” can be translated as “you are” which is why the Czech speaking individual can easily forget the difference related to the English direct questions rules. Nonetheless, mistakes related to direct questions are not as usual as the example used for prepositions. Both illustrations of interference differ from proper English speaking skills. The violation of word order example may be more common among high school students and the preposition example may be more common among university students. (Sparling 1990, 204)

Based on research from Lekova (2009, 321) an individual with good English speaking skills should not have any issues connected to interference. However, interference mistakes can appear among skilled bilingual individuals when research about interference from Král'ová (2011) was done only among bilinguals. The recommended solution might be to raise the individual's awareness about interference and improvement of English speaking skills. For instance, it is this author's personal experience that if the influence from the mother language causes issues with prepositions and the individual is not aware of it, then he cannot focus on the issue and improve it. To summarize, it is not necessary only to improve and develop, awareness should come first, for that might be helpful to serve the Error Analysis.

### **Common Lexical Mistakes**

Lexical level mistakes were previously tangibly mentioned and this chapter servers to describe it in greater detail and includes some of this author's reasoning. The purpose of this chapter is to mention several common lexical mistakes, which are made by individuals as well as by bilingual individuals as an important part for the future analysis of the recordings.

### Nouns

A lot of words in Czech and English sound similar but differ in meaning. Some words can however, sound as they are foreign words that got accepted or adapted in modern Czech, because there are at the moment a lot of words taken from foreign languages. The perfect example is *moderator* in “\**The new TV moderator is terrible!*” In British English, a moderator is a person who acts as a medium between two sides which are trying to make a deal. Or in American English a person, who acts as an observer and assures the debate is going fairly. In comparison to these two meanings, Czech word *moderátor* is for a person, who acts as a presenter or an anchor-man. (Land 2011, 61) The correct form of this sentence is then “*The new TV presenter is terrible!*”

### Prepositions

Czech students make many mistakes when they are directly translating from Czech to English (word by word). Poslušná (2011, 24) claims that “there are some prepositions which can have similar translations into Czech but are used in different structures or context.” Because there are no exact rules, individuals have to memorize the difference and meaning or learn their use by heart.

### Prepositions of time

“\**I lived there before two years.*” The first common mistake with prepositions is usage of “before” and “ago” Because both preposition can mean the same, Czechs tends to use before instead of ago. This is an example of word to word translation, because the first meaning to “předtím” is *before*. However the correct version should be: “*I lived there two years ago.*” The reason can admittedly be also insufficient vocabulary.

Through the previous example, common mistakes related to prepositions connect to time can be observed. For instance “at the end” and “in the end”. For instance: “*Odešla poslední.*”

In the end: “*She left in the end.*” The meaning in this case is that the subject decided to leave despite everything that had happened.

At the end: “*She left at the end.*” This is the correct translation, because in this instance, the subject left after the end.

A possible reasoning could be that Czech students mostly don’t know or don’t remember the prepositions, “in” and “at”, thus the issue can be due to not enough expanded vocabulary. (Poslušná 2017, 25)

### Prepositions of place

Prepositions of place can represent bigger a challenge for Czech speakers. Here is, where the support of the mother tongue very often takes place. For instance: “Na obrázku.” “\*On the picture.” The literal translation word by word would look like this. Czech speakers tend to say “on” because it is the literal translations of “na”. The correct version is, “In the picture.” However, the word by word translation to Czech would be: “V obrázku.” Which is grammatically incorrect in Czech.

### Other misuse of prepositions

Another interesting mistake mentioned by Poslušná (2017, 28) is: “\**Look on the sky.*” because in Czech, there is not “*Podívej se do oblohy,*” but “*Podívej se na oblohu.*” In this case the Czech speaker can possibly confuse the usage of prepositions and say “on the sky.” Because it can sound incorrect to them due to not realizing the influence of the mother language they are under.

### Frequency adverbs

Frequency adverbs is also one of the classic mistakes done by Czechs. For instance: “*Vždycky jsme tam chodili.*” could be translated as: “\**Always we used to go there.*” It is because the word “vždycky” which means “always”, is in Czech mostly used at the beginning of a sentence. It is not necessary to use it at the beginning, however it is very common and thus can lead to the mistake mentioned. But in English, the frequency adverbs are used after the main verb, the verb to be and after the first auxiliary. Furthermore, in question they appear after subjects. (Poslušná 2017, 50) Therefore the correct translation is: “*We always used to go there.*”

### Verbs

There are also verbs that are often confused and incorrectly used. For instance, one of the typical source of mistakes is the verb *to function* which can be illustrated in “\**He used to function there as a part time manager.*” It is incorrect, because the verb *to function* cannot be used with animated objects. The correct form of this sentence is “*He acted as a part time manager there.*” (Land 2011, 56-57) This mistake can happen, when Czech want to say for example, “*Fungoval tam jako manažer na zkrácený úvazek.*” Because in Czech, it is possible to use *to function*, in translation *fungovat* with inanimate objects.

## Articles

Articles in English is the biggest problem for Czech learners, because the Czech language system does not have articles, it can represent an issue for the learners to differentiate and choose the right article. Common misuse of articles could be because the system is missing it.

### A, An

*A, an* is used when talking about something for the first time, or with a certain quantity such as jobs or illnesses. In addition, it is used only with singular countable nouns. (Poslušná, 2017, 31) Usage of a wrong article would be a grammatical mistake, however omitting of the article can be viewed as a lexical mistake.

### The

*The* is used when talking about something already mentioned or known as well to the speaker as to the receiver. Moreover, it can be used for nouns which are unique. (Poslušná 2017, 32) For instance: *The Sun*. There is only a single Sun. It is possible that the Czech speaker would omit “the” because in Czech it is said “Slunce”, without the article.

### Some, any

*Some* is used as an equivalent of “nějaký” and *any* is “nějaký” but also “žádný” or “jakýkoliv”. This can tempt Czech speakers to misuse the words.

It can be seen for instance in: “*Mohl bych dostat nějakou sůl?*” This could be translated as: “\**Can I have any salt?*” Whereas the correct translation is: “*Can I have some salt?*”

Or Poslušná (2017, 33) mentions an example of: “*Dal bych jakýkoliv sýr.*” Which could be translated as: “\**I’d like any cheese.*” Whereas the correct translation is: “*I’d like some cheese.*” The reason behind this mistake might be caused by insufficient vocabulary and knowledge about the English language system. As mentioned at the beginning of this subchapter, “any” has many meanings in Czech, and it could be said that it is ambiguous.

### Plural and singular

Both English and Czech have several distinctions in term of plurality and singularity. To be more concrete, some plural Czech words can have a singular form in English. The most common example of this could be the word “a door”, “a dress” or “a watch”. It is therefore needed to use a verb in a singular form. (Poslušná 2017, 4) For instance: “*Zavři dveře, prosím.*” Because “dveře” is only plural in Czech, we can say that and the Czech individual

would understand which door is being referenced. In contrast to this, if it is translated as: “\*Close the doors, please.” The English native can get a little confused because he would not know which doors are being referenced. Because the translation would be: “Zavři všechny dveře, prosím.” Most probably, the native’s next question would be as following: “Which door you want me to close?” If it is used in singular form, it means that the individual is pointing at the nearest door, on the other hand if it is used in plural form, it can mean any other door which is nearby. As a consequence of Czech only having the plural form of the word “dveře”, it can happen that the individual would say “doors” instead of “a door”.

### **Phrases mistakes**

Sometimes an entire phrase cannot make any sense when translated from the mother tongue. There are phrases, which are acceptable in Czech but not in English which will be illustrated in several examples. Recognizing these mistakes can be definitely easier for the native speaker, because in some phrases the Czech individual can feel that it is not right to say the phrase the way it should be. Indeed, those mistakes can also be made spontaneously without any further thoughts.

#### **\*Can I have a question?**

Czech speakers often tend to incorrectly say “\*Can I *have* a question?” Which means in Czech: “Mohu mít dotaz?” But in English it is incorrect. The correct phrase is: “Can I *ask* a question?” On the other hand, “Můžu se zeptat?” Can probably lead the Czech speaker to ask the question correctly, however the first translation is taken as formal and the second one is more informal, better said spoken. Thus Czech people which can be confused regarding English rules in order to speak formally, or do not have enough vocabulary, could say this phrase instead of the correct one, thinking they are speaking more formally in this way. The matter of formality is different and more confusing for Czech speakers because both language systems have their own rules to speak formally. They are both about using correct word forms and for that it is necessary to have well expanded vocabulary. It is still understandable for native speakers, however “Can I have a question?” does not exist in English. (Poslušná 2017, 76)

#### **\*This is the way how to do it.**

Because the Czech translation of this sentence is: “Toto je způsob, jak to udělat.” It can tempt Czech speakers to write or say incorrectly “\*This is the way how to do it.” But in English, after the word “way” is a sentence without a preposition, it can be followed by an infinitive

or by a gerund, which is why it is not possible to use “how” after the word “way”. As a result of these rules the correct sentence is: “*This is the way of doing it.*” Nonetheless, the Czech version of this sentence differs because in Czech it is possible. (Poslušná 2017, 77)

The mistakes coming from interference will certainly appear in the analysis as they are not grammatical mistakes but lexical mistakes. It will not be about what kind of mistakes they made but why they made them. The point in this last chapter was to provide a closer look at the mistakes caused by interference from the lexical point of view, not grammatical, thus the correction is there only for the sake of information. Nonetheless, the correct phrase or version of any sentence used is mandatory to explain the reason behind interference.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

Third chapter of this thesis will be dealing with a sample and analysis. The first, sample is description of a research segment used for an analysis which by means are recordings of Business English students. Second part of this chapter is dealing with a method of the research and therefore mentions the Error Analysis. The Error Analysis was chosen to be used as a method of this thesis because it is based on discovering a theory of interference. Mistakes therefore can be emphasized and a part which is the most problematic can be located. When the research is done, it will be possible to explain origins of these mistakes.

#### **3.1 Sample**

The main focus of this thesis is to analyse given recordings containing Czech first class students of business English giving their speech about a business product. Those students are not judged based on their level of English but analysed in terms of interference at lexical level. Firstly, it was important to study the information well enough to be prepared to start the analysis. The students should be intermediate English speakers hence they are not completely beginners in its language system. On the contrary, their knowledge of the language system itself does not have to be that strong and that can cause many variations of mistakes or errors. This is where phenomenon called Czenglish might take a place. It can be caused sometimes by the insufficient knowledge of an individual, but these are not errors nor mistakes made under the influence of mother language. Though the aim of this thesis is not only to find lexical mistakes and point them out, but to look for the reason why those mistakes were made. To be more concrete, how does the interference influence the speech and what is the reason behind it.

#### **3.2 Method**

##### **Error Analysis**

This chapter will be focused on a chosen method for the research. As was once mentioned, the language interference is known between linguists and psycholinguists. It might be because the interference is widely recognized, mostly not by an individual learning a foreign language, but by a native speaker, for whom the language the individual is studying as his second, is mother language. Most of individuals, even individuals with advanced level of English may or may not recognize the interference mistakes they do. Until the moment they are exposed, told or even get to know by self-discovery. After an individual get acquainted with the language interference, he will most likely seek for solution. Linguists and



psycholinguists are doing research about overcoming the interference and have already offered some solutions. Such as Error Analysis, which will be explained furthermore in this chapter. (Lebkova 2009, 322)

Error Analysis was created based on discovering the theory of interference. Its main argument was that any mistake in the second language is caused by the interference. The Error Analysis is focused on errors an individual make when learning a foreign language. Based on these mistakes an individual make, it is possible to focus on the problematic part where does he error the most. In addition, the analysis can be made on a wider range of individuals, which can help to discover errors caused only by interference itself. (Khansir 2012, 1029) However, the analysis is supposed to help for language teaching and it may happen that language learners after discovering their problematic parts in language studies can try to avoid those errors by completely omitting certain phrases, which is not how the Error Analysis is supposed to function. The language teacher may then think that the language learner does not know what does he have to say or how to formulate the correct sentence. The Analysis should help emphasizing the problematic parts and tell the language learner and to its teacher what should be improved. The language learners should not be afraid to speak. However, it was not possible to explain each mistake done by non-native speakers and that is why is this analysis widely criticized. First part of the criticism talks that the Error Analysis only predicts but does not explain the arose mistakes itself; Second part of the criticism talks about that the analysis does not describe phenomena which does not belong into the mother and second language systems; Third part of the criticism talks that it does not take in account the stylistics variations in communication; The last, fourth criticism talks about its ability to collect only statistical performance level of the non-native speaker. Later on was analysis divided into “weak” and “strong”. The “weak” analysis unlike the former “strong” did not have any means to predict the issues of foreign languages, but to only explain the reasons behind recorded mistakes. (Kráľová 2011, 12)

### **Juxtaposition languages**

Error Analysis is based on choosing and working with juxtaposition languages. More precisely, juxtaposition languages are those languages, which can be compared next to each other. It is said that it is one of the most rational approaches for improvement in foreign language teaching. (Lebkova 2009, 322)

## **II. ANALYSIS**

## 4 RESULTS

Since the theoretical part of this thesis dealt mainly with language interference, potential lexical mistakes and has also introduced methodology, the practical part will now serve the results of an analysis done through observing several recordings containing business student's speech or presentations. There were 417 mistakes made in total, and these mistakes were of various types. Word classes were used to serve as mistake criteria. Each word class category was analysed and the majority of them were used to create a sufficient graph emphasizing in which subcategory of word class students made the most mistakes. The analysis and observation of previously mentioned recordings pointed out that the most problematic part are seemingly determiners and prepositions. In regard to determiners, the first and the most common source of mistakes made by these students is the complete omission of determiners. As for mistakes in prepositions, the analysis showed that there were mistakes mostly in prepositions of place. On the other hand, what did not pose any difficulties were Conjunctions and Numerals.

### 4.1 Word Classes

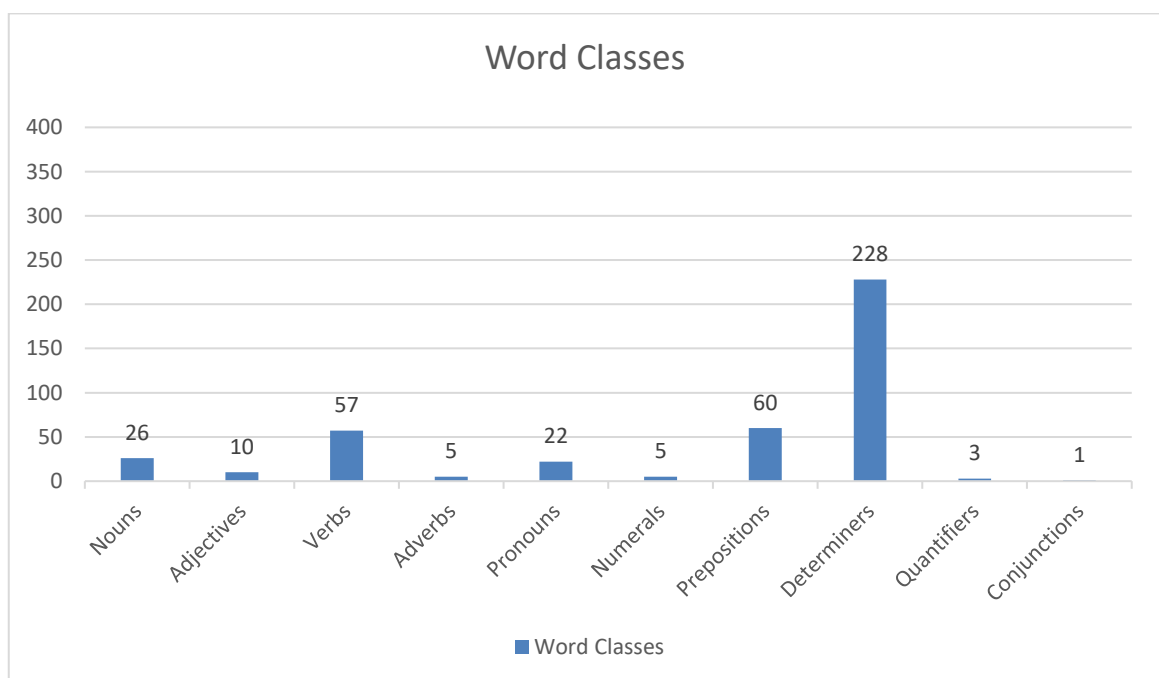


Figure 2: Amount of mistakes in each word class category

#### Nouns

The 1<sup>st</sup> word class category is Nouns, which were separated into two subcategories, countable and uncountable. The reason behind this differentiation is that it can deliver better clarification and judgment of mistakes. Countable nouns were often caused by not having a

good enough command of the English language, only very few of them were actual lexical mistakes, and that was mainly because of false friends. On the other hand uncountable nouns were more often caused by lexical origin, because there are a lot of words which have a singular and a plural form in Czech, whereas English does not have a singular form for these words and vice versa. For instance, instead of *information* which means *informace* in Czech, *informations* was used. Apparently, it tempted the student to say it incorrectly because the singular or plural form is differentiated in Czech. It was most likely used to say “*I have got some basic information*”, but because it seemingly sounds as it is singular for Czechs and the student wanted to avoid saying that they only have one piece of information, they incorrectly added an “s” to its end, “*\*I have got some basic informations.*” The total number of mistakes is 26.

### Adjectives

The 2<sup>nd</sup> word class is Adjectives, which got a slightly smaller amount of mistakes; compared to nouns, the number is 10. They were often caused by not having a good enough command of English, thus meaning the mistake is of lexical origin. For instance, the adjective *comfortable* was used incorrectly in the sentence “*\*The price is also very comfortable*” . Apparently it was meant to say “*The price is also very nice.*”

### Verbs

The 3<sup>rd</sup> word class is Verbs. Most of these mistakes were caused by an actual interference. The total amount of mistakes is 46. The mistake that appeared very often was the misuse of the verbs *to learn* and *to study*. In Czech there are the verbs *učit se* and *studovat*, however these words are used differently. For instance, “*\*I used this when I was learning for my exams.*” is incorrect, but understandable in English, whereas in Czech “*Tohle jsem použil, když jsem se učil na zkoušky.*” this would be correct and understandable. Nevertheless, if those verbs are swapped, “*I used this when I was studying for my exams.*” would be acceptable and correct in English, “*Použil jsem to, když sem studoval na zkoušky.*” would be correct but it is less used. It is considered very formal or perhaps even archaic among Czechs. In addition, *studovat* is more related to education. For instance, “*Studoval jsem vysokou školu Tomáše Baťi*” sounds the same in English, “*I studied at the university of Tomas Bata.*” In addition, another mistake which appeared a lot was the complete omission of a verb. This can be illustrated by student’s use of “*\*What she need?*” instead of “*What did she need?*” A

possible reason behind this mistake is interference. Whereas the first sentence is correct and used among Czechs, it is incorrect in English.

### **Adverbs**

The 4<sup>th</sup> word class is Adverbs, where there were not as many mistakes as in other word classes categories. The total amount of mistakes is 10, for instance “*\*If the student is great, we’ve got financial evaluation.*” This is acceptable in English, but not entirely correct. However in Czech, “*Jestliže bude student skvěle pracovat, máme pro něj připravené finanční ohodnocení.*” which was also apparently meant to be said, would have a similar meaning. The correct way of saying it would be, “*If the student performs well/ is doing good, we have got a financial evaluation in this case.*” Or any other corresponding to this sentence. In summary, the student borrowed some features from their mother tongue at that certain moment and that caused a mistake, because in English, *skvěle pracovat* is said *performing well, having an excellent performance, doing good*. It is not only the interference which took an effect in this case, it is also a non-interference. Most likely the first part of this sentence is caused by interference and the second, not.

### **Pronouns**

The 5<sup>th</sup> word class is pronouns. In the Pronouns category, almost as many mistakes were made as in Nouns; the total amount of them is 22. A lot of mistakes were caused by interference, because Czechs omit objects very often. To emphasize this, “*\*I would like to show my product.*” is a very common phrase in Czech to say, and on the other hand, it is incorrect and not used in English. “*I would like to show you my product*” or “*I would like to present to you my product.*” According to observations, Czechs tend to forget that the omission makes the sentence incorrect. Another reason behind this mistake, might be that the student spoke very quickly. Either because of nervousness or that Czechs speak very quickly in general.

### **Numerals**

The 6<sup>th</sup> word class is Numerals. No mistakes related to Numerals were found.

### **Prepositions**

The 7<sup>th</sup> word class is Prepositions. Prepositions represent the second largest source of mistakes for Czechs. The total amount of mistakes is 60, whereas the vast majority of

mistakes were caused by language interference. Prepositions are a huge problem for Czechs, it is one of the most common cases where Czechs make mistakes. A lot of them were with the prepositions *on*, *at*, *in*, *for* and *from*. The way prepositions function is slightly different in English than it is in Czech. Whereas in most cases where Czechs would say *on*, English speakers would say *in*. To provide a closer look, *\*participate on* is incorrect in English, but correct in Czech, *podílet se na*. Furthermore, there were mistakes that could be said were made because students wanted to avoid saying *on*. For instance, *to work on fields*, is correct in English, however the student said *\*to work at fields*. There could be a certain chance that this mistake was made in order to prevent using the wrong preposition from happening.

### Determiners

The 8<sup>th</sup> world class is Determiners. Determiners represents the largest source of mistakes for Czechs. The total amount of mistakes is 228. Although the vast majority of these mistakes were caused by language interference in the form of missing articles or incorrect use of said articles, there were also non-interference mistakes found. A missing article could be taken as the most suitable example for interferential mistakes. On the other hand, unnecessary articles or wrong articles can be accepted as non-interferential mistake. For instance, “*\*in case dropping phone on ground*,” there are precisely three mistakes, the first and the second are the prepositions and the third is the article, which is missing. This is caused because, “*v případě spadnutí telefonu na zem*” is how it is said in Czech. Nevertheless, the correct English form is, “*in case of phones falling to the ground*.” The omission of the article in this particular example is because it is a fixed phrase. The phone always falls *on* ground in Czech, but *to the* ground in English. Examples in recordings were also mostly improvised, thus meaning that students did not prepare any examples, or did not include them in their notes.

### Quantifiers

The 9<sup>th</sup> world class is Quantifiers. Quantifiers are the second smallest source of mistakes. Quantifier mistakes were made because students did not have a good enough command of English or did not use Quantifiers at all. To provide an example of misused quantifier, *\*every our products* instead of *each of our products* is used incorrectly because it is meant in a way that every single one of their products is in high-quality. *Each* is used for one of two or more things, understood as *one by one*. Whereas *every* is used when referring to more than two things, more precisely to a group. (Fitikides 2002, 110) Since it was meant as every single product taken one by one is of high quality, an English person would use *each*.

## Conjunctions

The 10th word class is Conjunctions. There was just one mistake found in Conjunctions, this word class does not seem to pose a problem for Czechs, it is the smallest source of mistakes.

## 4.2 Types of mistakes

As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, the results were converted into graphs to point out which subcategory of word classes possessed the biggest issue for the recorded students. Each word class was done separately to better differentiate between lexical and grammatical mistakes. Each graph is accompanied by a commentary about the estimated number of lexical mistakes, and if they occurred more often than grammatical mistakes. The rate of lexical or grammatical mistakes varied from each word class category, the highest rate of lexical mistakes was related to Determiners and Prepositions, but also to Verbs, Nouns and Pronouns.

The last part of this chapter provides a graph with the amount of interferential and non-interferential mistakes.

### 4.2.1 Nouns

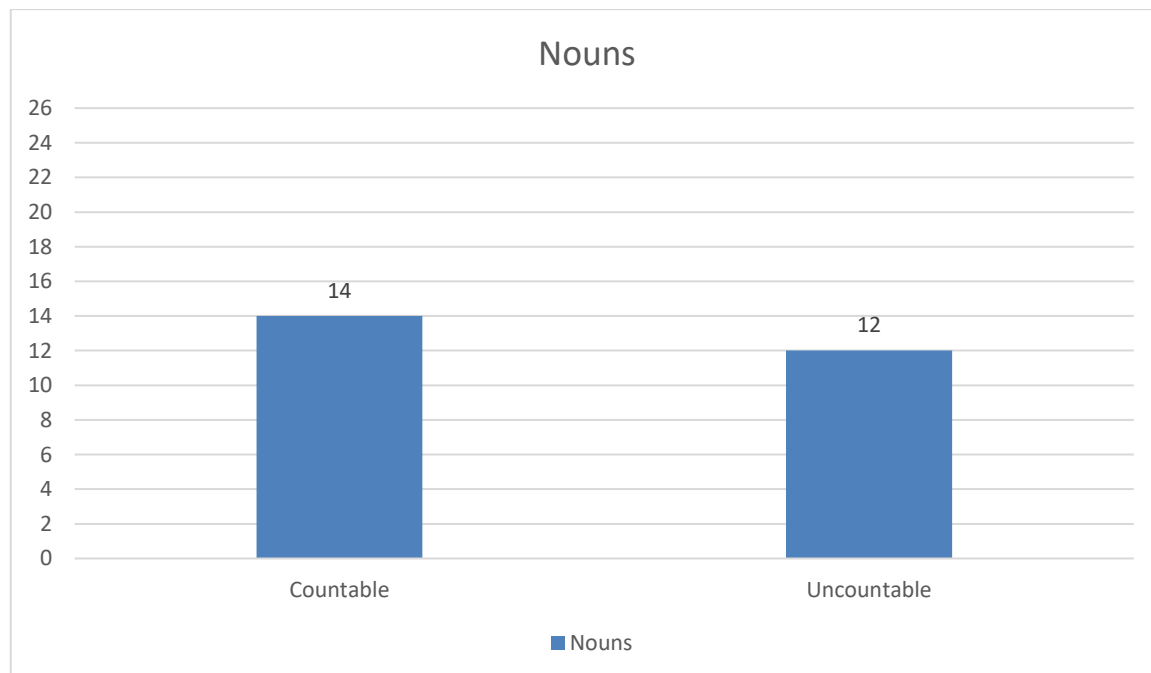


Figure 3: Amount of mistakes in Nouns

As mentioned previously, there are 26 mistakes related to Nouns. They were divided into countable and uncountable nouns, mainly to see if there are more or fewer mistakes in any of these subcategories. Moreover, it served to differentiate if a mistake was caused by interference or non-interference, especially if there are particular nouns which are plural or

singular in Czech but might be different in English, such as *information*. This division was also used in case the mistakes only came from lexical nouns, such as *maturity*, which are often misused by students. As can be seen from the graph, there are more mistakes made with countable than uncountable nouns, which mean that the wrong word being used occurred more than mistakes regarding plural and singular forms.

#### 4.2.2 Adjectives

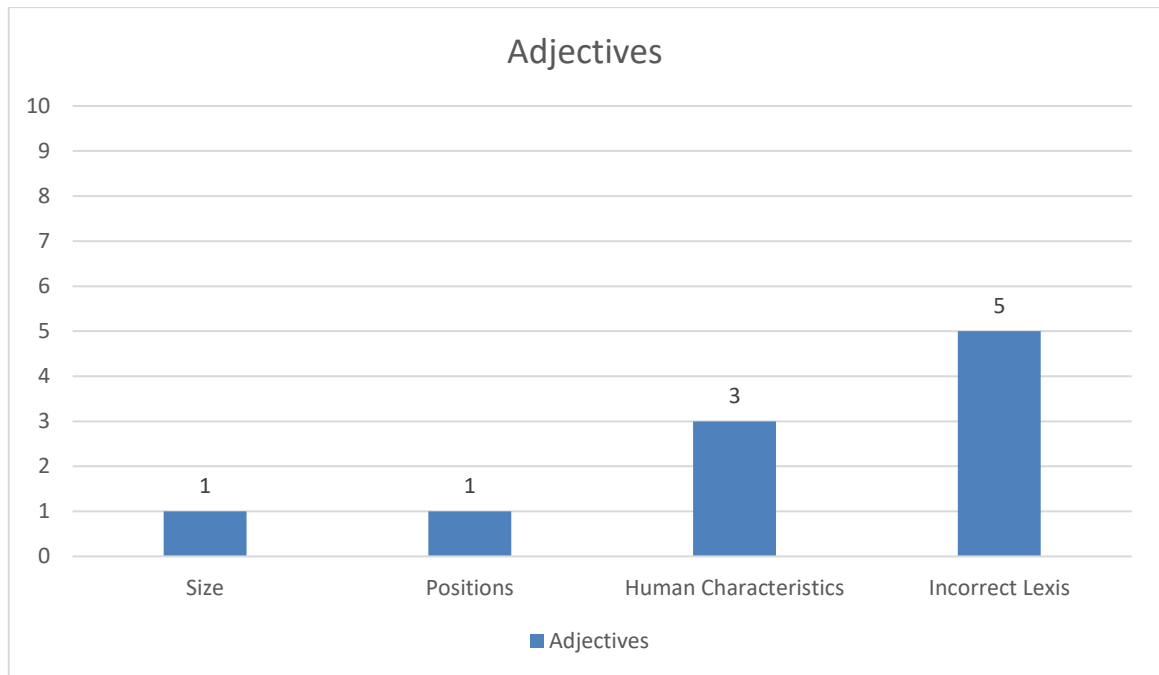


Figure 4: Amount of mistakes in Adjectives

There were 10 mistakes in total made with Adjectives. Adjectives were sorted out into four categories such as size, position in the sentence, human characteristics and incorrect lexis in order to better differentiate between mistakes which were of lexical or grammatical origin. The results pointed out more lexical mistakes rather than grammatical. Thus meaning that mistakes such as using *people's sensitive* instead of *people's weaknesses*, where speakers use the wrong adjective due to Czech false friends, occurred more than the use of wrong adjective from a grammatical point of view, such as using *well-equipped* instead of *well-furnished* when describing hotel rooms. Speakers with a good command of English often get acquainted with the difference between *equipped* and *furnished*, either by studying vocabulary or from learning passively.



### 4.2.3 Verbs

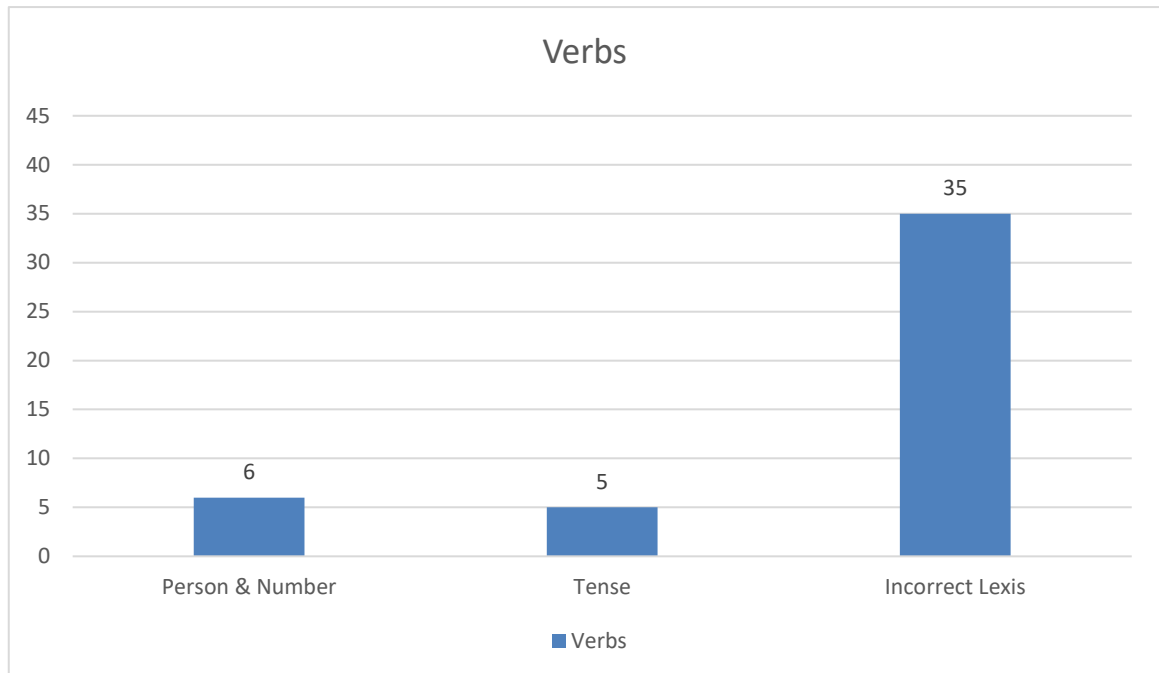


Figure 5: Amount of mistakes in Verbs

46 mistakes were recorded regarding the Verbs word class. Verbs were sorted out into three categories which are person & number, tense and incorrect lexis with the same purpose as in previous graph. The results pointed out more mistakes of lexical origin rather than grammatical origin. Mistakes of lexical origin were, for instance, “\**And you must look your phone every ten minutes.*” Verbs like *have to*, *look*, *watch* or *see* seemingly posed the greatest challenge. The correct form is “*And you have to check your phone every ten minutes.*” students tend to use modals instead of classic verb because it is slightly confusing for Czech speakers. In Czech, the verbs *have to* or *must* in relation to a person is said *muset* in both cases, while it is differentiated in English. Have to is a common verb and Must is a modal verb. (Poslušná 2017, 12) Apart from using a modal verb instead of a normal one, the student said *look* instead of *check*, omitting a preposition which is mostly used with that verb unless it is not in relation to an impression, or someone’s appearance. Thus meaning that if the student added the mentioned prepositions, it would still not be correct. The Czech form of this sentence is “*A musíte se podívat na mobil každých deset minut.*”

### 4.2.4 Adverbs

There were 10 mistakes made in relation to Adverbs. Most of these were misuse of adverbs with *time* and *how often*. Speakers apparently did not use them often to avoid mistakes.

#### 4.2.5 Pronouns

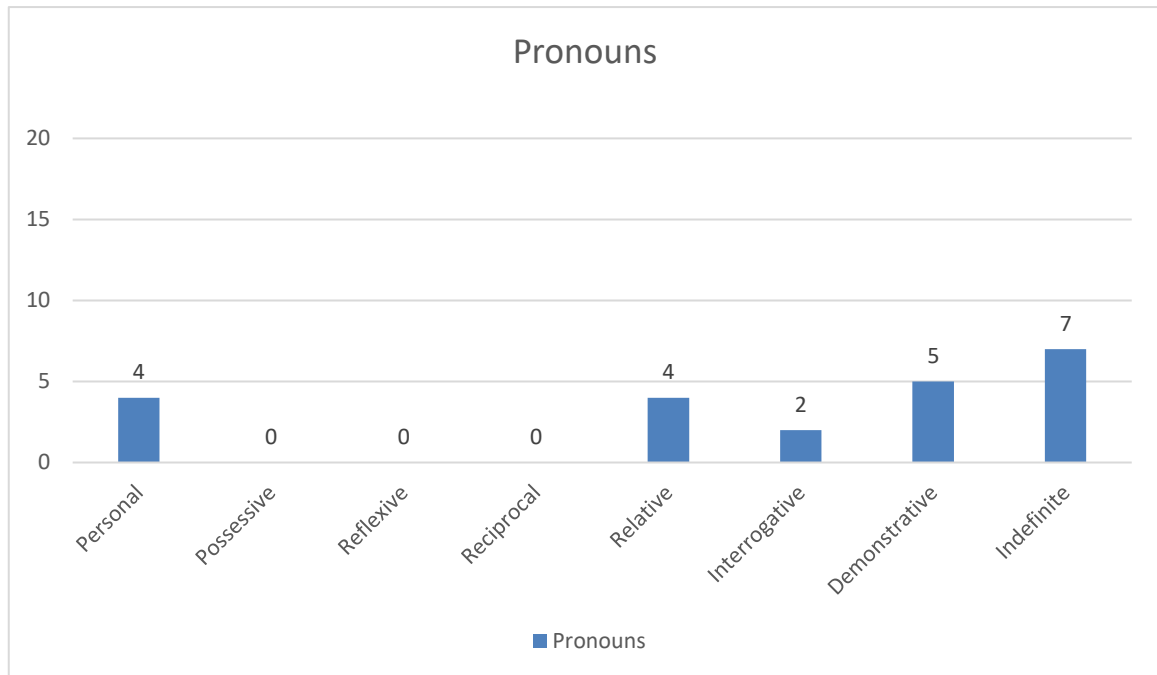


Figure 6: Amount of mistakes in Pronouns

In total, there were 22 mistakes made with Pronouns. The main source of mistakes were indefinite pronouns, with demonstrative pronouns right behind them. It was sorted out by their categories to better differentiate between mistakes of lexical and grammatical origin. Most of these mistakes were lexical, because most of them consisted of complete pronoun omissions, for example omitting the word *you*. In addition, a lot of students used *which* instead of *that* as in “\**And think of ways doing something differently, but something which works and makes sense*”, the pronouns *which* and *what* cannot be used after *everything*, *all*, *something*, *anything* or similar; *that* must be used instead. (Fitikides, 2002, 31) It could be argued that this is a grammatical mistake, but in fact, the mistake has a lexical origin behind it. In Czech, *that* is *to*, and *which* is *který/které*. If these words had a different meaning, students would most probably not make any mistakes in this field. It sounds too different for Czech speakers to use *that* and *which* in comparison to how can it sound to native English speakers. Therefore, the correct form is “*And think of ways doing something differently, but something that works and makes sense.*”

#### 4.2.6 Numerals

There were no particular mistakes made in relation to Numerals from a grammatical or lexical point of view. This word class is the only one that does not seem to pose any difficulty for analysed students.

#### 4.2.7 Prepositions

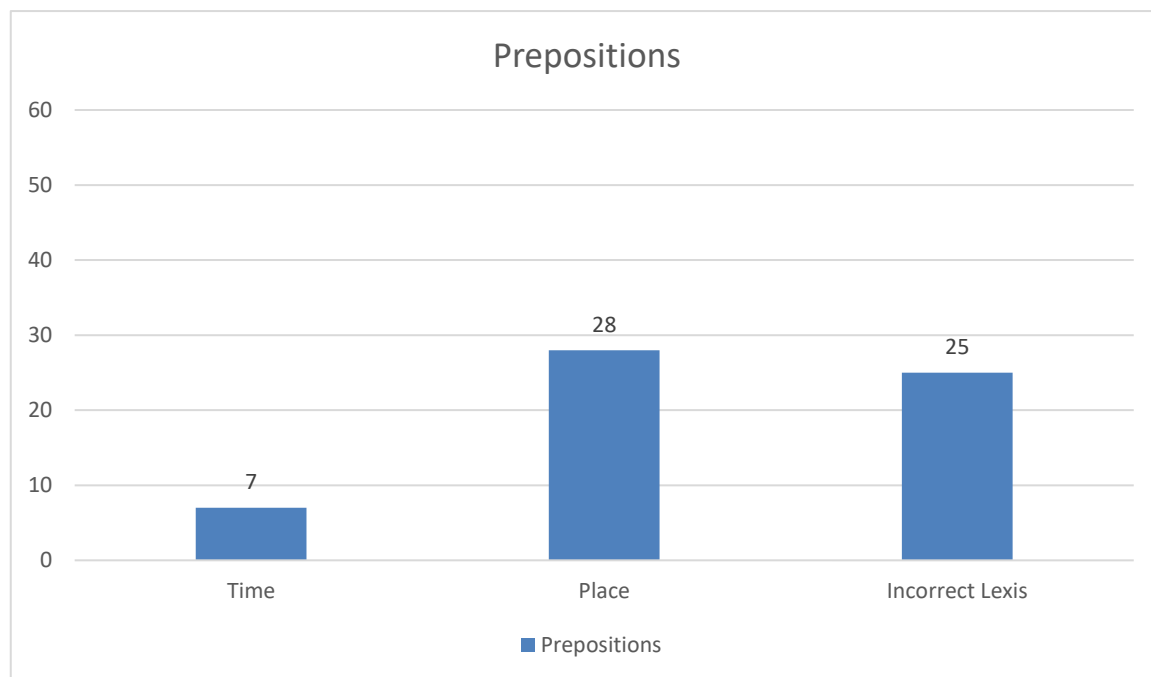


Figure 7: Amount of mistakes in Prepositions

There were 60 Preposition mistakes counted in total. Prepositions were also sorted into three subcategories such as time, place and incorrect lexis. The sorting was needed to better recognize if mistakes were of a lexical or grammatical origin. It can be said that more mistakes were of lexical origin. Prepositions seemed to present the second biggest difficulties in word classes among students; many mistakes were made by using prepositions which would sound correct in Czech, but are actually incorrect in English. The prepositions that were used wrongly were mostly *on*, *in*, *at* but also *for* and *from* and as can be seen through the graph, prepositions of place or incorrect choice of prepositions caused the most mistakes, in comparison to prepositions of time, which has got a considerably lower amount of mistakes. An example of a mistake related to a preposition of place is “\**You may have seen us in TV*”. The correct form of this sentence is with the *on* preposition, like so: “*You may have seen us on TV*”. It would be classified as a mistake of lexical origin, because the student chose to say *in TV* due to it being said *v televizi* in Czech, and *v* can be translated as *in*, whereas *on* can be translated as *na*. Thus, to avoid saying “*Mohli jste nás vidět na televizi*” which is incorrect in Czech, because it will most likely look like to Czechs that the person is located at the TV, the student ends up saying *in TV* instead. Similar mistakes to this happened when students were talking about a company which is biggest *\*in the world*, which should be written *of the world* in proper English. The reason why it would be classified as a

lexical mistake is that in Czech the correct phrase is *in the world*, because the way to say it in Czech is *ve světě*.

#### 4.2.8 Determiners

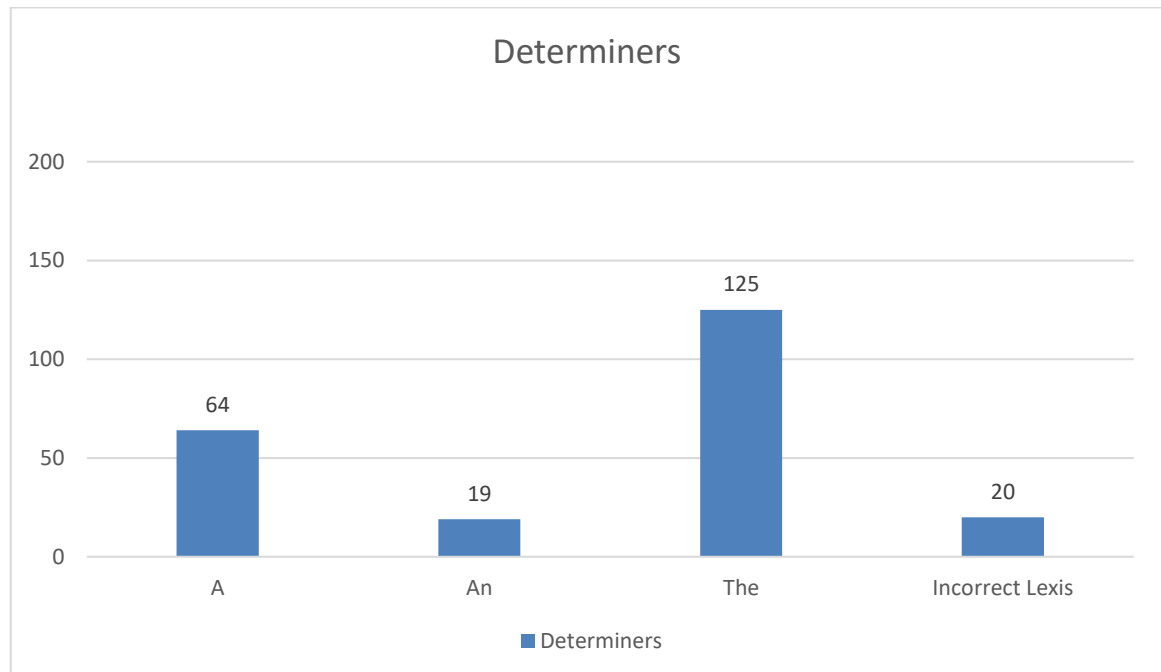


Figure 8: Amount of mistakes in Determiners

Determiners presented the greatest difficulty for students according to the analysis results. Most of these mistakes were caused by the complete omission of determiner or the use of a wrong preposition. Determiners were sorted according to their classification, in order to find out the source behind these mistakes, more precisely if it was of a lexical or grammatical origin. Results proved that more mistakes were of a lexical origin, thus the omission or wrong choice could possibly have occurred due to the fact that Czech, as a language, has no articles. The reason behind *the* being related to many mistakes is potentially because students forgot about the grammatical rule behind it and therefore omitted the article entirely. In summary, a lot of these mistakes which consisted of omission or wrong choice of *the* originated from a command of English that was not good enough. On the other hand, complete omission of articles or wrong choices seemed to be more of a lexical mistake. It is considerably difficult for Czechs to memorize how each article should be used, and the reason for omission arose due to language interference.

Apart from the three main types of determiners, the word *some* was also wrongly used. Despite *some* being a determiner, it was used many times as an adjective instead. For instance, when a student was talking about education, he used *some* instead of *something*, as in “*she had some more*”, which does not make any sense in that context. On the other hand

“*she had something more*” would be the correct form in this case, meaning the person had something above everyone else in regards to her education.

#### 4.2.9 Quantifiers

Quantifiers did not present as much difficulty as other word classes because the number of mistakes is only 3. However, these mistakes were of grammatical origin, meaning students did not have enough command of English and its grammatical rules which resulted into confusion of *each* and *every*.

#### 4.2.10 Conjunctions

As it has already been mentioned before, Conjunctions were the least difficult for students, according to the observation results. There was only one mistake found in this category: “*I don’t mean books like Romeo and Juliet and these ones.*” This sentence translated to Czech is “*Nemyslím tím knihy jako je Romeo a Julie a tomu podobné.*” Which, when properly translated to English, would be “*By this, I don’t mean books like Romeo and Juliet.*”

### 4.3 Source of mistakes

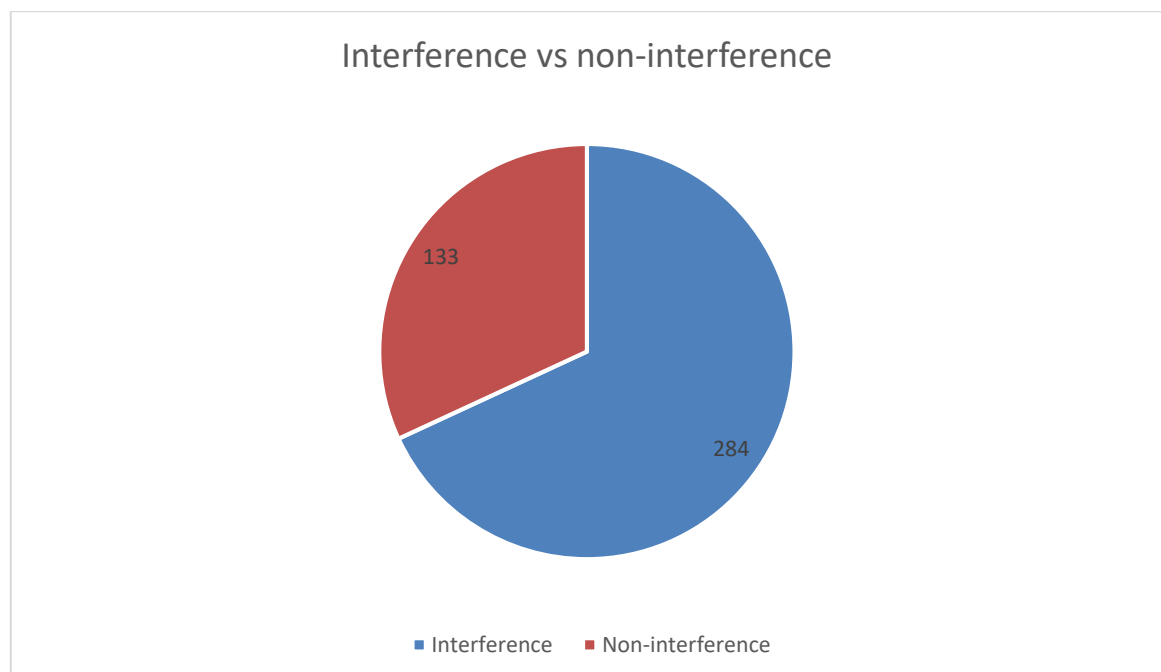


Figure 9: Amount of mistakes caused by interference and non-interference

The last and final part of this practical part provides a graph with the amount of interference and non-interference mistakes. The goal is to differentiate between if mistakes were made because the student did not have enough vocabulary and used their mother tongue to fill in

the blanks, causing them to use the wrong word, or if mistakes were made due to the student's command of English not being up to par. The results pointed out that more than half of these mistakes were caused by language interference. Students sought support from their mother tongue more often when they needed to describe or give a closer look to the audience of something they were explaining or talking about. In order to presumably avoid breaks and reach fluent speech. Some of these mistakes did not pose as much of an issue as others, that is to say that some mistakes were absolutely wrong and unacceptable in English, but at the same time some mistakes were still technically wrong, but broadly acceptable in English. Nowadays, more and more words are being added, accepted and understood in the English language. It can be seen from the graph that there were more interferential mistakes rather than non-interferential. Difference between these are almost over 100 mistakes.

## 5 CONCLUSION

In summary, based on the analysis and the results it provided, it was discovered that the majority of students did mistakes caused by language interference. The aim of this thesis was also to discover the reason behind these mistakes. According to the observation, most students made mistakes during their speech predominantly because they tried to present themselves as fluent and natural. Students whom tried to sound and act natural were usually not directly reading information off their notes and attempted to interact with their audience, in an effort to be seen as a fluent English speaker. Several of them prepared their speech in great detail, which led to barely any mistakes. On the other hand, the students who did not prepare their speech tended to make pauses in their speech, causing them to hesitate and seek support from their mother tongue, which would then result in grammatical or lexical mistakes. Students most of the time tried to improvise in a variety of situations where they forgot their speech or wanted to provide the most suitable example for the audience. The students who prepared their speech but did not practice it enough, were either reading off their notes completely or at least half-way through. If they were reading half-way through, they would try to appeal to the audience by attempting to sound and appear natural. There were cases where a student's written speech contained mistakes of lexical origin, which might have been caused by not enough preparation or not paying attention to possible mistakes, meaning that most students did not proofread their speech after writing it in case it had any mistakes. Students who came prepared had noticeably better knowledge of lexical and grammatical rules, or had a better command of English. While being under prepared and attempting to sound natural were sources of several mistakes, stress was an undeniable factor too. Even those who prepared their speech precisely and properly would end up making a few lexical mistakes because of their nervousness, though they did not make as many mistakes as students reading off their notes or students trying to improvise their speech because they did not prepare it. Students reading off their notes would get lost in their own speech and start to panic more often than not. The panic itself would then cause even more mistakes as they tried to escape the situation, making them say things which were not related to their chosen topic or they had already talked about. In regards to sounding natural and being stressed, students also tended to talk very quickly. This led to either misunderstandings or mistakes in general, as it was done mostly by improvising or by very nervous students who did not want to read everything off their notes. Possibly one explanation could be that they wanted their speech to be fluent or they could have been too nervous, making them

want to end their speech as soon as possible. In regard to incorrect use of suffixation, there were rarely mistakes found. It does not seem that suffixation possessed any problem for these students. That is why it was not mentioned in practical chapter. There were other mistakes that should be paid attention to, for instance the amount of mistakes that were made with Determiners and Prepositions. The hardest part on Czech language is that it has no articles and most of prepositions are said in different way, which can make it difficult for Czech speakers. On the other hand, if the awareness is raised and speakers are advised properly about it, they can eventually notice these mistakes and prevent themselves from doing them.



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