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Pedagogická fakulta
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Varianty angličtiny u českých studentů

Bakalářská práce

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Anotace:

Cílem této bakalářské práce je zjistit, jaká varianta angličtiny je nejběžnější u českých studentů, co nejvíce ovlivňuje jejich angličtinu a jakými způsoby se nejraději a nejčastěji tento jazyk učí. Teoretická část práce je zaměřena zejména na vysvětlení důležitých pojmů a vytyčení hlavních rozdílů mezi různými variantami angličtiny. Praktická část se soustředí na rozbor cvičení provedených se studenty, která mají prokázat, jaká angličtina převažuje u vybraného vzorku studentů anglického jazyka. Praktická část si také klade za cíl odpovědět na otázku, zda se předchozí jazykové stadium významným způsobem projevuje na výsledné variant angličtiny českých studentů.

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Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně pod vedením vedoucího bakalářské práce a uvedla jsem všechny použité prameny a literaturu.

V Hradci Králové dne 29.4.2016

Podpis: _____

Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že bakalářská práce je uložena v souladu s rektorským výnosem č. 4/2009 (Řád pro nakládání se školními a některými jinými autorskými díly na UHK).

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VOKŘÍNKOVÁ, Jana. *Varianty angličtiny u českých studentů*. Hradec Králové: Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Hradec Králové, 2015. 63 s. Bakalářská práce.

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Klíčová slova: angličtina, varianty, dialekt, standard, postoje českých studentů

Annotation

VOKŘÍNKOVÁ, Jana. *Varieties of English in Czech students*. Hradec Králové: Faculty of Education, University of Hradec Králové, 2015. 63 pp. Bachelor Degree Thesis.

The aim of this Bachelor thesis is to find out which variety of English is for Czech students most prevalent, what the most influential factor of their variety of English is, and what their favourite means of learning this language are. The theoretical part of the thesis is especially focused on the explanation of the basic terms and defining the main differences among various varieties of English. The practical part of the thesis is focused on analysing exercises carried out with students which should prove which variety of English predominate at chosen students of the English language.

Keywords: English, varieties, dialect, standard, Czech students' attitudes

Poděkování

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Introduction

The aim of the bachelor thesis is to show the main differences between two well-known English varieties – the British and the American variety. The reason why I chose these two varieties is explained in Chapter 1.3. The title of the thesis suggests that the thesis deals especially with the way how Czech students use the English language and how they sometimes mix the British and American varieties of English together by mistake. This mixture can lead to a misunderstanding in communication and also during their lessons with native speakers.

The first part of the thesis deals with some examples of the varieties of English in general. The most important and common varieties are mentioned, e.g. British English, American English and Canadian English, however, the stress is laid on the differences between British and American English. The first part also deals with the basic linguistic terms which are necessary to be explained.

For the second part of the thesis, a small group of students was needed for the research that was carried out for this thesis. The research looked into the students' English background and their applied variety of English. At the end of the research, there is a result of their knowledge and their preferred variety of the English language. This research should show how this topic about differences in English is discussed at schools.

In the Czech Republic, there is a tendency to teach students the British variety of English. The majority of English study sources for English learners used at schools are based on the British model. The importance of British English in the Czech Republic is supported by certificates in English skills based on the British variety: First Certificate in English (FCE) or Certificate in Advanced English (CAE). This information is based on my research at primary and secondary schools in Hradec Králové.

Although students are taught British English, through mass media they are also in touch with American English. Furthermore, more and more native speakers teaching English in the Czech Republic are from the United States of America or Canada. The differences among English varieties are not usually systematically taught.

In my opinion students should know more information about the differences among the varieties of English on the one hand to avoid any misunderstanding, on the other hand to learn more about English language.

The bachelor thesis is divided into two parts – A Theoretical part and B Practical part. Quotations are mentioned in brackets behind the quoted text. They are written in italics and separated by inverted commas. Paraphrases are finished by an author and a year of publishing in brackets. In case I mention the third person singular, I use form “he/she”. In case I use a transcription, it is written in square brackets. In case I use literature written in Czech, I translate it into English.

A Theoretical Part

The theoretical part of the thesis has to prepare the ground for the practical part. It shows the main differences in varieties of the British and American English which are then mentioned in the practical part.

1 What is English?

First of all, the English language should be classified and briefly introduced. English is a West Germanic language developed in the British Isles. English is a Germanic language spoken in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and most parts of the Commonwealth, etc. (Seargeant, Swan, 2012). In addition, it is also the third most spoken mother tongue in the world after Mandarin Chinese and Spanish (Lewis, Simons and Fenning, 2016).

Nowadays, the main problem of mankind is to understand each other. There were tendencies to use English as a world language; however, not everyone is able to speak English even on a very low level. As time went by, there were some attempts to create some auxiliary languages, which were very easy to learn, to unify the languages. The most well-known auxiliary language is called Esperanto, which was created by Jewish author with Russian origin Ludwik Lejzer Zamenhof (Boulton, 1960). Using the auxiliary languages, people should be able to understand each other with very little difficulty. However, no international auxiliary language has been accepted. The reasons are obvious: the auxiliary language has no native speakers and no bordered area. The international language cannot be a dead language which has no central group of speakers.

Apparently, it is hardly possible to say which language is becoming the most widely spoken one. It depends mostly on the quantity of speakers and furthermore, it depends on the economic, military and political power of the language area and also on the ability to learn the language (the language is not supposed to be complicated). The language should be also spread all over the world, it should not be bound with a specific geographical area. These factors contributed to the fact that English is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world nowadays.

The chart 1 (see below) shows the 10 most spoken languages in the world based on the number of native speakers of the particular language. It also says English is the first language or mother tongue for about 375 million people. Add to the people who learn English as a second (foreign) language, the total number of English speakers is quite large. This fact naturally causes the differences within the language given especially by the development in various areas.

Rank	Language	Primary Country	Speakers (millions)
1.	Chinese	China	1,179
2.	Spanish	Spain	406
3.	English	The United Kingdom	375
4.	Hindi	India	260
5.	Arabic	Saudi Arabia	223
6.	Portuguese	Portugal	202
7.	Bengali	Bangladesh	193
8.	Russian	Russian Federation	162
9.	Japanese	Japan	122
10.	Javanese	Indonesia	84,3

Chart 1: List of languages with at least 50 million native speakers.

Taken from: Lewis, Simons and Fenning, 2016.

1.1 Definition of English

The more the linguists there are, the more the definitions of English are given. From one point of view, English is “*very likely to be almost as integral a part of your life as the air you breathe*“ (Seargeant, Swann, 2012, p. 6). Of course, the term English language means something else to somebody else, everyone uses another definition of the term. The definitions do also change in time, e.g. in the 18th century, Samuel Johnson, an English essayist, lexicographer, literary critic and poet, defined English

as: “*English, adj. Belonging to England; thence English is the language of England*” (Sergeant, Swann, 2012, p. 7).

Nowadays, the definition is not satisfactory anymore, it is incomplete and unusable. Since there are many definitions of the term “English” or “English language”, it cannot be said that any definition is more correct than any other one. Each definition focuses on different parts of key elements. Some definitions are quoted below to show how they differ.

According to the Cambridge dictionary, the English language is “*the language of the United Kingdom and the United States, used also in many other parts of the world*” (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2016).

The Dictionary.com defines the English language as “*the official language of Britain, the U.S., most parts of the Commonwealth, and certain other countries. It is the native language of over 280 million people and is acquired as a second language by many more. It is an Indo-European language belonging to the West Germanic branch*” (Dictionary.com, 2016).

The Oxford dictionary says “*English is the principal language of Great Britain, the US, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and many other countries. There are some 400 million native speakers, and it is the medium of communication for many millions more: it is the most widely used second language in the world*” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016).

1.2 Basic terms

At the beginning of the thesis, some basic linguistic terms should be clarified. It is important to feel the differences among terms: accent, dialect, language variety, and the language standard. I tried to define the terms according to the only one source of information to keep the cohesiveness. The terms are defined by David Crystal, an important and respected British linguist.

Accent identifies where a person is from, regionally or socially. The term accent refers to pronunciation only, and thus differs from the term dialect which refers to grammar and vocabulary as well (Crystal, 2008). That means, accents differ only

in pronunciation so in the written form the differences are not apparent. Basically, accent is not only a matter of loudness but also of the duration (length) and pitch movement.

Dialect stands for a “*regionally or socially distinctive variety of language, identified by a particular set of words and grammatical structures ... The distinction between ‘dialect’ and ‘language’ seems obvious: dialects are subdivisions of languages*” (Crystal, 2008, p. 142). One of the dialects is usually used more than the rest, thus becoming the official standard form of language.

The term **language variety** stands for languages forms which differ from the standard language in particular ways (Crystal, 2008). “*It simply refers to a distinguishable variant of a language. This means that there are a large number of varieties of any given language*“ (Universität Duisburg-Essen1 2016). It is a set of linguistic features that are derived from standard form of the language.

Language standard refers to “*a prestige variety of language used within a speech community. ‘Standard languages/dialects/ varieties’ cut across regional differences, providing a unified means of communication, and thus an institutionalized norm which can be used in the mass media, in teaching the language to foreigners, and so on*” (Crystal, 2008, p450). Other forms which do not refer to this definition are called non-standard – these forms do not conform to the norm. Each language or each language variety has its own standard which represents a norm for the language. The standard is mostly used in formal speech or writings (Crystal, 2008).

1.3 Why British and American varieties?

It should be explained, why British and American varieties are chosen and compared in this thesis. The reason is that these varieties are mostly widespread in the Czech Republic. Czech students mostly get in touch with these varieties, native speakers at their schools come from the United Kingdom or the United States – this statement is based on my research: in Hradec Králové, there are nine native speakers teaching at primary schools, secondary schools, and at the University of Hradec Králové. Three of them are from Great Britain, six of them are from the United States; the number of native speaker from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, or other English speaking countries in the Czech Republic is in my opinion negligible.

The other reason, why British and American English are chosen for this thesis, is that “*they have attained the highest status and the greatest number of speakers.*” (Edelson, 1978, p. 47). These varieties are well-known in the Czech Republic, none of the respondents in the practical part have any idea between the differences among the other English varieties than the two stated above.

The differences between the British and the American varieties are sometimes underestimated. If the differences between American and British English were so small, there would not be a need to discuss them as two different varieties.

2 Standards of the English Language

English is spoken in many varieties although there are many standards of this language. English standard represents the most prestigious language form, both written and spoken. “*Because it is a more careful and precise form, it avoids the contractions of informal English (I’ll, we’ve, isn’t) and tends to include all linking words and pronouns*” (Coman, Shephard, 1971, p. 167). All standards of English are used mostly in media, e.g. newscasts, radio broadcasts or films.

The standard of the language is that kind of the language form which is accepted to be a norm. Some examples of definition by Peter Trudgill are given below to show how he tries to be the most specific when he is talking about the English standard to be non-misleading as much as possible.

Peter Trudgill, an honorary professor of sociolinguistics at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK, and Adjunct Professor at the Research Centre for Linguistic Typology at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia, in his book *English Accents and Dialects* says that the standard English is “*the dialect normally used in writing, for teaching in schools and universities, and heard on radio and television*” (Hughes, Trudgill, Watt, 2012, p. 13).

In one of his other books he claims that the standard English is “*the variety of the English language which is normally employed in writing and normally spoken by educated speakers of the language. It is also, of course, the variety of the language that students of English as a Foreign or Second Language (EFL/ESL) are taught when receiving formal instruction. The term ‘Standard English’ refers to grammar and vocabulary (dialect) but not to pronunciation (accent)*” (Trudgill, Hannah, 2008, p. 1).

The main point is if the concept of the standard English is useful and valid. He comes to the conclusion that there are some purposes that the concept of the standard English is indeed valuable. The standard English can be held to exist, however, it should be definite in a particular way (Stevens, 1981).

“*There are of course as many ‘Englishes’ as countries in which they are used; Australian English, Canadian English, etc.*” (Edelson, 1978, p. 47). Although American

and British English are partly connected to a specific area, it would not be correct to speak about them as they are regional dialects. Each of them contains dialect within its own boundaries. Calling these varieties “dialects” could be vague.

The standard English is both formal and informal. *Formal English is used more in writing than in speaking* (Coman, Shephard, 1971, p. 166). This kind of English is used on more formal occasions. The informal kind of English is used more in everyday speech and appears also in writing – it is characterized by the contractions, e.g. I’ll, can’t, haven’t (Coman, Shephard, 1971).

2.1 British Standard

The term British standard stands for the standard of English which is spoken and written in “*England and, with minor differences, in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, The Republic of Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa*” (Trudgill, Hannah, 2008, p. 2).

Received Pronunciation (RP) is a term which stands for the standard pronunciation form of English on the British Isles. “*Although it is spoken by only a small and declining proportion of the British population, RP is an important point of reference ... and is widely used in dictionaries and other books on English*” (Svartvik, Leech, 2006, p. 125-126). Despite the fact that the Received Pronunciation is considered as a formal pronunciation form, it is pronounced by the minority of the population. The estimation of Received Pronunciation speakers in Great Britain is by Peter Trudgill’s claim no more than 3 % of the local population (Trudgill, 2002). In everyday English the standard pronunciation appears very seldom.

The Received Pronunciation is also known as Queen’s English or BBC English. It is not used in everyday life, but the Royal Family uses this standard commonly, and also the BBC Chanel has still the tendency to speak English on the highest level.

2.2 American Standard

Standard American English is a term which refers to an English variety that is used in professional communication. The biggest difference between British and American standard is appreciable in the pronunciation.

General American means standard American English pronunciation – it is a standard form of pronunciation of English for the United States of America. “*American English is much more homogenous than British English, meaning it is often harder to tell where in the USA someone is from just by hearing their accent*” (ESL language studies abroad, 2016). “*American English exercise increasing influence on usage in other countries*” (Brown, Ogilvie, 2009, p. 333).

2.3 Other Standards

Also other parts of the English speaking countries have their own standard norms of English. The well-known standards are British English and American English. The lesser known standards are for example: Canadian English, Irish English, Australian English, New Zealand English, Indian English, Singapore English, South African English, or Jamaican English (Schreier, 2010).

Canadian English is influenced by both British and American English. “*In recent years there have been indications that American spellings are more commonly used in Canada*” (Shephard, Coman, 1972, p. 78). For standard Canadian English is typical using of the British spelling of some words e.g. honour, colour, favourite; travelled. On the other hand, Canadian English uses the American spelling of the word “recognize” (in American/Canadian spelling “recognise”). Generally said, the Canadian pronunciation is more similar to American English than to British English, however, the Canadian pronunciation is mostly different from both British and American English (Shephard, Coman, 1972).

Other standards are not further described in the thesis, since in the Czech Republic, the British and American standards are dominant. These standards are not important for the research. They are mentioned to show that they exist and to protect the opinion that the British English and American English are the only English standards we distinguish.

3 Differences between British and American English

Although British and American English have many differences, there is hardly any difficulty in understanding each other; however, the differences sometimes lead to misunderstandings and embarrassing or ridiculous situations. The differences are in pronunciation, accent, spelling, grammar, and vocabulary.

3.1 Pronunciation

Here is given a list of main differences in pronunciation between American and British English. The list is based on the Received Pronunciation and General American, since these are the standard pronunciation forms of the varieties. The differences in pronunciation are the most obvious. These differences were summarized by Brown and Ogilvie in their book *Concise Encyclopedia of Languages of the World*, 2009.

- “*British English has a distinct open back vowel phoneme that is absent in American English.*” (Brown, Ogilvie, 2009, p. 329). The mentioned phoneme is a rounded short [ɔ], e.g. in words: cot, cough, often, stop. In American English, there are 2 ways how to pronounce the phoneme: as [a] or as [ɔ:].
- The British English misses a postvocalic [r] which leads to new diphthongs in some environments, e.g. dear [dɪə], hair [heə].
- For American English and northern British varieties is typical an [æ] sound in some words written with a + consonant (e.g. fast, after). Standard British English does use an [ɑ:] sound.
- American English prefers a [u] sound in some words which are written with u + dental [θ, ð] or alveolar [t, d, s, z, n, l] consonants, e.g. duty [duti], tune [tun], new [nu]. In British English are these kind of words pronounced with a [ju:] sound, e.g. [ˈdjuːtɪ], [tjuːn], [njuːn].
- Some differences occur in some words ending in -ary, -ery, or -ory, e.g. stationary. In American English the word “stationary” is pronounced [ˈsteɪʃəˌnɛri], while according to British English this word is pronounced [ˈsteɪʃənəri].

- “Speech sound r: in standard American English is clearly heard, on the contrary in standard British English it is not pronounced (provided that the syllable does not start with this speech sound).” (Brown, Ogilvie, 2009, p. 329).

Some differences in pronunciation are shown in the chart below:

Word	British English	American English
Amen	[ɑ:'men]	[eɪ'men]
Tomato	[tə'mɑ:təʊ]	[tə'meəʊ]
Progress	[prəʊ'gres]	['prɔ:gres]
Process	[prəʊ'ses]	['prɔ:ses]
Herb	['hɜ:b]	['ɜ:rb]
Lieutenant	[lef'tenənt]	[lu:'tenənt]
Z (a letter)	['zed]	['zi:]
Schedule	[ʃed'ju:l]	['skedʒəl]
Garage	['gærɪdʒ]	[gə'rɑ:ʒ]
Kilometre	[kɪlə'mi:tə]	[kɪ'lɑ:mətər]

Examples taken from: Lewis, 1972.

Transcription according to: Fronek, 2006.

3.1.1 Stress placement

Some words in American English differ from British English in pronunciation by stress placement. Mainly words originally from French are in British English pronounced with the stress placed on the first syllable, in American English with the stress on the second one.

Word	British English	American English
Adult	['ædʌlt]	[ə'dʌlt]
Ballet	['bæleɪ]	[bə'leɪ]
Buffet	['bʊfeɪ]	[bʊ'feɪ]

Transcription according to: Fronek, 2006.

However, exceptions also appear and sometimes the stress is pronounced contrarily.

Word	British English	American English
Address	[ə'dres]	['ædres]
Moustache	[mʊ'stɑːʃ]	['mʌstæʃ]

Transcription according to: Fronek, 2006.

3.2 Spelling

The differences in spelling are not significant, although they are relatively frequent. The students of English can be confused due to this divergence. The unification in spelling is important in formal papers, it is non-professional to use mixed spelling of two or more varieties of English.

In the chart below, there are chosen the main differences in spelling according to the British and American varieties.

Difference	British English	American English
-or vs -our	-our: colour, favour, labour etc.	-or: color, favor, labor etc.
-re vs -er	-re: centre metre theatre	-er: center meter theater
-que vs -k	-que: banque cheque	-k bank check
-ogue vs -og	-ogue: catalogue dialogue	-og: catalog dailog
-ce vs -se	defence (n) licence (v) / license (n) offence (n) practice (v) / practise (n)	defense (n) license (n, v) offense (n) practice (n, v)

-ise vs -ize	both, however, the more used variety is -ise: organize/organise realize/realise recognize/recognise	only -ize: organize realize recognize
leaving out of the final -e in compounds	Prefers the variety with -e: sizeable liveable	Prefers the variety without -e: sizable livable
-l vs -ll	-l: fulfil skilful	-ll: fulfill skillful
Other words	pyjamas programme mum moustache tyre whisky	pajamas program mom mustache tire whiskey

Examples taken from: Doubravová, 1999.

3.3 Grammar

The grammar differences are mainly in usage of verbs, nouns and prepositions, e.g. some prepositional phrases are correct only in British or American English, or they are correct in both British and American English.

3.3.1 Verbs

The difference in using tenses differently is seen in using the present perfect tense. In British English, it is correct to use the present perfect tense for expression of recent past. American English uses the perfect tenses less frequently than British English does (Lawendowski, Pankhurst, 1975). From this point of view, American English is closer to

the Czech students who begin with English – they are not sure how and when to use the perfect tense, since they do not know this kind of tense (perfect aspect) from the Czech language.

British English	American English
I have just returned.	I just returned.
I have already had breakfast.	I had breakfast.
I have lost my keys.	I lost my keys.

Examples taken from: Doubravová, 1999.

Simple vs perfect aspect

“*American English uses the past tense on many occasions when British English would use perfect aspect.*” (Lawendowski, Pankhurst, 1975, p. 62). The perfect aspect is decreasing in frequency in both British English and American English, however, it decreases more in the latter (Doubravová, 1999).

One example of the use of the perfect aspect is a situation that something has just happened and therefore occurs a current reference, e.g. “She has just fallen down.” This sentence would be said by Americans using the past simple tense without any time adverbial: “She fell down.” (Lawendowski, Pankhurst, 1975).

Have

On the contrary to American English, the verb “have” is being used in British English mostly with an object which adds the meaning, e. g. I would like to have a break. Americans replace the verb have by a verb “take”, e. g. I would like to take a break (Carter, McCarthy, 2007).

Have got vs have

As for these verbs, the British variety prefers the expression “have got” (e. g. “I have got a dog.”), the American one uses just “have” (e. g. “I have a dog.”). That goes also for talking about obligation, e.g. American “I have to learn” vs British “I have got to learn” (Lawendowski, Pankhurst, 1975).

Shall vs will

The verb “shall” is typical for the British variety, it is used for the first person (both singular and plural), e. g. “I shall return the books.” In the American variety appears the verb shall rarely. They prefer the auxiliary verb “will” for future tense, e. g. “I will return the books.” (Lawendowski, Pankhurst, 1975).

Irregular verbs

Talking about irregular forms of verbs, British English and American English evince also some differences. Generally said, the words which have both forms (regular and irregular) are used in British English in their irregular form. In American English, they are used in regular form. These words are e.g. burn, learn, smell, spell, etc. That means that the verb is conjugated in American English regularly with the regular ending -ed, e.g. burn / burned / burned, learn / learned / learned. For the British variety is common the irregular ending -t, e.g. burn / burnt / burnt, learn / learnt / learnt (Lawendowski, Pankhurst, 1975). The regular forms appear in the British variety as well, however, they are much less in common. American English prefers the regular ending -ed more, whereas British English uses the irregular forms of verbs more (Carter, McCarthy, 2007). The differences are shown in an attached chart (see below):

British variety	American variety
burnt	burned
Dreamt	dreamed
got (past participle)	gotten (past participle)
Learnt	learned
Spelt	spelled

Examples taken from: Doubravová, 1999.

Shall vs should

Typical for the British variety is a question starting with “shall”, e. g. “Which way shall we go?” American English switches the sentence into “Which way should we go?” (Carter, McCarthy, 2007).

Auxiliary verbs

In general, auxiliary verbs are that kind of verbs that help form a grammatical function. The difference is seen in usage of an auxiliary verb “shall”. In American English, the verb “shall” is used in formal language. In question, Americans say “Should we go?”, Brits might say “Shall we go?” (VOA Learning English, 2016).

There is also a difference in usage of a verb “need” in case of expressing a lack of obligation. The American sentence looks like “You do not need to go there tomorrow” (Americans use the auxiliary verb “do” followed by the verb “need”), the British sentence looks like “You need not go there tomorrow.” (VOA Learning English, 2016).

3.3.2 Nouns

The grammar differences in these English varieties relate also to collective nouns. The tendency is that British English connects collective nouns (e.g. team, government, and jury) with both singular and plural forms of verbs, while American English prefers the singular form of verbs in connection with collective nouns (Lawendowski, Pankhurst, 1975). For example, the sentence “Our national team play/plays an important match tonight.” is correct according to the British variety. Americans would only say “Our national team plays an important match tonight.”

3.3.3 Prepositions

As stated above, some prepositions are used in other phrases comparing British and American English. In a chart below, there are named only some of them, but the number of different uses of prepositions is much higher.

Czech	British English	American English
od pondělí do pátku	Monday to Friday	Monday through Friday
o víkendu	at the weekend	on the weekend
Mluvil jsem s Jamesem.	I talked to James.	I talked with James.
Šel směrem ke mně.	He walked towards me.	He walked toward me.
Nemluvil jsem s ním 3 roky.	I have not talked to him for 3 years.	I have not talked to him in 3 years.

Examples taken from: Doubravová, 1999.

There is also another usage of verbs connected with prepositions, e.g. the verb “write”. British and American English would say “I am going to write John a letter.” The difference appears when the second subject (a letter) is not mentioned. The British sentence then looks like this: “I am going to write to John.” while the American sentence looks like this: “I am going to write John.” (Lawendowski, Pankhurst, 1975).

3.4 Vocabulary

It is frequent that British and American English have a specific word for the same concept, or the same word has different meaning. For example, the British word “engine” has in American English equivalent “motor”. On the other hand, the word “bill” is used in both varieties, although in each variety it has another meaning.

The list of all different words could be a theme for a special dictionary. The number of words used only within one variety is large. Here are mentioned only the ones which occur in everyday conversation or causes the biggest misunderstanding. There is an importance to mention the Czech translation of the words, so the difference can be seen.

Czech	British English	American English
bankovka	bank note	Bill
Účet	bill	check
brambůrky	crisps	chips
hranolky	chips	(French) fries
Film	film	movie
lékárna	chemist's	drugstore
Metro	underground	subway
obchod	shop	store
plechovka	tin	Can
Pošta	post	Mail
Rozvrh	timetable	schedule

Examples taken from: Doubravová, 1999.

4 Czech students' English

Czech students' English looks sometimes a little bit strange. Of course, this claim is not valid for all Czech students. However, here are given the most frequent mistakes Czech students make (in case they make some). All examples mentioned in this chapter are based on my personal experience with students attending a private language school.

The Czech students often mix the British and American variety together, since they feel they know the expressions but they do not know which variety of English it belongs to. It is caused as they do not view the language as a unified unit which has its own rules of use.

This specific variety of English is called "Czenglish". The word "Czenglish" was introduced into English by Don Sparling and the term stands for such type of English which is influenced by Czech grammar, syntax, pronunciation and vocabulary. This kind of English is typical for learners of English as a second language (Sparling, 1991). The mentioned mistakes in following paragraph are based on my experience with Czech students.

Most frequent mistakes are in using prepositions both of space and time. The students tend to translate these prepositions the same way they are used in Czech. It creates misunderstandings during communication, e.g. "I was on the post office.", "He smiled on me.", "She plays on the guitar.", "We will come behind ten minutes." "I was by my mother."; "I will call you back to 10 minutes." Another example of wrong word by word translation is in conditionals. The students often tend to use "so" as a conjunction, e.g. "If I have money, so I will buy it."

One more example of "Czenglish" is unfamiliarity with way how some English words work. I mean words such as "like", "miss" or "mind". The students quite often use sentences like "You miss me." instead of "I miss you."; "The sweater likes me." instead of "I like the sweater."; "Smoking minds me" instead of "I mind smoking." These mistakes come from switching the object and the subject in English sentences. Other examples are "I have a dog. The dog bought my father."; "The vase broke my son." To correct these sentences the passive voice should be used.

Furthermore, the Czech students mistake using adverbs namely “very” and “a lot of”, e.g. “I very like System of a Down.”; “My neighbour smokes a lot of.” Moreover, the Czech students do not realize that English names have only the basic form. Therefore they tend to use expressions such as “Hello Pavle.” or “I was in Olomouci.”

A special chapter represents Czech students’ mistakes made in pronunciation. The students make, of course, mistakes in pronunciation of words which they are not familiar with, or in words they do not use often. They do not use intonation or word and sentence stress. Their intonation is flat. *“The most common is in fact interference with the Czech language and blending with English and American English”* (Comorek, 2009, p. 52).

4.1 Frequent mistakes which Czech students make

In this chapter, some examples are given on how Czech students make mistakes according to the ignorance of respecting the differences in the English varieties.

Pronunciation mistakes

Pronunciation is necessarily needed for communication. It causes problems to students of foreign languages because in various languages the pronunciation of phonemes differs, or the foreign language has some phonemes that the mother tongue does not have.

The Czech students make many pronunciation mistakes because there are lots of differences between Czech and English phonemes and the English language has some extra phonemes. Although there are phonemes that do differ the word meaning slightly, there are also phonemes that distinguish word meaning fundamentally, sometimes the level of difference is striking, e.g. be [bɪ] – bee [bi:].

The best way to learn the pronunciation of a foreign language properly is to start with the language at a very early age. Children can produce with their mouth almost every sound. That is why they learn to pronounce more clearly. On the other hand, the tongue of adults gets used to sounds which do not appear in their mother tongue very slowly. They are sometimes also ashamed to pronounce these sounds. Nevertheless, the start with a foreign language at early age could cause problems – in case the child acquires a wrong

pronunciation of some words. This wrong pronunciation is for him/her so deep-rooted that it is very difficult to fix their incorrect pronunciation.

There are 44 phonemes in English and they can be divided into 3 basic categories of phonemes from the Czech – English pronunciation difference point of view.

- The first group are phonemes that differ the meaning slightly, e.g. [s, m, n]. The pronunciation of these phonemes is not necessary to improve because their pronunciation is almost the same as the Czech variety;
- the second group contains phonemes whose pronunciation is similar to the Czech ones, they differ little, but the difference does not change the word meaning. Such phoneme is e.g. [r]. The native speaker recognizes that the phoneme is pronounced by a foreigner, but he/she would understand with no difficulties;
- the third group includes phonemes whose mispronunciation causes problems. That are primarily phonemes that do not appear in the Czech phoneme alphabet, e.g. [θ]. The pronunciation of this phoneme is hard to acquire, therefore many students pronounce it as [s], [f] or [t]. This phoneme belongs to the group where the change of pronunciation differs the word meaning a lot. For example the incorrect pronunciation of a word “three” could lead to misunderstanding and the hearer could hear a word “tree” etc. (Szynalski, Wojcik, 2001).

There are no reliable rules how to gain perfect pronunciation, although there are some recommendations that can help. First of all, it is to practice it, try to imitate the speakers in films, radio, TV broadcasts etc. However, it is hardly possible to get the pronunciation of a native speaker, but it is possible to speak nearly as a native speaker. Some people are more talented and can speak nearly as a native speaker easier. Overall, all people should be able to speak so that they are understood.

I share Mr. Comorek’s opinion which is described in the following sentence: “*We as teachers should explain to the students that good pronunciation (RP or BBC English) in nothing bad, and that they can improve their English easily by improving solely their pronunciation*” (Comorek, 2009, p. 54).

Mistakes in meaning

Another area of mistakes in meaning are idioms – Czech students’ tendency is to translate them word by word. They translate them regardless of the etymology of the idioms. The Czech students make mistakes in word meaning because they do not know the differences in vocabulary used in British and American English. For example, the meaning of a word “bill” is in British English different than in the American one. The number of these words is higher (see Chapter 3.4).

These mistakes come from the students’ ignorance of the varieties. They find out a word which they need in a dictionary and they do not distinguish the American or British variety. Then the sentence “Let’s have some chips.” can be misleading for a native speaker, since he/she awaits completely another kind of food.

5 Which English should be taught?

It is hard to say which English variety is better, which one is required, easier, or more useful. Every language is a part of a specific land. There are not better or worse languages as there are not better or worse cultures. The use of certain types of English depends on a personal opinion – the criteria are very subjective.

The frequent argument is that we are a part of a European culture and so we should learn the British norm. We are also geographically closer to the British Isles, also young people have higher possibility to visit Great Britain than the United States of America (Lawendowski, Pankhurst, 1975). On the other hand, it should be taken into consideration that the American culture is surrounding us more due to the TV, films, music, etc.

Each variety has its own norm. It cannot be said which variety is easier, although American English is more permissive towards the grammar rules. This is the main reason why it is said to be the easier one. Honestly said, the easier form of the English variety is the one that the English learner is more in touch with.

Truth be told, more and more study sources for students in the Czech Republic (e.g. school books, educational videos etc.) are available in British English, so this form of English is more taught at Czech schools. However, it is not a condition or a duty.

The American variety is largely strictly refused at schools. Nevertheless, the students are led to read in English and to build relationships with people all over the world, so it is impossible to insist on pure British English.

The current trend is to focus on English for an international usage. In listening tests, there are not only British native speakers but also there are American, Australian, Canadian and other records. There is a need to remember that a word appears in both British and American English, however, the word could have a different meaning in British English and in American English, e.g. pants, vest, chips, public school, etc. This kind of exercises should help the students hear the differences in the pronunciation of English. They get to know other pronunciation forms of English speakers than they are used to.

In my opinion, teachers' requirement should not be to teach both varieties, however, students should manage only one variety and should be able to speak and write precisely in the only one English variety. The attention to the differences between British and American English should be paid systematically and regularly.

B Practical Part

The practical part of the thesis is focused on Czech students' English background and their knowledge about the differences in English from a regional point of view.

I did a few exercises with students of English including also an interview at the beginning. The group of students is various, their age, level of education, level of English skills, and motivation to learn English are different. I chose the students who have some experience with English, beginners are not relevant for my research. I gave them some prepared exercises to recognize, if they use British English, American English, or mixture of them.

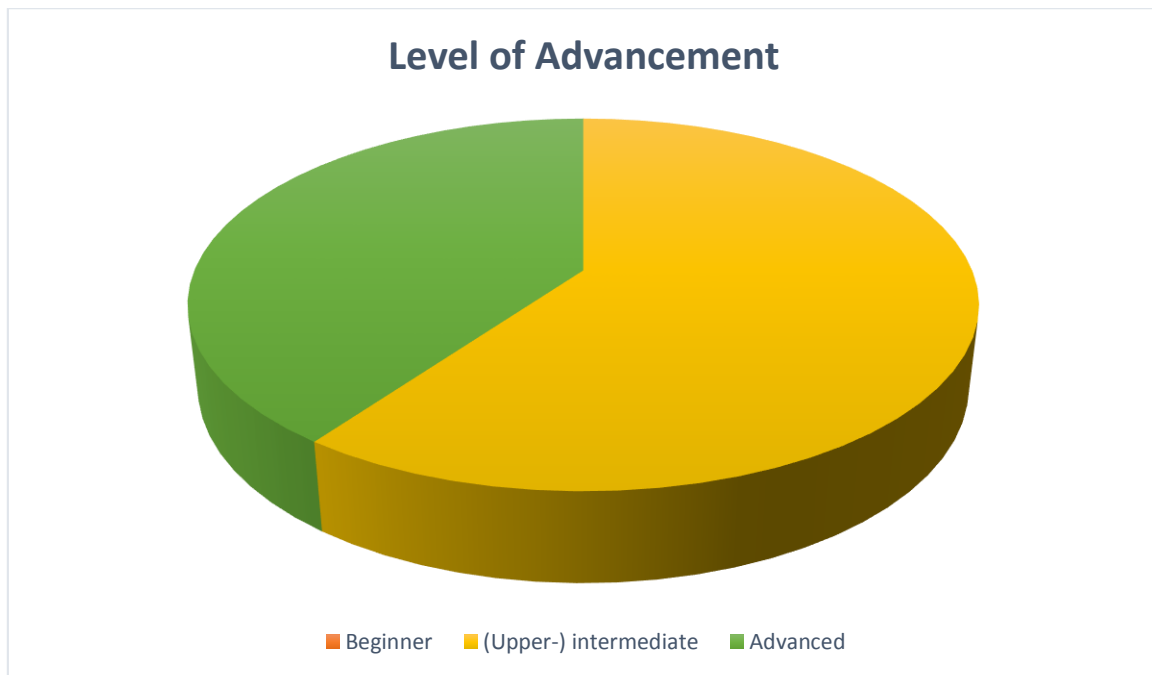
The interview with the students was focused on their sources of learning English and education of English at Czech schools focusing on the differences in the varieties. They told me their experience with learning English at Czech schools and opinions on what should be changed or improved. Each of the students was asked their name, age and English background at first. After the interview, the students did exercises which I prepared. Based on the results of the exercises, I tried to analyse their English variety.

In the theoretical part, I focused on the differences in the varieties in pronunciation (typical pronunciation features, stress placement), spelling, grammar (tenses, prepositions, irregular verbs, nouns), and vocabulary. For the practical part, I made 6 exercises focused on pronunciation differences, spelling differences, use of tenses, use of prepositions, and 2 exercises focused on vocabulary differences. These exercises are chosen because I think they are the most conclusive to determine the students' variety.

The practical part is divided into 4 parts; in the part I, the students are introduced, the part II includes the exercises, in the part III, the students' varieties are determined, and the part IV is a summary of the practical part. The students' answers from part II are attached as Appendix A.

Part I: Introduction of chosen students

The graph below shows the level of chosen students' advancement:



For the practical part, I chose 10 students of English. The students can be divided into 3 groups: those who prefer British English, those who prefer American English and those who use a mixture of varieties. As it is shown in the graph above, I tried to choose students who have some experience with English, since the beginners are not for me relevant – in most cases they do not have any knowledge about the differences in the English varieties.

Student No. 1

Name: Iva U.

Age: 18 years old

English background: Iva has studied English since the 1st grade at primary school (that means since the age of 6). She has never been to any English speaking country for more than 2 weeks. She would like to work abroad to improve her English and earn some money. She wants to visit Great Britain or Denmark.

Iva knows that British English is “slightly” different to the American one, but she uses English regardless the differences. She says her English is a mixture of the British and American variety and she does not make any effort to change it. Her teachers have taught her the British variety, but native speakers at her grammar school are Americans – this is the main cause why her English is mixed. She also thinks that it is important to use English to communicate and understand, not to “be the best English speaker in the world”.

She has learned English only at school. In 2014, she started visiting an English course at private school in Hradec Králové. She does not spend much time on learning English on her own. Her effort to improve her English is too low. She does not watch films in English or even in English with Czech or English subtitles. She says that the foreign language bothers her during watching the films.

Iva studies the J. K. Tyl Grammar School in Hradec Králové. They use textbooks and study sources based on the British variety of English. However, their English teacher does not care about the variety they use. Iva says that she is sure that any of her classmates do know hardly anything about the differences in the English varieties. They have not had any exercises practising this topic. Furthermore, the 2 native speakers who teach at the grammar school come from the United States.

In her opinion, the differences in English are not so big to spend any lessons on dealing with these issues. She is satisfied with her English, she can understand and communicate abroad, although she uses English regardless the differences in the varieties.

Student No. 2

Name: Miloš U.

Age: 23 years old

English background: Miloš has studied English for 10 years. He has been to Great Britain (particularly to London) – he was working there for a year. He would like to go back to London and travel across Scotland as well. He has never been to the United States and he does not even think about a visit, the American culture is not attractive for him.

Miloš uses only the British standard, he was taught English by British native speakers (except Czech English teachers), and so he is used to this accent. As stated above, he has spent some time in England. He prefers British English to the American one because our country is nearer to the British Isles, so he thinks that Czech children should speak above all according to the British variety. He also thinks that students of the English language should know something about the differences in the varieties more and they should learn the variety regarding the country they want to visit.

Miloš puts an emphasis on studying on one's own, so he tries his best to improve his English skills. This was also one of the reasons why he had left the Czech Republic and spent a year in London. According to his words, a longer stay abroad is the best way to learn or improve the foreign language, however, the choice of the foreign country is important. He thinks it is impossible to improve English in countries, where English is not an official language.

Miloš studies English language at University of Ostrava. The university does pay attention to the differences in the English varieties and the teachers there want the students to speak the British one. He says that it causes problems to some of his classmates because they are not used to differing the English varieties. He understands them, if he had not left the Czech Republic, he would never use the clear British variety. His English teacher at high school was not able to distinguish the differences in the English varieties, she preferred other branches of the English language. Miloš thinks that the differences in the English varieties should be respected and taught.

Student No. 3

Name: Renata C.

Age: 42 years old

English background: Renata learns English because of her own interest, English is not required in her job, and she just wants to communicate abroad during her holidays. She has learnt English for 5 years at language school. She spends about 2 weeks abroad each year, she has visited e.g. Tunisia, Greece, or Dubai.

Renata does not know anything about the differences in British and American English. As stated above, she does not need to communicate in English on a high level, she only needs to understand. She knows some words and she can use these words in a sentence, but she does not know if these words belong to British or American English.

Renata had not learnt English during her study years, her foreign languages were German and Russian. About 6 years ago, she started to feel an importance to understand the English language, so she started studying it. For her, it is not easy as she has a job, a family with 2 children, therefore she does not have much leisure time. She does not spend her leisure time learning English on her own, she only visits a private language school.

The fact that she learns English only for ability to communicate during the holidays is significant. She does not know anything about the English speaking countries or about the differences in the English varieties. She thinks that British and American English differ only in negligible ways. She does not feel an importance of learning the differences in the varieties, she has never had a problem in understanding.

Student No. 4

Name: Anna D.

Age: 20 years old

English background: Anna has learnt English since kindergarten. She had learnt the British variety at school, they did some exercises to recognise the varieties. In 2014, she spent a year in the United States and since this time she speaks the American variety. She wants to spend some time in Ireland, but she is afraid of the Irish accent.

Anna speaks only American English, she says this variety is easier for her to learn. American grammar is for her easy to understand and she thinks it has less exceptions. She spent a year in the United States and she wants to return there. She thinks it is not necessary to use strictly only one variety, in her opinion it is important to speak and understand.

Although she says she uses only the American variety, she confesses that sometimes during longer speech she is not sure she uses only one variety. She organizes meetings with students from abroad and when she speaks with the students from the United States she is afraid to embarrass herself due to mixing the English varieties. She prepares a lot for these meetings to avoid such embarrassing moments.

Anna stays in touch with her friends from the United States, she chats with them, speaks with them via Skype, so she is used to the American accent. She admits that she gets into difficulties during communication with British native speakers, she does not understand very well, because she is not used to the British accent.

In Anna's opinion, it is not necessary to teach the differences systematically, but it is important to inform students about the other varieties and the differences.

Student No. 5

Name: Kateřina K.

Age: 29 years old

English background: Kateřina has studied English since the 6th grade at primary school. English has never been one of her favourite subjects, but she needs English at work now - she works for a travel agency; that is the reason why she started improving her English.

Kateřina visits an English course at private language school. She does not care, if the expressions she uses belong to British or American English because she just wants to express herself. She was studying in Latvia for a year, but she was not using only one variety. She only needed to pass exams and teachers did not care about the differences in the varieties.

Her stay abroad (in Latvia) contributed to her mixed English. She got in touch with students whose English was on the same level as hers. They used the language only for understanding each other and improvement of their English was not noticeable.

Up to now, she does have some problems in understanding during speaking with native speakers. Nevertheless, she does not want to work hard on improvement of her English. She managed to understand people abroad and that is the point she wanted to achieve. It shows that not every stay abroad is helpful in learning English.

To improve her English, she watches films with subtitles (namely the Czech ones). She says she unfortunately focuses more on the subtitles than on the original English version. Despite this fact, she thinks this is the first step in her language improvement.

Kateřina's English teachers at school wanted her to speak the British variety, but they were not strict enough. In tests, they also accepted answers which were correct only in American English.

Student No. 6

Name: Eva T.

Age: 24 years old

English background: Eva is very good at English, she has studied the language since kindergarten. She also visited some English courses when she was younger, her parents wanted her to be good at the second language. She has been to many English speaking countries and she spent there always at least a month each time. She does not fear of going abroad, she knows that she can communicate very well.

Her English is a mixture of the varieties. Eva works for one students' organisation which takes care of students from abroad. They do many activities together; and as there is a mixture of nations, there is also a mixture of English. She has never had a problem with using not only one variety, she has always understood perfectly. At school, she was taught to speak the British variety, but the experience influenced her more.

Eva prefers the British variety to the American one, she thinks it is more useful in the Czech Republic. She was taught British English at school and she wants to return to this variety. Although she is not a fan of British humour, she watches mostly British films to learn the British variety. She also buys books from Great Britain and she borrows British magazines in the library. Next year, she is going to spend a half a year in Great Britain. She thinks that the stay in the country where the British variety is dominant will bring the biggest influence on her English.

Teaching the differences between the English varieties is in her opinion important. She claims, the only variety that should be taught at schools should be the British one.

Student No. 7

Name: Pavel P.

Age: 27 years old

English background: Pavel is both a student of economics and a teacher of English at private language school. He has learnt English since kindergarten. Since he has never studied English for teachers, he tries to improve his English every day for the purpose of doing his job very well.

Pavel is used to the British variety, his teachers wanted the students to speak only British English. Moreover, his teachers dedicated some lessons to explain basic differences between British and American English. He also prefers the British variety to the American one - as his teachers did. He also feels a need to know the differences between these varieties. The fact that all native speakers teaching at his school were only from Great Britain contributed to his British variety he gained.

Every holiday he spends in some English speaking country. He has been to the Republic of Ireland, Great Britain (Edinburgh, Liverpool, and London), Nevada and Illinois. He travels alone, since he says it is the best for improvement of language skills.

He has got a lot of friends from Great Britain, he meets them very often and the communication with them has the biggest influence on his English. According to his words, British English is more prestigious form than American English.

He also wants his students to speak British English, however, he distinguishes the level of their English – demands that he places on his students are various depending on the level of their advancement. He says that the education of English should be improved in the Czech Republic in general, this topic is only one of the many gaps.

Student No. 8

Name: Alena P.

Age: 24 years old

English background: Alena has studied English since secondary school. Alena has no interest in learning English, her preferred foreign language is German. Although English is more spoken in the world, she thinks German is more important in the Czech Republic (since Germany is our neighbour).

She does not know anything about the differences in the English varieties, her teacher at high school was teaching by the textbooks only, and he did not do anything extra. That means they did only exercises from the textbooks the whole lesson. She studied at secondary school in a small town, they did not have a native speaker.

Her desire to learn English deeply is not evident. She thinks her English is all right, since she is able to communicate while travelling. However, she has learned English for a long time, so she should know something more about English than vocabulary and basic grammar rules.

She sometimes watches films with subtitles, she has never read any English books or magazines whatsoever. The films help her to get used to another accent, but she needs subtitles, since she is not able to pay attention to English for a long time.

Student No. 9

Name: Martin J.

Age: 28 years old

English background: Martin has studied English since primary school, however, he was more interested in sports than in languages. Despite the fact that he has never needed English for applying for a job, about 2 years ago he started to visit a native speaker from Texas and he started to pay for private lessons. He wants to improve his English just for himself.

At secondary school, he was not taught the differences in the English varieties. His teacher did not think it is important for the students. She wanted them to communicate in the English language, not in one pure English variety.

He spent some time in Greece about 10 years ago – he worked there as a waiter in a hotel restaurant. He says his English did not improve much, since he used still the same phrases. He did not get outside the hotel restaurant to meet some people he could talk to.

Martin wants to go abroad again, but alone. He does not want to work abroad anymore, he wants to travel a lot and get to know some new people he could talk to and improve English this way. Although he pays for private lessons with a native speaker, he feels it is not enough.

Student No. 10

Name: Lucie A.

Age: 19 years old

English background: Lucie is a graduate of the First private language grammar school in Hradec Králové. Their teachers paid attention to teaching the differences between the British and American variety. She prefers the American variety to the British one; for her is easier to speak according to the American variety, however, she can recognise also the British variety.

She has spent about 2 months in Britain as an au-pair. She really appreciates this experience, since she improved her English by speaking with small children. Although she has not been to the United States, she speaks the American variety. She says she spoke the American variety also during her stay in Great Britain. Sometimes she had some problems that native speakers did not understand her what she meant.

Part II: Exercises

Exercise 1 – Pronunciation

There is given a short text which the students had to read out loud. I made notes of their pronunciation of the words which I think the differences are most noticeable. In the bachelor thesis, the words are underlined (for better orientation); students got the text without any marks.

At the beginning, the students had enough time to think about the exercise in order to ensure that their pronunciation is not random. At the end, I mention both British and American pronunciation for illustrative purposes. Transcription is used according to: Fronek, 2006.

Peter woke up and realised that his clock had stopped. He was shocked. He got up fast and checked his schedule. He needed to get to work quickly. “I had better take a tube to the centre”, he thought. “I can’t be late. If I come late, I will lose my job”, he said.

On the way to the tube station, he noticed somebody dancing. “I can either take line number 17 or line number 21”, he thought. He got off at the station called Rock Mountain, and he hurried to his office. He was late, however, he got a second chance.

Word	British pronunciation	American pronunciation
clock	[klɒk]	[kla:k]
stopped	[stɒpt]	[sta:pt]
fast	[fa:st]	[fæst]
schedule	[ˈʃedʒ.u:l]	[ˈskedʒ.u:l]
better	[ˈbet.ər]	[ˈbet̩.ə]
tube	[tʃu:b]	[tu:b]
can't	[kɑ:nt]	[kænt]
job	[dʒɒb]	[dʒɑ:b]
dancing	[da:nsɪŋ]	[dænsɪŋ]
rock	[rɒk]	[ra:k]
got	[gɒt]	[ga:t]
chance	[tʃɑ:ns]	[tʃæns]

Exercise 2 – Spelling:

The students were given the following words and they were to fill in the missing letter(s) according to their experience with the words. Needless to say, none of the students filled in the missing letter(s) incorrectly.

Fill in missing letter(s):

m__stache

cent__

reali__e

col__r

trave__ing

licen__e

progra____

gr__y

learn__ (past tense)

dialo__

fulfi__

Examples taken from: Doubravová, 1999.

Exercise 3 – Tenses

This exercise is aimed to find out whether the students prefer the English or American rules of using tenses.

Write the verbs in the correct forms:

- 1) I am very tired, I had a very busy day. I am glad I (return) _____ just home.
- 2) I cannot get home. I think I (lost) _____ my keys.
- 3) Something must be wrong with her. She (fall) _____ down.
- 4) Our national team (play) _____ a match today.
- 5) I (future tense) return the books to the library.
- 6) I am not hungry, I (just/eat) _____ .

Exercise 4 – Prepositions

The students filled in the prepositions according to the variety they are used to using. Two of these students answered some prepositions incorrectly for the both varieties.

Fill in particular prepositions (at/in/on/zero preposition):

What will you do (1) _____ the weekend?

The shirt you liked is (2) _____ sale.

What time is shown on the clock? (3) _____



Do you like games which are played (4) _____ the team?

Your name stands first (5) _____ the list.

I moved into a new flat, I live (6) _____ Market Street.

I am sick. I have to stay (7) _____ home today.

Exercise 5 – Vocabulary I

The students are to write down words which are described below. In order to make this exercise easier, I attached pictures of the required words. The pictures are quoted in Bibliography (Picture sources).

Which means of transport is unique for Prague? (Picture 1)



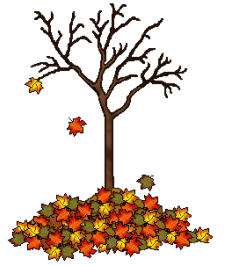
Metal container for pineapples (Picture 2)



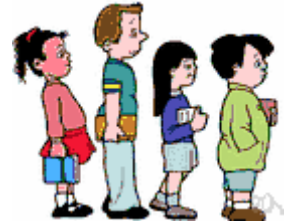
Common side dish in fast foods (Picture 3)



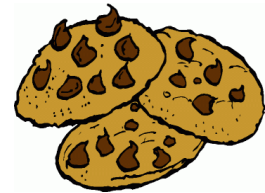
There are 4 seasons, winter, spring, summer and (Picture 4)



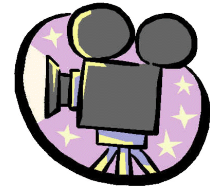
A crowd of people waiting at the cash desk (Picture 5)



Common snack with tea (Picture 6)



You go to a cinema to watch a (Picture 7)



You live either in a house or in a/an (Picture 8)



A piece of clothes worn on your legs (Picture 9)



A place for pedestrians along the road (Picture 10)



In summer, we go on (Picture 11)



A car needs either diesel or (Picture 12)



Exercise 6 – Vocabulary II

In this exercise, the students had to match 2 words with the same meaning. And then they had to choose if the word belongs to British or American English by circling the abbreviation.

Match these words with their meanings. Does the word in the first column belong to the British or to the American variety? Circle the correct answer.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 pram (BrE/AmE) | 8 vacation (BrE/AmE) |
| 2 holidays (BrE/AmE) | 9 lift (BrE/AmE) |
| 3 elevator (BrE/AmE) | 10 biscuit (BrE/AmE) |
| 4 mobile phone (BrE/AmE) | 11 underground (BrE/AmE) |
| 5 baby buggy (BrE/AmE) | 12 chips (BrE/AmE) |
| 6 cell phone (BrE/AmE) | 13 subway (BrE/AmE) |
| 7 cookie (BrE/AmE) | 14 crisps (BrE/AmE) |

- a) a small sweet snack
- b) a type of phone which you can take out with you
- c) a small vehicle where a baby lies
- d) when you do not want to use steps
- e) a favourite dish which we eat during watching a film
- f) a long period of leisure time, especially in summer
- g) a public transport typical for capitals

Part III: Students' varieties

Student No. 1

Iva's variety is mixed, it cannot be said it is more British or American – based on my research. In the first exercise, she pronounced 8 words according to the British variety and 5 words according to the American variety. In the spelling exercise, she filled in 5 expressions according to the British variety, and 6 expressions according to the American one. Iva answered the tenses exercise more like American (4 words) than British (2 words). The prepositions she filled in were 4 according to the British variety and 2 according to the American one. The first vocabulary exercise was filled in half-and-half (6 in British English, 6 in American English). In the last exercise, which also proved her knowledge about vocabulary, she matched 3 expressions correctly (that means 6 correct answers) and 4 incorrectly.

With regard to the interview we did at the beginning, the research confirmed the fact about her English as she said - her English is a mixture of the British and American variety. She said she had not thought about the exercises a lot, since she had known that at least one answer is correct (in exercises where she could choose between 2 answers). Other exercises she answered according to the first thought she had.

Student No. 2

The research shows that Miloš has the clear British variety. In the exercises focused on pronunciation, spelling, tenses and prepositions, he answered everything according to the British variety. Only in the second exercise focused on vocabulary, he connected 2 expressions incorrectly, everything else was matched correctly.

In comparison with the interview at the beginning, his answers are in compliance with his English background. Miloš's variety of English is not mixed and he uses a pure variety – the British one.

Student No. 3

According to the research, Renata's variety is mixed and she does not care about the expressions or rules. In the first exercise focused on pronunciation, she pronounced 5 words according to the British variety and 8 words according to the American variety.

In the second exercise (spelling), she filled in the letters according to the British variety 5 times and according to the American variety 6 times. She answered the tenses exercise twice according to the British variety and 4 times according to the American variety. She is used to using prepositions mostly according to the British variety (5 times) than to the American variety (twice). The first vocabulary exercise was answered more according to the British variety (9 times) than to the American one (3 times). In the second vocabulary exercise she was lost, she answered correctly only 4 answers out of 14.

During the interview, she said she learns English only for her own need to communicate during the holidays. Her English is mixed and she uses expressions and rules regardless the varieties differences. She does not feel an importance to distinguish the varieties.

Student No. 4

Anna's English is pure American. All exercises were answered according to the American variety and also in the last exercise (where she had to match correctly the expressions), she matched everything correctly.

Her English background includes learning both British and American varieties, however, she chose the American one as the acceptable variety for her. She does not mix the varieties and she knows her English is correct.

Student No. 5

Kateřina does not care about the differences in the varieties, she only wants to express herself. Her answers in the exercises were mixed. In the first exercise, she pronounced 6 words according to the British variety and 7 words according to the American one. The spelling exercise was filled in by 8 words according to British English and 3 words according to American English. Tenses were filled in according to the British variety 4 times and according to the American variety twice. The preposition exercise was answered 4 times according to the British variety, once according to the American variety and one preposition was filled in incorrectly. In the first vocabulary exercise, Kateřina wrote 5 words in British English and 7 words in American English. In the second vocabulary exercise, she was 8 times wrong and 6 times correct.

Kateřina does not respect the variety rules. She mixes the varieties together. She told me that in case I asked about some words again (for example some words in exercise No. 5), she would answer the exercise according to the other variety than she chose for the first time. She does not want to improve her English skills in this point of view, although she is forced to, since she works at a travel agency and her English should be very good.

Student No. 6

Eva's English is more British than American, however, her English variety is mixed again. The pronunciation exercise was pronounced more British (11 expressions) than American (2 expressions), the spelling exercise was answered also mostly British (8 expressions, American only 3 expressions). She answered the tenses exercise half-and-half (3 times British and 3 times American). Prepositions were filled in 4 times according to British English and 3 times according to American English. The first vocabulary exercise was answered almost half-and-half again (7 words in British English and 5 words in American English). In the last exercise, she was 10 times correct and 4 times incorrect.

The reason of Eva's mixed English could be the fact that she communicates with students from all over the world (as stated above). She was taught the British variety, however the influence of the American one is very big and so she started mixing her English.

Student No. 7

Pavel's variety is strictly British – at least what the research shows. The result of the exercises is in compliance with the result of the interview at the beginning. He is an example of a good English teacher in my opinion, since he observes the rules of the British variety. He knows the differences in the English varieties very well, all of his answers were correct in British English.

After the pronunciation exercise he remembered a situation that he had experienced during his stay in the United States – he asked about the right way and he came across a situation, how an American pronunciation of a word “rock” causes him a difficulty, he could not understand.

Pavel's answers in all exercises were only in British English, he did not answer anything according to the American variety.

Student No. 8

Alena's English is a mixture of the British and the American variety. In the first exercise (pronunciation exercise), she pronounced 7 words in British English and 6 words in American English. The spelling exercise was also answered almost half-and-half – 6 words she spelled according to the British variety and 5 words according to the American one. In the tenses exercise, she filled in 4 tenses in British English and 2 words in American English. The prepositions were filled in mostly according to the American variety, only 1 preposition she filled in correctly in British English. The first vocabulary exercise was answered half-and half – 6 times British and 6 times American. In the second vocabulary exercise, she was 6 times correct and 8 times incorrect.

As Alena said in the interview at the beginning, she prefers studying German to English. Her results confirm her claim. She does not want to make any change in her approach to the English study, she thinks her English is enough good for her need.

Student No. 9

Martin is another example of mixed English speaker. His answers were more in American English, however, it was caused maybe only by an accident. He pronounced 11 expressions in American English and only 2 in British English. The spelling exercise was also answered more according to the American English (8 words out of 13 possible) and the tenses exercise too (5 expressions were filled in according to the American variety – out of 6 possible). The preposition exercise was answered also more American, 5 prepositions he filled in in the American variety, 2 prepositions in the British variety. Also the vocabulary exercise was answered more American, he wrote 10 words in American English and 2 words in British English. In the last exercise, he was 12 times correct and 2 times incorrect.

Martin's English is mixed, however his answers were more American. There are 2 explanations for this result – it was caused only by an accident, as stated above, or the fact

that he pays for English lessons with an American native speaker contributed to this result.

Student No. 10

The research confirms the information I got from Lucie during the interview at the beginning; she knows very well the differences between the British and American varieties and her preferred variety is the American one. She filled in a word according to the British variety only once, otherwise her other answers were absolutely correct in American English.

After showing the answers to her, she was surprised that she made a mistake, she was sure she had all answers correct in one variety (the American one). The mistake she made could be a result of inattention. The fact she answered one word according to another variety than she is used to does not indispensably mean that her English variety is mixed.

Part IV: Summary of Practical Part

All respondents have some experience with English, each on a different level. Their motivation to learn English is also different. These facts are also reflected in their language skills. The graphs attached as Appendix B show that only 3 of 10 interviewees have the unified variety. The other students' English is mixed, meaning their variety is neither British nor American.

My research shows that there is no connection between the variety that students learned at school and the variety they chose to use. It is obvious that the practical use of English influences the students more than the school lessons. The interview with them proves that students choose their variety of English with regard to their own preferences.

In the majority of cases, the chosen students were taught the British variety, however, their native speakers are more from the United States or Canada than from Great Britain (based on my research shown in Chapter 1.3). The result is that students do not care about the differences, they are satisfied with the possibility to speak with native speakers and they appreciate that they understand him/her. I was surprised by the fact that most of schools do not have any native speaker. I thought it is a standard nowadays.

The majority of students from my research is satisfied with their English, although their variety is not unified. They have not had any problems with mixing the varieties (in most cases) yet, so they will probably continue in this way of using a mixed English variety. The students in my research do not accept the importance of distinguishing the varieties. For them, it is similar as using colloquial Czech in the Czech Republic.

Most of the students think they could improve and unify their English during a long stay abroad. In my opinion it is not useful in every cases. Not every stay abroad will help improve one's English. The man who wants to improve the language has to think about a destination where his/her language skills can get better according to his/her language preferences.

Some of the asked students also try to improve their language skills by reading English books or magazines, watching films in the English version, some of them have a

penfriend from the United States or the United Kingdom etc. These are the basic ways to improve one's English.

In addition, in the research, I found out that none of the students has got in touch with some native speakers from any other part of the English speaking countries than from the United Kingdom, Canada or the United States. That leads to the fact that they do not know anything about the other English varieties. Going through their textbooks they showed me, I have not found any chapters or lectures which are devoted to the topic of the different varieties. In case they were taught the differences, it was only their English teachers' effort or they taught this topic based on their own sources.

Conclusion

Broadly speaking, British English is closer to the Czech students than the American variety. The reason could be that they are taught mostly the British variety at schools. The mixture of their English could be caused by the way how students spend their leisure time – they watch films, play PC games and visit the cinema. During each of these activities they hear or read mostly the American variety of English. That has of course a big influence on their English use.

In this thesis, there are described the main differences and difficulties that cause problems to the Czech students in their effort to learn the language in the one unified way. The list of differences I gave is naturally not complete, however, I tried to show the basic and biggest differences. For English teachers, it is recommended to know these differences. Then he/she should decide, if he/she will accept only the British variety, or only the American variety, or both. In my opinion, it depends on level of students' English; English basic users (beginner, elementary English) should be allowed to use both varieties, it is important that they use the language, adopt some expressions and are able to express themselves. Since on the level of independent English users (pre-intermediate English, intermediate English) and Proficient English users (upper-intermediate English and advanced English) it is necessary to distinguish the varieties of English, it is a part of the English skills (in my opinion).

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Appendix