

Morphological Structure of Czech Students' Spontaneous English Utterances

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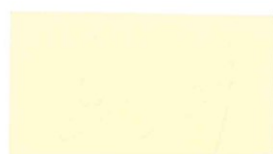
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ABSTRAKT

Bakalářská práce pod názvem “Morfologická struktura spontánních rozhovorů českých studentů” se zabývá srovnáním vybraných morfologických jevů v ústních projevech českých studentů anglické filologie v anglickém jazyce, zaznamenaných na začátku a konci prvního semestru studia.

V teoretické části je, s přihlédnutím na zkoumanou problematiku, popsána anglická morfologie. Získání výzkumného materiálu bylo prováděno metodou experiment, tedy pre-test, intervence, post-test. Samotná analýza se byla učiněna prostřednictvím metody lingvistické analýzy diskurzu.

V projevech studentů v obou zkoumaných obdobích byly detekovány a klasifikovány chyby zasahující morfologickou rovinu a porovnána jejich četnost.

Klíčová slova: anglický jazyk, morfologie, ústní projev, diskurzivní analýza, čeští studenti filologie

ABSTRACT

Bachelor thesis “Morphological structure of Czech students’ spontaneous English utterances” is focused on the comparison of selected morphological phenomena occurring in spontaneous English utterances of Czech students of the English for Business Administration programme, recorded at the beginning and at the end of the first semester of their studies.

The theoretical part describes English morphology by taking into account the examined issues. The acquisition of research material was performed by the means of the experimental method, i.e. pre-test, intervention, post-test. The analysis itself was performed using the method of linguistic discourse analysis.

In the utterances from both observed periods, were detected and classified errors affecting the morphological level and compared their frequency.

Keywords: English, morphology, utterance, discourse analysis, Czech students of philology

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I hereby declare that I worked on my Bachelor thesis myself, independently and all the sources of information I used are listed in the bibliography.

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

With English being one of the global languages, and the number of speakers throughout the world it is important for new generations to have some level of knowledge of the language and be able to use the language on daily basis. As many of the students are taught English since elementary schools a question on the extent of their knowledge arises. This bachelor's thesis will, therefore, be focused on the analysis of morphological structures of spontaneous utterances of Czech students. Experiment group consists of students studying English for Business Administration at Thomas Bata University. The analysis will be done on 35 subjects with each of the subjects observed at the beginning and the end of the semester when the students are supposed to have a notable development of linguistic skills.

I will try to prove the difference development of linguistic skills can make on spontaneous conversations or utterance of non-native speakers. The special aim will be brought to reoccurring mistakes found throughout utterances recorded at the start and at the end of the semester in each group, changes in morphological structure that can be substituted to the development of linguistic skills and finally the comparison of the two observed groups.

Thus, the thesis has been subdivided into four main chapters. Chapter 1 and 2 focus on the theoretical background and further description of the experiment, they will provide a brief description of the programme the students are studying and syllabus of each subject with linguistic basis and criteria by which all the transcripts of utterances were analysed. Chapter 3 and 4 focus on the practical part of the experiment. The analysis itself will take place with examples and enumeration of the most common mistakes connected to morphological structure, with a comparison of both phases of the experiment and signs showing improvement in linguistic skills.

I. THEORY

1 BACKGROUND OF THE EXPERIMENT

1.1 Morphology

Even though the term morphology first appeared in the second half of the nineteenth century, the morphology itself is both the oldest and one of the youngest subdisciplines of grammar. As a proof for morphology being the oldest could be the earliest grammatical texts, which consisted of well-structured lists of morphological forms of Sumerian words, but it was also shown to be a great part in the writings of the greatest grammarian of Antiquity and Roman or Greek grammatical tradition. As the classical languages such as Greek or Latin had morphological patterns too complex for speakers of the modern European languages the linguists thought of grammar as consisting primarily of word structure, it was at the second half of the nineteenth century that the term was created, and thus making morphology in a way one of the youngest subdisciplines of grammar. One of the youngest because subdisciplines such as phonetics or syntax were already existing prior to this.

The initial definition of morphology as a study concerning the internal structure of words may be in a way misleading as phonology studies the internal structure as well but from a different point of view. Phonology studies the sequences of sounds that create a word, thus word *gut* is made up of three sounds, however, in morphology, the word *gut* would be made up of one morpheme, as morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit. The smallest meaningful unit could as well be [s], i.e. *guts*, by morphological analysis, we could then say that the word *guts* is made up of two morphemes, with the first morpheme being *gut* and the second morpheme being the final [s] which if occurs at the end of a noun expresses plural meaning, therefore is a meaningful unit. The typical morphological analysis then consists of breaking words into the smallest possible constituents, with each carrying meaning. (Haspelmath and Sims 2010, 1-11)

Morphology studies the changing in word-forms, the relation of words to other words in the same language and analysis the individual parts such as root, stems, prefixes, suffixes. Morphology also studies the change in the meaning given the context in which it is used.

1.1.1 Morphological phenomena

As was mentioned above morphology studies the changes in word-forms of lexemes. These changes are then divided into certain areas, such as inflection, derivation or compounding, with each of them denoting a certain set of morphological processes that explain certain sets

of word forms of individual lexemes. Compounding is a lexeme formation where are at least two lexemes involved in a process of combination in order to create a new complex word. However, inflection or derivation has as an input only one lexeme. Derivation or derivational patterns commonly change the word class of the base lexeme and based on the word class of the input lexeme are then divided into cases such as denominal, deverbal or deadjectival. Derivation focuses more on the formation of new words, whereas inflection focuses more on word-form formation as it changes inflectional values of lexeme depending on the number, case, tense and more. (Haspelmath and Sims 2010, 14-27)

Compounding having the input of two or more lexemes is quite different from inflection or derivation, but those two may seem somewhat similar, because, both of them use affixes in the process. Thus, there are five criteria to distinguish them. First criterion is a change of word class, which says that derivation, unlike inflection, may cause a change in word-class of the inputted word. However, derivation does not necessarily change the word class, therefore the fact of word-class being same in resulting word does not simply mean it is not an inflection. It is even quite possible for inflection to change a word-class as well. Second criterion is obligatoriness, which states, that derivation is optional and inflection obligatory, which means that word should be for example specified for number and if it is specified for a number depends on the readers understanding, therefore obligatoriness may not be always certain. Third criterion is a paradigm, which states that a characteristic difference between these two systems is that inflection is organized in term of paradigms. Paradigms are divided into cells and each of the cells shows exactly the form of a lexeme for certain inflectional value, such as number, case, person or tense. Fourth of the criteria is generality and productivity, which states, that inflectional rules are general, meaning they apply to all relevant words and productive, meaning that there is a possibility for new word formations if the creation is made following the rules. Fifth criterion is semantic transparency which state that inflection has more clearer meaning than derivation. Another difference between inflection and derivation might be, that results of derivation are more likely to be stored in memory and results of inflection, on the other hand, might be produced according to rules in a matter of seconds. Syntactic relevance may be another of the necessary means for differentiating inflection and derivation. Syntactic relevance states that in a certain syntactic context may be required specific inflectional form, determined for example by agreement. This inflection is then called contextual inflection. (Booij 2000, 361-368)

1.2 Czech-English Morphological interference

Morphology is as a big part of grammar disciplines taught on a certain level from the beginning of studies at compulsory schools and the knowledge of morphological phenomena expands with every year of study. Throughout their studies, learners come in contact with English morphology rather unconsciously, right from the beginning of their studies during compulsory nine-year schools. While they are acquiring new vocabulary by provided translations of words, they are slowly, with the addition of grammatical principles and exercise progressing through language acquisition stages, such as the knowledge of articles or the right usage of suffixes such as plural -s or past regular -ed.

As Celce-Murcia (2001) the methodology of teaching foreign or second language has changed over the years. Before the twentieth century was the approach to the language teaching shifting between getting learners to use language and to understand grammatical rules of a given language. At that time there was perhaps the Czech scholar and teacher Johann Amos Comenius, with his approach being focused more on the actual use of language or afterwards at the beginning of the nineteenth century Karl Ploetz with his more analytical Grammar-Translation approach or at the end of the nineteenth century the Direct method, once again focused more on the actual use of the language than the analysis and more.

In addition to the Grammar-Translation and Direct Approach, other approaches developed as well, such as the Audiolingual Approach, Oral-situational, Cognitive, Affective-Humanistic, Comprehension-Based or Communicative approach and are used till nowadays.

- **Grammar-Translation Approach** which is the approach used formerly for teaching classical languages, now used for teaching modern languages as well. The instructions are given in the native language of the learner, the approach is focused on the grammatical analysis of form and inflectional words, with typical exercises such as translating given words from or into the target language. As the teacher does not have to possess the ability to speak the language and with little focus on the actual communicational use this approach usually renders learners unable to use the language for communicative purposes.
- **Direct Approach** which forbids the use of mother tongue and lessons are focused on dialogues or monologues, through the use of pictures and actions learners are taught the meaning of words. The teacher is supposed to have a native level of the

target language or being a native speaker so that target culture and grammar may be taught inductively.

- **Audiolingualism** which is the approach that adds on top of the Direct Approach features from structural linguistics and behavioural psychology. Lessons begin with dialogues and based on the assumption that language is habit formation the mimicry and memorization are used and thus inductively learning grammatical structures. In early stages of the approach, the vocabulary is limited, nonetheless, pronunciation is more important and individual skills are divided as listening and speaking is seen more important than reading and writing which are taught afterwards. Learning materials and activities are carefully controlled in a great effort to prevent mistakes and the teacher needs to be proficient only in the vocabulary or structures taught by him.
- **Oral-Situational Approach** where the primary focus is given to spoken language and all of the exercises are firstly focused on the spoken form and then the presentation of written occurs, all in the target language if possible. There is a great effort on the teaching of the most useful lexical and general items belonging to a certain situation with grammatical structures being sorted by difficulty.
- **Cognitive Approach** which in contrast to Audiolingualism this approach sees language learning as a rule acquisition. Learners are responsible for their own learning and the language can be taught either deductively or inductively. There is less emphasis on prevention of errors as they are seen as inevitable, there is less emphasis on pronunciation as well and more emphasis on reading and writing in the target language as well as more emphasis on vocabulary instructions. Teacher with this approach should be able to analyse the target language as well as be proficient at its usage.
- **Affective-Humanistic Approach** is the approach that gives more importance to feelings of all involved people, therefore gives more importance to the overall atmosphere than actual exercises. As much of the instructions involve work in pairs and small group, there is more emphasis on the communication being meaningful to the learner. The teacher should be proficient in both the target and native language and is viewed as a counsellor or facilitator.
- **Comprehensive-Based Approach** where the comprehension of listening exercises is seen as the most important part as it serves as a means of spontaneous development

of other skills. Learners are not forced to respond in spoken nor spoken form until they feel ready to do so, they are supposed to answer nonverbally in a meaningful way and progress through levels by listening to samples just above their level. Rules may help with understanding but not with the actual use of the target language and error correction is therefore seen as unnecessary. The teacher does not need to be proficient if he can supplement audio materials of adequate level.

- **Communicative Approach** where the goal is for the learner to be able to communicate in the target language, therefore it is assumed that materials and exercises will include linguistic structures, social functions and semantic notions. Learners often perform role play or dramatization and work in small groups or pairs to exchange information and meaning. Exercises and materials show a specific situation that might occur in life and integrate all the necessary skills, such as listening, writing, reading and speaking. The teacher is supposed to ease the communication and then correct mistakes and should be able to use the target language at a higher level. (Celce-Murcia 2001, 3-9)

1.2.1 Learning English morphology

Those mentioned approaches often had a problem with emphasizing one goal they wanted to accomplish, for some of them it was the actual use of language and for others, it was the analysis of a language, for example, the Reading Approach emphasized vocabulary learning but the grammar was not so important and that resulted in learners being unable to produce accurate structures, or on the other hand, the Audiolingual Approach was focused more on the grammar but less on the vocabulary, which resulted in learners being overall unable to understand naturally used language. Nowadays teaching approaches combine both of those parts. (Celce-Murcia 2001, 251-253)

While the approach to teaching and whether to teach intensively or extensively differs, there are some steps in learning that are common. As Templeton (2012) states, the first and key step to learning morphology is to learn the proper spelling, as the spelling is the key that visually connects the morphological elements inside words and between individual words. He argues that with the help of a knowledgeable teacher, learners should be able to notice categories of morphology such as prefixes, suffixes and roots and with the help of proper spelling they should be able to notice their relationships among words because, in contrast to the pronunciation of some roots of words, their spelling stays the same.

Students start their learning of morphology by the process of deconstructing and constructing word forms to bring attention to changes occurring in connection to adding or removing of affixes. This way students learn what specific parts of the word are, how the meaning of root behaves with the change in some affixes. (Templeton 2011, 102-103) This way students learn to differentiate individual components of morphology such as compounding, inflectional morphology and derivational morphology and how they work. Same as in other years and levels of studies, this year students expand their vocabulary and learn how to properly use articles.

As students progress through their studies and are more familiar with the basics of morphology teachers often show students history or etymology of words and use metaphors to show how the meaning of words grew beyond their original meaning and thus, showing them that it is possible to construct deeper meanings. Through the metaphorical process, students are able to give or connect meanings to words they have never seen before. (Templeton 2011, 102-104)

Students will always enrich their skills by reading, listening and writing as they enrich their vocabulary and may see the similarities between words due to the use of affixes, or the used article in a given situation or changes in the agreement. The more overall exposure to the language leads to more knowledge of both the use of language and used grammatical structures.

1.2.2 Czech morphology and English morphology interference

Morphology is a part of grammar and is present in all languages, therefore English and Czech are no exceptions. The thing that differs morphology in those two languages is the importance of morphology in Czech and English. Morphology in English typically stands for compounding, inflectional morphology and derivational morphology, while in Czech, as Adam (2015) states, the term morphology is usually connected to the inflectional morphology and on a derivational morphology is more focused Czech lexicology, even though there are some occasions where the boundaries seemingly disappear. But given the fact, Czech has a significant number of inflections the Czech morphology with syntax become an irreplaceable part of Czech grammar. (Adam 2016, 8-9)

Černý (2008) states, that there is no language with clear classification and that there is always one type more dominant than others. While Czech might seem like a synthetic flexible language there are cases in which it acts as an analytical language as the case of past tense and rarely other cases. This classification might, however, change as with English

which was at first a synthetic language and now is more analytic language. The crucial difference in English and Czech is this classification, while in Czech the grammatical category may be expressed by the change of an inflectional suffix, English needs to use additional free morphemes, e.g.: *čtu – čteš (I read/I am reading – You read/You are reading)*. (Černý 2008, 59-62)

This might lead to potential mistakes of Czech learners of English during their actual use of English, for example, in omission of free morpheme *be* while expressing tense. Most mistakes might occur when it comes to articles, as the Czech language does not use articles and for English, it is a necessity. Other mistakes might be connected to nouns and their gender as Czech does not recognise nouns as sexless as it is in English, and therefore speaker might assign gender and therefore change the pronoun by which it is described. The difference in word classes might cause problems as well, as in English there is a special word class for articles and determiners.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Objectives

The experiment consists of analysing the transcribed recordings of 1st year English for Business administration students at the beginning and at the end of their first semester. As they were newcomers to the university with their English language skills based on secondary school education where they had learnt about the morphology of the English language.

Therefore, the focus of interest was the development of their English morphological competence during one semester of their study. The primary objective was to find out the frequency and typology of morphological mistakes occurring in their spontaneous English utterance before and after the first semester.

Given the nature of the experiment and the separation into two observed phases, the pre-test and the post-test, following research questions were asked:

What are the most frequent types of morphological mistakes in pre-test?

What are the most frequent types of morphological mistakes in post-test?

In this context, one research hypothesis was formulated:

The number of morphological mistakes in post-test is lower than the number of morphological mistakes in pre-test.

The programme the subjects are studying is focused on perfecting their English and providing them with new vocabulary and better insight into the English language system. Throughout the studies students thus should be capable of realising their mistakes and being able to avoid doing some of them.

2.2 Participants

2.2.1 Observed students

35 first year students of the bachelor's degree programme English for Business Administration participated in the research. Those students were chosen based on the fact that their knowledge of the English language is comparable as they had to comply with the study program entrance requirements.

Czech students start to learn the first foreign language at the age of ten at 4th grade of their elementary or primary school. These first steps in learning a new language consist of acquiring basic vocabulary such as colours, numbers, and words of daily use. Throughout the elementary studies, they are taught basics of the language and how it works, shown the

principles of usage of basic tense forms, articles, creation of basic syntactical forms such as conditionals and more.

The knowledge of foreign language then further extends during high school studies, which provide students with more useful vocabulary, significantly sophisticated tense usage than the one taught during elementary school studies. This knowledge is supposed to extend onto such level that would make students able to hold conversations daily and with little to no problem be able to get any needed information in a foreign language.

Even though the knowledge may satisfy most of the students as it is enough to hold a continuous and meaningful conversation and enough to get any necessary information, there is still room for improvement. Some universities then supply students with the possibility to further work on their skills and deepen the overall knowledge. Such university is Thomas Bata University in Zlín.

For the experiment were chosen new graduates of high schools who were newly incoming students of bachelor's degree programme English for Business Administration. Those students were chosen based on the fact their knowledge of the foreign language, in this case, English is mainly but with some occasional exceptions from elementary and high school studies, therefore being the perfect candidates to observe if the new deeper knowledge of linguistics provided by the studied programme bears fruit in a way of making less morphological mistakes in spontaneous exchange of information.

From a number of utterances may be seen that some of the subjects are only connected to the English language through the means of education, others use English while travelling and quite possibly in their part-time jobs. Thus, diversity in the span of knowledge with which the subjects enter the experiment might be visible. Each subject in the group studied for the whole semester and was then at the end of the semester tasked with yet another utterance on a closely unspecified topic to provide insight into their acquired knowledge.

2.3 Material and Methods

As was previously mentioned, as a material for this experiment serves transcribed utterances of Czech students, that were recorded and transcribed at the beginning and the end of the first semester of the English for Business Administration programme. Content of the utterance is different from each subject as their task was to deliver a spontaneous utterance of preferred length on a topic of their choosing. The length of utterance, therefore, differs with each subject. In most cases the topic of their utterance was a description of an experience, while some are connected to travelling, others are connected to work experience.

2.3.1 Discourse Analysis

Given the nature of this thesis being analysis of spontaneous utterances, it is important to mention the topic of discourse analysis. In common language, the term discourse might simply mean discussion, while the academic term discourse covers all forms of communication, whether it is in a written form, spoken form or visual form. As this thesis concerns with spontaneous utterances, more importantly, their transcribed form, the analysis which I will conduct is in a way a text linguistics analysis.

What is important is to explain the terms *text* and *discourse*. As I mentioned previously, *text* is sometimes used for written language, while *discourse* for the spoken one. Modern Linguistics, however, see as a summary designation for all kinds of utterance. Some Linguists define *text* as a communicative event, that must satisfy seven criteria, those being: Cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, and intertextuality. (Widdowson 2007, 3-9)

Text linguistics pays more attention to the first two criteria, while on the other hand discourse analysis in a belief that the rest of the criteria are the building stones for communication, pay more attention to them. Some of the studies have a broader view on what is text linguistics, as one may see the text linguistics as a study that studies any aspect of language in use, while others might be driven by more strict criteria. It can be said, that text analysis and discourse are often the same things but it can be also said, that text analysis often gives a more formal and experimental view, seeing the language as a mental phenomenon, while discourse analysis concerns more with the functions and see the language as a predominantly social. (Widdowson 2007, 3-9)

Linguists analysing discourse are concerned with the background of the whole discourse, paying attention not only to linguistic facts but with the specific use of language given the specific social or cultural aspects. Therefore, discourse analysis involves disciplines such as phonetics, sociology psychology or semiotics and is used not only by linguists but by literary critics, sociologists, political scientists, and many more. (Alba-Juez 2009, 5-15)

To conclude the discourse may be seen from two points as a language beyond a sentence and language in use. In this thesis I am going to focus on the actual language in use, use of morphemes, reoccurrence of certain patterns and mistakes with account for the subjects providing the utterances being students of the university with previous experience in English acquired only from previous levels of education or in some cases affected by travelling into the foreign countries. All of those subjects being of one social group – students of a

university with philological studies – and none of the subjects travelling into foreign country throughout the studies to improve their language level by adding a new variable.

2.4 Intervention

As Thomas Bata university offers the programme of English for Business Administration, there are quite a few subjects that could have an impact on the level of English every subject undergoing the experiment has. Therefore, I found important to mention those subjects and briefly introduce their nature and possible effects they could have on the performance of subjects.

The programme is in the capable hands of Faculty of Humanities, it is a full-time study programme and as the content of the programme states, the programme itself offers a combination of business and philology-based subjects in a balanced matter. Some of the subjects that this programme covers over the 6 semesters are Professional Business English language, Basics of accounting, Selected Chapters from British literature, Selected chapters from American literature, Business Administration, English morphology and Syntax, Lexicology, Marketing, Translation and interpreting basics, Psychology for managerial practice, etc.

For this experiment, only the philology part is important as it should provide students with new skills that could enhance their level of English. This possible enhancement of their English level throughout the newly acquired linguistic skills is what I will try to prove by the means of this experiment.

2.4.1 Subjects taught in the first semester of the programme

As was previously mentioned, subjects of the programme are combined each semester in such a manner to provide students with a balanced knowledge of both business and language, but the first semester is focused on the general education needed for the following study as well, therefore subjects the first semester starts with subjects such as Information technologies and Czech language in practice as those subjects are necessary for further studies and are connected to both main areas of the programme.

Solely business subject is then Basics of economics and when it comes to subjects that are taught only in English and should provide students with necessary language skills, there is Phonetics and Phonology subject, British studies subject, English language exercise part 1 subject, the subject called Introduction to the study of language and Basics of academic

writing subject. Only the subjects taught only in English will be described further as those are the subjects affecting English utterances of students, as they are tasked with speaking only in English.

Description of subjects based on their syllabus:

- **British studies** – As the content of this subject says, students will be introduced to the social system of Great Britain and with the acquired knowledge they should be capable of making their own opinion on today modern Britain society. The subject is taught in English and students are to discuss during the class in English only to work on their skills, the content of the subject provides students with new and useful vocabulary.
- **English Language exercise** – Sole purpose of this subject is to ensure the further advance of students in their English level. For this purpose, students are taught advanced grammatical structures and vocabulary. As a result of this subject students should be on the level of C1, both in written and spoken form. Student after completing this subject should be capable of having a conversation on any given topic, creating complex sentence structures and react adequately to any given question or situation requiring the usage of English.
- **Phonetics and phonology** – Subject of Phonetics and phonology provides students with necessary information on English sound system and as a result, students should acquire enough knowledge to differ English and Czech sounds, making him capable of determining the cause of pronunciation deviations and by the use of theoretical knowledge improve their own English pronunciation. With the knowledge acquired throughout this subject, students can create transcriptional records and explain the occurrence or absence of specific sound phenomena.
- **Introduction to the study of language** – This subject is focused on the basic linguistics terminology. With the knowledge provided by this subject, a student should be capable of identifying the most important linguistic schools as well as their approach to the study of language and should be acknowledged with the basics of linguistics enough to use them in any further studies of linguistic disciplines.
- **Basics of academic writing** – As the name of the subject implies, students are taught the basics of English academic writing, therefore improving their English writing skills and enriching their vocabulary as well as improving their argumentation skills.

All off those subjects serve as a helpful tool for students to perfect both their spoken and written English. Teachers responsible for each of the subjects help students to work on their English by giving them space to freely state their opinion in English and providing them with helpful advice on their mistakes and how to avoid making the same mistakes twice. Each spoken or written exchange between teacher and student is then supposed to result in a better understanding of how the language works and how to properly utilize it.

2.5 Procedure

The first step of the experiment was that at the beginning of the semester, namely in September were subjects of the experiment tasked with providing a simple utterance, that was recorded and then transcribed into a written form. The same task was given to the same students at the end of the first year, namely in May. Utterances were sorted by the observed period they belonged to, the first half of the experiment being the pre-test and second half being the post-term.

Each of the subjects of the experiment made two utterances, one in the pre-test and one on the post-test. In both, the pre-test and the post-test are two groups, consisting of approximately twenty subjects. Each of the subjects was therefore tasked with providing two utterances, which were then recorded and transcribed. None of the observed subjects travelled to any English-speaking country.

After sorting the utterances into two groups for each period the following step was literary research and analysis of given samples itself and their interpretation.

With analysis being done, the results of the analysis for each of the subjects in each of the group and both of the experiment phases, the resulting figures were documented in this thesis.

II. ANALYSIS

3 ANALYSIS OF UTTERANCES MADE DURING PRE-TEST

This chapter is going to focus on the actual analysis of utterances provided during pre-test period and a summary of the most common mistakes made by subjects in both groups and the intensity of their occurrence as well as provide my personal opinion on the cause of those mistakes.

Subjects were providing their utterances in front of other subjects of the same age, so it was only natural to use informal English, but even with the usage of informal spoken language, there are certain rules, under which they need to form their utterances. Due to the importance of these rules, the decision was to inspect only grammatical structures.

The main focus was, therefore, on the usage of suffixes in plural forms, suffixes in the agreement of verbs in 3rd person singular in the simple present tense, usage of tenses and adequate form of verbs due to inflectional suffixes, and most importantly on the use of articles whether indefinite, definite or zero.

The most frequent mistakes – the use of articles, prepositions and verb tenses – were further analysed. The total number of mistakes occurring in pre-test was two hundred and fifty-five. Sixty-six mistakes were connected to the usage of articles, forty mistakes were in the usage of prepositions, eighty-eight mistakes were connected to the usage of adequate tense in utterances, and sixty-four mistakes were of other types, such as the agreement of verbs and nouns, usage of the -s suffix, derivational mistakes and others.

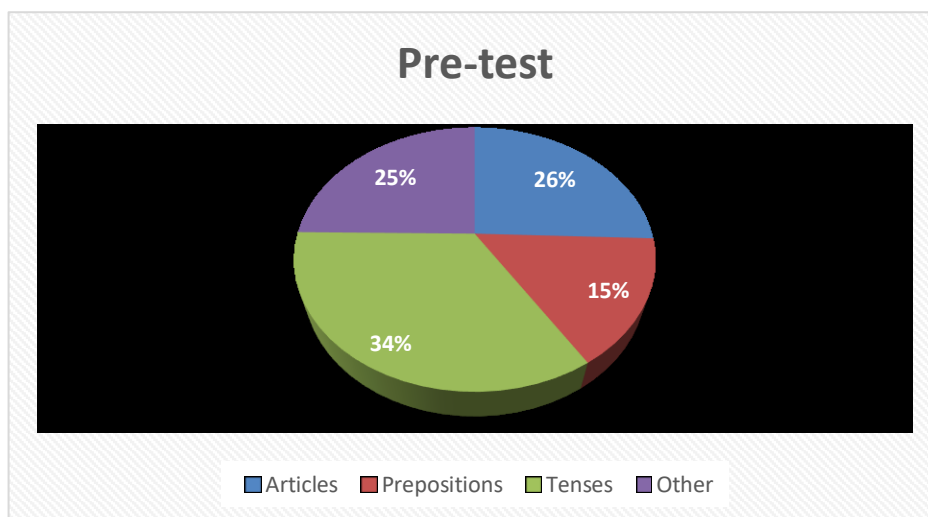


Figure 1 - Morphological Mistakes in Pre-test

3.1 Analysis of utterances

There is a total of thirty-five subjects who provided their utterance both in pre-test and post-test. As I mentioned previously background of their English language learning is mostly the

same in a way of years studied, but the actual level of English will, of course, differ with each subject, as each subject is unique. Thus, the focus is on mistakes, that have the highest potential of occurrence given the interference of Czech and English morphology.

3.1.1 Occurring errors

While analysing the text I found, that the most common mistake in utterances of all the subjects consisted of mistakes connected to tense, usage of articles and wrong use or complete omittance of prepositions. Mistakes connected to the correspondence of two words in terms of the case, person, gender or number occurred as well and in larger amount than the rest, which consisted mostly of changed order of words in phrases and few errors in derivational morphology.

3.1.1.1 Articles

As there are three types of articles in English, definite, indefinite and zero, and no articles in front of Czech words, this might quite understandably cause problems to Czech learners of the English language. The definite article can be replaced in both Czech and English, by the use of pronouns, demonstratives and possessive, e.g.: pronoun “*It*” - *Give me the book.* – *Give it to me.* (*Dej mi knihu./Podej mi to.*), demonstrative “*this*” – *Give me this book* (*Dej mi tu knihu*), or possessive “*your*” – *Give me your book* (*Dej mi tvou knihu*), this way the speakers may avoid unnecessary errors.

Indefinite articles, on the other hand, have no such substitutes and therefore must be present and are a necessity in English, which is not the case in Czech and may cause a problem to the Czech learner of English. And in addition to that, the presence of indefinite article is conditioned by the countability of nouns, the indefinite article is to be used with a singular countable noun, but in one of the utterances can be seen the wrong usage of the indefinite article in **...we were in a streets...*” where, given the context, the speaker probably wanted to say “*...we were on a street...*”

At least one error of a missing indefinite article *a/an* occurred in majority of utterances, e.g.: **...he covered mi in blanket...*” While Czech does not need to use an article to express the same sentence “*...Přikryl mě dekou...*” it is a necessity in English, same in **...I took picture of him...*” (*...Vyfotila jsem ho...*). Other examples of missing indefinite article may be seen in following structures: **...a dish in restaurant,*” or **...it was big adventure,*” or **I didn't give it much of attention,*” etc.

However, missing indefinite articles were not the only problem connected to articles, in the utterances of four subjects, were missing definite articles as well, e.g.: **... first week...*”

where, the “*first*” is an ordinal, therefore has to be with the definite article. The definite article was missing in **“I went into main tent,”* or **“In middle of July,”* as well.

Cases, where the definite article was used instead of the indefinite or vice versa, occurred in less than seven utterances, for example in **“...they opened the door with the code...”* where the code was not mentioned nor known. There was a mistake in the use of indefinite article instead of definite, for example in **“I was enjoying a festival,”* where the festival was already known and discussed

3.1.1.2 Prepositions

Between the most common mistakes occurred problems with prepositions as well, which is quite understandable as not all constructions need a preposition and this often differs in Czech and English and on top of that prepositions differ in each language and that might lead to yet another complications.

Preposition being different in English and Czech might be proven by simple example with a preposition *on*, e.g.: *“You can count on me,”* which could be translated as *“Můžeš se mnou počítat,”* which then back in English literally translated as **“You can count with me.”* Those cases of different preposition being used, occur very often and thus, learners make mistakes, the most common being mistakes concerning prepositions *by, in, for, on, to, about, into,* and *at*.

Those prepositions were also exactly the preposition that caused problems to the subjects providing the utterances. One subject added a preposition into construction, that did not need a preposition, in **“...offered to me,”* quite possibly due to literal translation from Czech, in which the construction sound like *“nabídl mi”* and inflection changes the first person *Já* into third case *mi*, which might Czech student try to substitute by adding the preposition *to* in English. Errors caused by a translation into native language may be seen in examples such as **“she took a closer look on me”* or **“she took a look to my bank account.”* Translations of those to constructions could be *“Líp se na mě podívala,”* and *“Podívala se na můj bankovní účet,”* in both cases is the preposition *at* replaced with another.

Other mistakes were connected to Czech literal translations as well but were more of a wrong choice of a preposition. Those mistakes occurred in several utterances. The first construction that had a wrong choice of a preposition, specifically *on* instead of *for*, due to the Czech translation was **“...tickets on buses...”* where the Czech translation would be *“..lístky na autobusy..”* In another construction occurred mistake with the preposition *at* used

instead of *in* in the construction **“...at the morning...”* which referred to a time of day and not a certain point of time, the same error occurred in the third utterance.

In one utterance the subject used preposition *in* instead of *on*, while still expressing the means of transport and not his exact position **“...never flew in a plane.”* Preposition *in* was also used instead of *on* in **“I had like ten stitches in my head...”* One subject used preposition *of* instead of *for* and changed the meaning of his construction, while in an effort to express her being afraid for her lost friend, she said **“I was so afraid of her,”* which led to change in the meaning, this subject then used preposition *for* instead of *to* leading to the same result in the structure *“It was very funny for me.”*

3.1.1.3 Tense

One of the most common mistakes were errors in tense structures or choice of wrong tense and aspect for a given construction. This might be quite understandable as well since the point of view on tense is in both languages different.

The most common mistake connected to tense, occurring in many utterances was the use of present simple tense instead of past simple or vice versa. This problem occurred in exactly seven utterances in constructions, that were supposed to be in the past simple tense and were in the present simple, e.g.: **“We took off the bus and go to the station in Berlin,”* or **“our five year old cousin came to us and ask my older brother...”* or **“she bust me.”* The present tense being used instead of the past simple may be evident in **“We finally get there and we were going...”* or in **“He took his ankle and bring it back.”*

In few cases occurred problem with the use of past simple instead of the past continuous, as in **“After one hour I see that she is drink more,”* in this utterance occurred problem with present simple being used instead of past simple as well and the final outcome is drink was missing *-ing* suffix, the utterance should be in this form *“After one hour I saw that she was drinking more.”*

Other mistakes connected to the tense use included, for example, the wrong form of a verb in **“it didn’t worked out,”* where the use of *didn’t* needs to be followed by a verb in present simple form as in *“it didn’t work out,”* or the use of present simple to express past continuous, e.g.: **“we think about how to pay for the tickets, but meanwhile...”* given the context of the utterances there should have been *“we were thinking about how to pay for the tickets, but meanwhile...”*

3.1.1.4 Other mistakes

Other mistakes, that were not so common throughout the utterances were mistakes concerning the use of -s suffix both in plural and agreement of verb with a noun such as with 3rd person in the present simple tense and rarely occurring mistakes with the order of a phrase.

The wrong usage of the suffix -s may be seen, both in the agreement of verb and noun as in **"It look"* or missing the -s suffix in plural form as in **"they got a few bottle,"* or **"most of American film,"* in one utterance the problem with the missing suffix -s in plural form occurred in four cases. Other examples of the missing suffix -s may be seen in following constructions: **"he like to wear only boxers..."* or **"so it begin..."* or **"one of the security guy..."* A mistake in the derivation of one word was present in an utterance where the subject wanted to express *a flight* and instead presented the audience with *a flying*.

Another mistake was in an utterance of one subject, where the subject assigned sex to a sexless noun *car* and that led to change of pronoun from it into him, in **"we crashed into him,"* or derivational mistake where the subject used verb *speaking* instead of noun *speech* in **"So my speaking is about an injury..."* Mistakes connected to the word order in a phrase were present in, for example, verb phrase **"...send pictures to my friends"* where the creator of the utterance shifted the position of an object, which resulted in **"...send to my friend pictures,"* or in another utterance where the subject change the order of words in a question **"how can I say..."* into **"how I can say..."*

In the group of participants, there were utterances with significantly low occurrence of mistakes and opposite which proves that each subject's morphological competence and performance is unique and the occurrence of mistakes differs with each participant. While some subjects had shorter sentences, others had complex sentences and were overall longer, nonetheless, this did not change the occurrence of mistakes as a person in a shorter utterance had more mistakes than a subject in way longer utterance or vice versa.

What was interesting were the disfluencies in speech such as pauses and filler words. As a filler word, we could see the words such as um, uh, like or on a certain level repetition. For the use of filler words may be different causes, those being, for example, divided attention, infrequent words or nervousness. (Dunvall, et al. 2014, 35-40)

The utterances provided were full of these disfluencies which could on a certain level indicate that the mistakes made during the speech could be caused more by the mentioned causes of filler words, rather than actual lack of vocabulary or not enough knowledge on the

topic of English grammar, as all of these subjects were new to their studies in a new environment and after two months of summer holiday when they did not necessarily need to use English, thus quite possibly perceive English words as infrequent.

4 POST-TEST ANALYSIS

This chapter is focused on the analysis of utterances made during the post-test. Those utterances subjects provided at the end of the first semester of their studies of English for Business Administration programme at Thomas Bata University.

The assumption was that their studies should have a positive effect on the resulting utterances of each individual subject, as each of them had studied under the same rules and the same programme. During the first semester, there was a number of subjects taught in the program that could improve their overall understanding of the English grammar, and therefore improve their morphological competence and performance, as it is mentioned in the subchapter Intervention. During their studies, specifically in the mentioned subjects, are students asked to communicate only by the means of English language and this is viewed as another variable that could add to the improvement of their utterances.

The total amount of mistakes that occurred in the utterances provided in the post-test was one hundred and twenty-nine. Mistakes connected to articles occurred in forty-two cases, while errors in the use of prepositions occurred in twenty-one cases. The usage of tenses caused problems in thirty-nine cases and other mistakes occurred in twenty-seven cases.

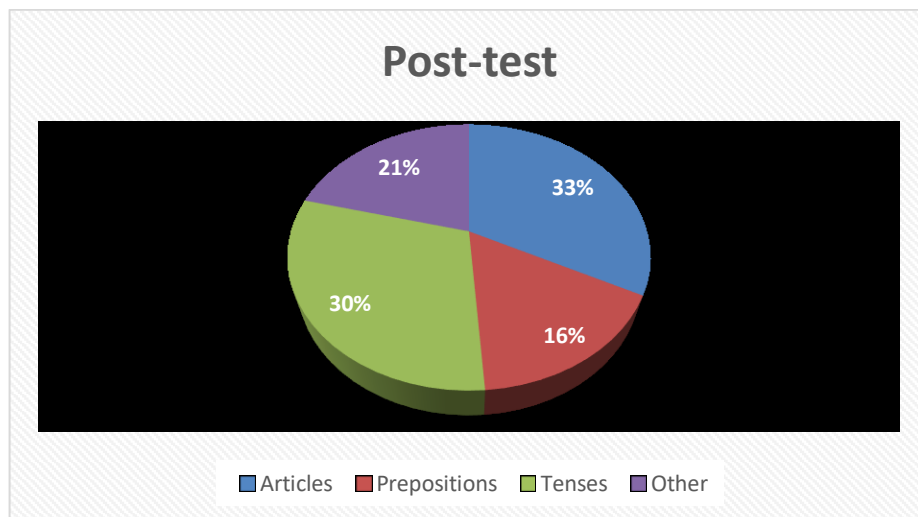


Figure 2 - Morphological Mistakes in Post-test

4.1 Analysis of utterances

As I mentioned in the paragraph above, the subjects of both groups were in the time of providing the utterances at the end of their first semester of studies of the programme. The number of the subjects providing the utterances is the same as it was at the beginning, during

the pre-test, therefore, thirty-five subjects as each of the subjects were providing the second utterance to show any changes as opposed to the first utterance.

4.1.1 Occurring errors

While analysing the utterances provided by the subjects during the second observed period, the conclusion was, that the mistakes occurring in the post-test are of the same or similar nature as the mistakes occurring in the pre-test period. Those mistakes, on the other hand, occur in a significantly smaller amount than in the pre-test.

4.1.1.1 Articles

While in the pre-test was the problem of missing indefinite article present in at least one case in majority of utterances, in the post-test, this problem occurs in eighteen utterances, wherein some the problem occurs only once and in others more than once. Evidence of missing indefinite articles may be seen in *"*there was concert...*" or *"*he was completely different person.*" Other examples of missing indefinite article may be evident in *"*I have story...*" or *"*I had skirt,*" or *"*Dubrovnik is really great city.*"

Problems with the definite article occurred in eleven utterances, from which in eight cases the definite article was missing, in one case the article was not supposed to be there, in one case there was the indefinite article instead of the definite, and in one case there should have been the indefinite article. Some cases of the missing article were in *"*...conversation with homeless woman...*" where the woman was previously mentioned and *"*on my way back to dormitory.*" The same problem occurred in another utterance in *"*I don't know like second to last or the last day there,*" where was the definite article missing in front of last as well.

There was an example of missing definite article in front of ordinal in *"*I was in third grade,*"

The case of the definite article being used instead of the indefinite occurred in *"*...when you are going to the concert,*" where the subject was mentioning concerts in general and not one specific. The construction *"*it is a biggest shopping centre in the entire Belgrade,*" shows the case of the indefinite article being used instead of the definite, same as in *"*I started a biggest laugh...*" and the construction *"*...lost track of the time,*" shows the definite article being used even if there should be omitted.

4.1.1.2 Prepositions

Prepositions, as mentioned above, are often a problem for a lot of learners of a foreign language but with the constant enriching of vocabulary and communication in given foreign language, it becomes less difficult as it is apparent in the utterances of the subjects.

While at the pre-test there was quite a lot of errors in prepositions, in the post-term there were only eight utterances showing examples of those errors. In five of those utterances, occurred only mistakes connected to the prepositions of time, the first of those two utterances had an error in *"*it was on August,*" where the subject used *on* instead of *in* and the second one had an error in *"*...to go for a walk in the forest in the night,*" where the subject used *in the* instead of *at*, the second one could be caused due to the literal translation which would be "*...jít na procházku v lese, v noci,*" the third one had an error in *"*...in one January afternoon,*" subject used *in* instead of *on*. Two subjects used wrong preposition, one used *in* instead of *on* in *"*...in 17th December last year,*" and one used *at* instead of *on* in *"*my story happened at one December weekend.*"

One of the remaining three utterances in which problems with prepositions occurred, had a problem in *"*we set our destination on the GPS,*" where the subject used *on* instead of *in* or *into*, quite possibly due to translation which could be "*Na GPS jsme nastavili destinaci.*" The second of the remaining three had a problem in a preposition of place in *"*...we sit on the pub again...*" using *on* instead of *at* and the third one had a problem in *"*a wonderful view to the snowy mountains,*" using *to* instead of *on*.

4.1.1.3 Tense

Problems with tense occurred in fewer utterances than in the pre-test. Three utterances had mistakes quite possibly only due to the nervousness of subjects providing them as there were almost no other mistakes and all of those three utterances had only one mistake in the use of present tense instead of the past simple, one of them was constantly shifting between the representation of direct speech and his telling of the story, which could be the cause as well.

Most of the problems were once again connected to the use of present simple tense instead of past simple, for example in *"*we stopped in a bar and have some beers...*" or *"*we found out that the lightning strike the tree that was about 200 metres....*" Or in *"*...somehow my mum manage to arrange.*"

In one utterance occurred *see* in the past form *saw*, while being preceded by *could*, in *"*we could saw the whole city.*" One subject made two mistakes in the use of tense, both of which were in the use of present simple instead of past simple tense in *"*All it happens in*

one January afternoon,” and *”*I help him stood up,*” the first example of this utterance was shown in the subchapter Prepositions as well.

One subject made several mistakes in tenses, as he used the verb *be* in present simple form 3rd person in front of *happened* in *”*This is happened two years ago...*” next used construction with wrong order of words and additional *do* in *”*we should don’t go to the sea...*” which I think should be “*Why shouldn’t we go to the sea...*” and used two verbs in a present simple form, while they should have been in the past simple in *”*We were thinking about it for two minutes and decide to go the same day,*” and “*we travel for maybe seventeen hour.*”

4.1.1.4 Other mistakes

Amongst other mistakes that occurred during the post-test were mistakes with the suffix *-s*, five times missing in a plural form and once missing in agreement in 3rd person singular, they were in four utterances.

The case in which the *-s* for plural form was missing was in *”*the concert was one of the best concert...*” the same problem occurred in *”*...one of the guy...*” where the *guy* should have been in plural form with the *-s* suffix. Another example of missing *-s* suffix is in *”*...so he would buy us a lot of beer.*” where the subject probably wanted to express the glasses or bottles of beer not beer as a substance, and in *”*...couldn’t look me in my eye...*”

The case of the agreement had in addition to the missing suffix *-s* a mistake in the choice of a pronoun, specifically *they* and looked like this *”*who comes first they get a better place,*” while using the pronoun *who*, there is a necessity for an agreement of verb in 3rd person singular and the use of *they* in the structure was not needed, the structure should be: “*who comes first gets a better place.*” In addition, in one utterance occurred additional *-s* while expressing singular *”*I got a tasks...*” and in another utterance there occurred *-s* in the plural form of *sheep*, while plural form of *sheep* is *sheep* without the suffix *-s*.

In one utterance there was a problem with agreement occurred in *”*the boy sitting across the class were telling...*” as well, where the *boy* needs an agreement with a verb in 3rd person singular. Other errors were connected to wrong order of words, shown in *”*It didn’t mind to me because the day before...*” where the subject should have used “*I didn’t mind because the day before...*”

Same as in the pre-test, one subject assigned sex to a sexless noun, this time with the noun *doors*.

Same as in the pre-test the difference in the level of each of the subjects is evident and sometimes significant. While in the pre-test subjects had generally more complex structures and were often getting lost in their speech, these utterances done during the post-test seem better thought through and some of the subjects seem more confident in their vocabulary and have a better way of expressing their ideas.

Still not all the subjects are showing these improvements but the overall occurrence of disfluencies in speech significantly decreased with most of the subjects. English being used during their studies at least in the subjects that could positively affect their level of English, could have resulted in the elimination of infrequent words being the cause of disfluencies and even though nervousness during talking in front of the other subjects might persist after the first semester, most of the subjects showed a significant decrease in the occurrence of disfluencies.

Those being in the group of subjects with high occurrence of disfluencies, often make mistakes in speech and afterwards quickly correct themselves as if not confident in their skills even though they have the vocabulary and awareness of English.

CONCLUSION

The analysis revealed that the most common mistakes occurring in spontaneous oral discourse of 1st year university students of English philology were the improper use of articles, incorrect use or complete omission of prepositions and mistakes connected to the use of verb tenses. Mistakes connected to the correspondence of two words in terms of case, person, gender or number occurred as well and in larger amount than the rest, which consisted mostly of changed order of words in phrases and few errors in derivational morphology.

It can be concluded that the mistakes occurring in the post-test are of the same or similar nature as the mistakes occurring in the pre-test period which provides answers to both research questions:

What are the most frequent types of morphological mistakes in pre-test?

What are the most frequent types of morphological mistakes in post-test?

The total number of mistakes in the improper use of articles in post-test (42) was smaller than in pre-test (66). The total number of mistakes in the use of prepositions decreased in post-test (21) as opposed to pre-test (40). The total number of mistakes in verb tenses in post-test (39) decreased significantly since the pre-test (88). Other mistakes were present in the post-test (27) in a smaller amount as well than in pre-test (64).

In post-test (total number of mistakes: 255), mistakes occurred in significantly smaller amount than in pre-test (total number of mistakes: 129), which proves the stated hypothesis:

The number of morphological mistakes in post-test is lower than the number of morphological mistakes in pre-test.

Throughout the analysis of the pre-test, I have spotted a significant difference between each subject and their uniqueness. While some had little to no mistakes, others had a lot of grammatical mistakes, while some seemed confident in their language even though there was a high proportion of errors occurring, others, on the other hand, seemed nervous and not confident enough even though their utterances exhibited minimal occurrence of mistakes.

The nervousness and actual occurrence of disfluencies in their utterances made me think about the possible connections to the outcome of their speech. English of some of the subjects seemed perfected by actual use, while others showed grammatical awareness which they were unable to convert into the actual usage

Moving to the analysis of the post-test, still bearing the idea of disfluencies, I have come to realise that the studies did not have an impact on every individual. While those previously

making little to no mistakes were in most cases still on the same level of English, some exhibited significant improvement while on the other hand, those making the most mistakes usually stayed on the same level as well.

What was interesting for me was the change in the frequency of disfluencies. I have come to see a pattern as those showing almost no disfluencies in the pre-test were usually the confident because their English seemed perfected by the actual use and their resulting utterances showed the same mistakes with a slight change to their occurrence. Those making a lot of disfluencies, which usually separated their mistakes and corrected form were the same who made the most improvement in both grammatical structure and the proportion of disfluencies occurring in their speech, those were actually the ones seeming to know the grammar and actual use, while only being unconfident in the pre-test.

To conclude, improvements were present, but not with each subject. Those beginning their studies with a higher level of English did not quite represent any significant improvements and mainly stayed the same. Subjects with the higher amount of disfluencies usually showed a significant improvement, it is not known whether because of knowing their environment and becoming less nervous and confident in their English or because of the newly acquired knowledge. Finally, the subjects, who were the most confident in their speech and showed disfluencies only in the moment of recalling a certain memory, rather than grammatical structure, were those who made the slightest improvement and usually in the frequency of mistakes rather than actual elimination of a certain type.

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