Routes and Destinations

Learning histories of Czech speakers of English and their achievement in selected communicative language competences.

Monika Černá, Libuše Hornová, Jaroslava Ivanová, Šárka Ježková

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Acknowledgements

List of Abbreviations

A1	Breakthrough, basic user according to CEFR
A2	Waystage, basic user according to CEFR
Act	activity of a participant
Adj	adjective
AmE	American English
B1	Threshold, independent user according to CEFR
B2	Vantage, independent user according to CEFR
BrE	British English
BS	basic school
C	complement, one of the constituents of a sentence
C1	Effective operational proficiency, proficient user according to CEFR
C2	Mastery, proficient user according to CEFR
CAE	Cambridge Advanced Exam
CEFR	the Common European Framework of Reference
CCSSE	the Corpus of Czech Students' Spoken English
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
Com	complexity of utterances
CPH	critical period hypothesis
D	discussion
DM	discourse marker
EFL	English as a foreign language
ELT	English language teaching
ESL	English as a second language
ESC	English-speaking country
FCE	the First Certificate of English
FEP	Framework Educational Programme
FEP BE	Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education
FEP SGE	Framework Educational Programme for Secondary General Education
FL	foreign language
FLA	foreign language acquisition
FLD	functional load
FLL	foreign language learning
FLT	foreign language teaching
GA	General American

ID	identifier, which uniquely identifies a text type in a corpus
IELTS	the International English Language Testing System
Int	interactivity in a dialogue
L1	mother tongue
L2	second language
LA	language aptitude
LE	learning English
LGSWE	the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English
LSWE	Longman Spoken and Written English (corpus)
LINDSEI	the Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage
LPD	the Longman Pronunciation Dictionary
M	monologue
MP	minimal pair
NA	no answer
NF	non-finite
NS	native (English) speakers
NNS	non-native speakers (of English)
NP	noun phrase
O	object, one of the constituents of a sentence
per	perfect aspect
PET	the Preliminary English Test
p_i	difficulty index
POS	part of speech
p	probability
pr	progressive aspect
P-value	probability value, = probability of an observed result arising by chance
Qua	quantity of language
QUAL	qualitative data
QUAN	quantitative data
RP	Received Pronunciation
r_p	Pearson correlation coefficient
S	subject, one of the constituents of a sentence; student
SEP	School Educational Programme
SLA	second language acquisition
SS	secondary school
T	teacher; information transfer task
TEFL	teaching English as a foreign language
T-S	teacher-student
VP	verb phrase

Introduction

The volume you have just opened aims to present the research project *Aspects of English Language Acquisition of Czech Learners at the Onset of Teacher Education*, the title of which implies its focus.

With about 1,500 million speakers all over the world, including 375 million native speakers (Statista, 2015), in the second decade of the 21st century English is undoubtedly a true global language. This growing ubiquity in international communication of the English language has long been indisputable. With this position of English in mind, there is an urgent need to educate communicatively competent users of English at all levels of the Czech education system. Therefore, educating qualified English language teachers is a sine qua non for achieving this aim.

While learning to teach, teachers acquire the knowledge base of teaching, the categories of which were proposed by Shulman (1987). Out of seven categories (content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational ends), pedagogical content knowledge is of special interest as it identifies distinctive bodies of knowledge for teaching. Following Shulman's idea that pedagogical content knowledge is "a special amalgam of content and pedagogy" (Shulman, 1987, p. 6), the importance of content knowledge is obvious. While pedagogical content knowledge has been subject to research in the Czech Republic in the last decade (e.g. Janík, 2009a; Janík, 2009b), subject matter knowledge, one of the sources of content knowledge, has long been outside researchers' focus, and not only in the Czech context (Píšová & Duschinská et al., 2011). That is why the research project of which the findings are presented in this volume places the subject matter knowledge of future trainee teachers, more specifically their ability to use spoken English as a tool of communication, at the centre of attention.

The research undertaken within the framework of the project targets the "amorphous field" (Ellis, 2008, p. 3) of second language acquisition (SLA), a "strongly interdisciplinary" (Ortega, 2009, p. 10) field of study, the goals of which involve both the description of processes and various ways of explaining them (Ellis, 1997, p. 4). Thus the study of SLA draws on and impacts on many other areas of study (Gass & Selinker, 2008, p. 2). The investigations conducted within this project are predominantly embedded in linguistics, discourse analysis, conversational analysis, language teaching, and education. When dealing

with the aforementioned areas, the concept of communicative language competences as presented in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001) is employed, although we are aware of other conceptualisations of the construct (e.g. Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996).

There are numerous definitions of SLA. They converge in understanding SLA as the study of the learning of a non-native language after the learning of the native language (Ellis, 1997; Gass & Selinker, 2008; Herschenson & Young-Scholten, 2013; Ortega, 2009). There are differences, however, regarding the position of SLA and foreign language learning (FLL). The difference between the two is based on the role of language in the community: "in the case of second language acquisition, the language plays an institutional and social role in the community" (Ellis, 2008, p. 6), while, on the other hand, "foreign language learning takes place in settings where the language plays no major role in the community and is primarily learnt only in the classroom" (Ellis, 2008, p. 6). While Ellis (2008) and Ortega (2009) perceive FLL as a subcomponent of SLA, Gass and Selinker (2008) maintain that there is a difference. Our standpoint, formulated earlier (Černá, Ivanová, & Ježková, 2015), corresponds with the following definition:

> SLA is the scholarly field of inquiry that investigates the human capacity to learn languages other than the first, during late childhood, adolescence or adulthood, and once the first language has been acquired. It encompasses the study of naturalistic and formal language acquisition in second, foreign and heritage learning contexts. It seeks to understand universal, individual and social forces that influence what gets acquired, how fast, and how well, by different people under different learning circumstances. (Ortega, 2009, p. 10)

As a consequence SLA is used as a superordinate term covering both SLA and FLL in those situations where the distinction is not necessary. In her definition Ortega (2009) implies that in SLA learners in different developmental phases acquiring non-native languages in a variety of learning contexts are investigated. In spite of the expansion of the field in the last fifty years, "most of the work in SLA is still on English … on adults and still on classroom learners" (Herschenson & Young-Scholten, 2013, p. 1). In this respect, the research findings that are presented in this volume are consistent with the trend; however, they do not just offer more of the same. They represent some of the developments in SLA in the last decade of the 20th and the first decade of the 21st century as summarised by Ellis (2008): (a) an emphasis on other than morphosyntactic aspects of L2 acquisition, including pragmatic features of learner language, phonological issues in L2 learning, L2 vocabulary learning, and social aspects of L2 acquisition; (b) attention to individual differences (aptitude, motivation, learning style); (c) the use of concordancing tools for examining the properties of learner language.

Apart from these mainstream advances, the project also possesses distinctive features. Its uniqueness lies mainly in two accomplishments: the creation of the *Corpus of Czech*

Students' Spoken English (CCSSE, Ježková, 2015b) and the deployment of a qualitative methodology both in the multidimensional analysis of the Czech learners' spoken English and in the biographical research. Regarding the former, the conception of the corpus reflects the trend in corpus linguistics to create and work with more specialised and smaller corpora (Granger, Hung, & Petch-Tyson, 2002; McCarthy, 2005). CCSSE is the first self-standing Czech native speaker learner corpus; on top of that it is a corpus of spoken English. Concerning the latter, the implementation of a qualitative methodology, a minority interest in SLA, responds to the call for "greater emphasis on qualitative research directed at the holistic description of second language learning experiences and for greater emphasis on the social, affective and conceptual dimensions of the learning process" (Benson, 2004, p. 12).

In order to relate the project outcomes to the existing body of research in SLA, *A framework for investigating L2 acquisition* (Ellis, 2008, p. 34) is used for reference. The framework presented in Table 1 below divides the field of SLA into seven areas which fall into three broad subfields: *description of learner language*, *explanation of learning*, and *instructed SLA* (Ellis, 2008, p. 34). The research findings presented in this book target *Area 1 – Characteristics of learner language* most substantially and *Area 2 – Learner external factors* and *Area 4 – Inter-learner variability* to a lesser extent. This reflects the body of research in the respective areas. Because of the prevailing concern with more universal aspects of acquisition, the research in the area of individual differences in L2 learners is still marginalised in SLA (Ellis, 2008, p. 643).

Table 1

A framework for investigating L2 acquisition

	General SLA					Instructed SLA	
Description of learner language	Explanation of learning						
Area 1 Characteristics of learner language	**Area 2 Learner external factors**	**Area 3 Psycholinguistic processes**	**Area 4 Inter-learner variability**	**Area 5 The brain and L2 acquisition**	**Area 6 Inside the 'black box'**	**Area 7 Intervening directly in interlanguage**	
Errors	Input and interaction	L1 transfer	Individual differences in L2 learners	Neurolinguistic accounts of L2 acquisition	Classroom interaction and L2 acquisition	Form-focused instruction and L2 acquisition	
Acquisition order and developmental sequences	Social accounts of L2 learning	Cognitive accounts of L2 acquisition					
Variability		Cognitive accounts of L2 use					
Pragmatic features of interlanguage		Sociocultural accounts of L2 acquisition					
		Linguistic accounts of L2 acquisition					

The content of the book is divided into eight parts: in addition to the introductory and concluding parts, there are six chapters.

Chapter 1 presents the research project and both its aims and its research methodology. After the rationale has been introduced, the development of all the research instruments is described, including their piloting and administration. Chapter 2, *Individual learning histories – Quantitative study*, investigates the influence of selected internal and external factors on individual English learning biographies. The qualitative part of the same study is introduced in Chapter 3: the lifelong experience with learning English is explored through the voices of selected respondents, with attention being paid to the significance of events in individuals' lives. While Chapters 2 and 3 focus on the routes which the students followed when learning English, the next two chapters concentrate on the destinations they reached up to the onset of university education.

Chapter 4, *Learner corpus analyses: grammar & discourse*, as the title suggests, collates the outcomes of multiple analyses of the CCSSE from the perspective of certain grammar and discourse features. Chapter 5, *Selected pronunciation features in focus*, introduces findings stemming from the analysis of students' reading aloud elicited by two different tasks from the point of view of seven chosen pronunciation features.

Chapter 6 brings the reader to the intersection of the research findings. Through the format of a multiple case study, the researchers interrelate the outcomes of the investigation of individual learning histories, and selected aspects of linguistic and pragmatic competences.

The concluding part offers a summary of the research findings, implications for educational practice, and possible directions for future research.

Chapter 1

Research methodology

This chapter introduces the research design developed in the context of the project. It specifies the characteristics of the research sample and describes the process of the design of the research tools, including the pilot phase and subsequent modifications.

1.1 Subjects

The education of qualified English language teachers has been a matter of high importance. That is why the research project was designed to investigate the spoken English of trainee teachers at the onset of their teacher education. The 228 participants in the main study are Czech first-year students in English language teacher education study programmes from three Czech universities: 68 students from the Faculty of Education of Palacký University, Olomouc; 102 students from the Faculty of Education of University in South Bohemia, České Budějovice, and 58 students from the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy of the University of Pardubice. The gender ratio is 160 females (70.2%) versus 68 males (29.8%). They are young adults (average age 20.1 years) and are native speakers of Czech. Their level of communicative competence, i.e. comunicative language competences according to the CERF (Council of Europe, 2001), was expected to be approximately B1-B2.

Originally, the cohort involved 350 students but 122 students were excluded from the study for one or more of the following reasons: (a) they were not native speakers of Czech; (b) they had already studied English previously in an English language teacher education study programme; (c) during the process of recording they functioned as a substitute or were paired with a teacher; (d) they submitted the transcript of their free speech sample in an unacceptable format; (e) they did not provide the questionnaire, or (f) their recording was of inadequate quality.

1.2 Research tools

With regard to achieving the partial aims as specified in the introduction, an array of research tools was used. The tools included oral production elicitation tools, a questionnaire, and a narrative interview. The design, the pilot stage, and the administration of each tool are dealt with in this section.

1.2.1 Oral production elicitation tools

With respect to the research aims, the team constructed two oral production elicitation tools: a diagnostic speaking test and a pronunciation test. In this chapter both tools are treated together with regard to their design, piloting, and follow-up modifications.

1.2.1.1 Design

The development of the tools reflected the research aims, relevant resources (e.g. Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Bachman & Palmer, 2010; Hewings, 2004; Hughes, 2003; Luoma, 2004), and preliminary studies (Černá, Urbanová, & Vít, 2011; Ježková, 2012). While the diagnostic speaking test was designed to elicit students' authentic speaking, the pronunciation test targeted the subjects' ability to read aloud.

The notion of "test usefulness" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 18) is used to characterise the research tool. Test usefulness is "a function of several different qualities, all of which contribute in unique but interrelated ways to the overall usefulness of a given test" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 18). The test qualities include reliability, construct validity, authenticity, interactiveness, impact, and practicality. Each quality will be discussed in relation to both research tools; however, test qualities which are specific to the pronunciation test will be dealt with in Chapter 5.

Reliability

Along with validity, reliability is an essential measurement quality of a test. The reliability of the diagnostic speaking test was ensured by obtaining enough samples of behaviour, which were elicited through several tasks of different kinds (Table 1.1). Furthermore, reliability was also supported by familiarising the students with the standardised procedure before the test itself. During the test the interlocutors attempted to provide clear instructions and to restrict the candidates through prompts in order to elicit balanced output.

Validity

Reliability is a necessary precondition for a test to be valid. Regarding construct validity, it "refers to the extent to which we can interpret a given test score as an indicator of the

ability(ies) or construct(s) we want to measure" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 21). For the purpose of the diagnostic speaking test and the pronunciation test, the abilities were specified with reference to the communicative language activities as defined in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) for both monologic production and spoken interaction at B2 level. Through their involvement in test tasks the testees are expected to demonstrate the selected abilities, i.e. they are supposed to

– "give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest" (p. 59);
– "pass on detailed information reliably" (p. 81);
– "give a clear, detailed description of how to carry out a procedure" (p. 81);
– "express his/her ideas and opinions with precision, and present and respond to complex lines of argument convincingly" (p. 77);
– "take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting [their] point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypotheses" (p. 77);
– "read a written text aloud" (p. 78).

Having defined the abilities which were to be tested, a major issue was to create test tasks that would elicit the required types of response.

Authenticity

Authenticity, which is closely related to construct validity, is considered a critical quality of language tests (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). Bachman and Palmer (1996) define it "as the degree of correspondence of the characteristics of a given language test task to the features of a TLU [target language use] task" (p. 23). In order to achieve the highest possible level of authenticity, the team attempted to design tasks that would be relevant to the target language use domain, i.e. that of teaching English as a foreign language. Reflecting the variety of the target language use tasks, it was considered desirable to design test tasks capable of eliciting samples of both monologic production and of student-student spoken interaction. As a result, both the monologue and paired format proved a necessity for genuine speaking tasks so that the characteristics of the test task corresponded to the characteristics of the target language use tasks (see the abilities listed above).

The advantages and disadvantages of the paired format in relation to the construction of this test were discussed in detail earlier by Černá (2014). The researchers' decision to involve the paired format was motivated by an endeavour to achieve a relatively high level of authenticity in the test. Furthermore, the research team referred to the study by Brooks (2009), who found out that candidates performed better in the paired format than in the individual monologue format; the student-student interaction was much more complex and revealed the co-construction of a more linguistically demanding performance than

the interaction between examiners and students. Moreover, Galacsi (2010) concluded that in oral paired tasks interaction tended to be more symmetrical.

Having made the decision to implement a paired format, i.e. the decision favouring authenticity, other issues appeared to be resolved. Two factors related to the ways of pairing the test-takers will be mentioned: the influence of students' proficiency and learner-learner acquaintanceship (Černá, 2014). The subjects in question were students at entry to tertiary education and their testing was scheduled as soon as possible after the beginning of the academic year in order to minimise the impact of university education. So beforehand, the researchers had no chance to learn either about the students' oral proficiency in English (the students were accepted to the university programmes in question on the basis of a written test or state "maturita" results) or about their social relationships in their newly-constituted groups.

As far as subjects' proficiency level is concerned, Davis (2009) reported that the level of proficiency of an examinee's partner in a paired oral test had little influence on the scores they achieved. Occasionally, however, the pairing type might have had an impact on the amount of language elicited or characteristics of the interaction. a potential decrease in language quantity or eliciting an inappropriate type of response was the researchers' major concern, since a failure to elicit a sufficient amount of data would have a detrimental impact on the size of the corpus. That is why two information exchange tasks with precisely defined roles were included, together with an informal discussion. Whether the three interactive tasks provided enough space for each test-taker to produce the expected response was verified in the pilot phase of the test construction process (Section 1.2.1.2).

With the timing of the data collection in mind, the researchers decided to ignore the potential acquaintanceship effect, i.e. the positive effect of knowing each other well, as discussed by O'Sullivan (2009). Prior to the testing the students were allowed to choose a partner, but the choice was presumably based on availability rather than on personal preference in most cases.

In conclusion, the main challenges posed by using the paired format in the diagnostic speaking test were resolved successfully. The tasks which were designed (Table 1.1) thus revealed a high level of correspondence between the test tasks and the target language use tasks. As a consequence, the authenticity of the test was considered relatively high; however, it was necessary to study its interactiveness.

Interactiveness

Construct validity is also linked with interactiveness, which makes it a critical quality of language test tasks (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 26). The interactiveness of a test task can be characterised in terms of the ways in which the test taker's language ability, topical knowledge, and affective schemata are engaged by the test task (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 25).

In order to examine the interactiveness of the individual tasks, they have to be described in detail. The structure of the diagnostic speaking test is the following: a warm-up, monologic production in response to interlocutor's questions, two information transfer tasks, and a discussion. The pronunciation test includes two reading aloud tasks.

(a) Diagnostic speaking test

The warm-up was included to enable the students to talk about something familiar; therefore, they were asked to introduce themselves. This section of the oral interview was not included in the corpus (Section 1.3 and Chapter 4).

Task 1, a sustained monologue, was stimulated by the interlocutor's questions (e.g. *Would you introduce yourselves*? *What about you and learning English*?). The respondents were expected to produce an extensive response one after another. If a student needed further prompts, the interlocutor posed a topical scripted question (e.g. *Have you attended any language courses*? *What about travelling in general and to English-speaking countries in particular*?) The questions were primarily concerned with learning English (Appendix 1). Task 2 was based on information exchange: one student was provided with a task sheet containing specific topic-related information; the other student was required to ask for the information by following the instructions. Task 3 was of the same nature but on a different topic; the students swapped roles to secure sufficient output from both students, as discussed above (for sample tasks see Appendix 2). In Task 4 the respondents were obliged to discuss a selected topic (Appendix 3) which was closely related to their student lives.

(b) Pronunciation test

There were two reading aloud tasks per student. The research team used two special instruments based on reading aloud to elicit target pronunciation features. The tasks were sequenced in this order: a short continuous text and a list of individual words.

The reading aloud tasks were designed with the aim of enabling the comparative pronunciation analysis of the chosen words in the context of a text and in isolation.

The diagnostic text consists of 153 words, out of which 98 are tokens, i.e. different words (Appendix 4). It is targeted at the B1 level according to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) and contains mostly statements. From the point of view of word length in syllables, there are 103 one-syllable words (67.8%), 35 two-syllable words (23.0%), 11 three-syllable words (7.2%), and three four-syllable words (2.0%), and the average number of syllables per word is 1.43. The text characteristics of this text were obtained by means of textalyser. net. The wordlist contains 24 words (19 tokens) which are taken from the diagnostic passage (Appendix 5).

(c) Summary of test task characteristics

To summarise the test tasks and their characteristics, Table 1.1 (Černá, 2014, pp. 1624-1625) is presented using the framework proposed by Bachman and Palmer (2010, pp. 74-82). The tasks in Table 1.1 reflect the order in which each student was supposed to undertake them. In the Input column, the characteristics marked with an asterisk, i.e. target language, unspeeded, and live performance, apply to all the tasks. Similarly, in the Expected response column, these marked features concern all the tasks: target language, oral, unspeeded, and live performance.

Table 1.1

Speaking and pronunciation task types

		Type of task	Format	Input	Expected response	Input-response relationship
Speaking	Introduction	warm-up	individual	aural, target language*, language input: sentences, prompt = open-ended questions, unspeeded*, live*	oral*, target language*, limited production response, unspeeded*, live*	reciprocal, narrow scope, indirect
	Task 1	sustained monologue	individual	aural, language input: sentences, prompt = open-ended questions	extensive production response, individual long turn	non-reciprocal, narrow scope, indirect
	Task 2	information transfer (asking for/ giving detailed information about events or processes; telling what to do)	paired	visual, language input: words, phrases, sentences, prompt = task sheet, non-language input: pictures	co-constructed, extensive production response, transactional and interactional language	reciprocal, broad scope, direct
	Task 3	information transfer (see Task 2)	see Task 2	see Task 2	see Task 2	see Task 2
	Task 4	informal discussion	paired	visual, language input: phrases, sentences, prompt = issue to discuss, clues given	co-constructed, extensive production response, transactional and interactional language	reciprocal, narrow scope, indirect
Pronunciation	Task 5	reading aloud: text	individual	visual, language input: extended discourse, prompt = text (153 words)	extensive production response	non-reciprocal, broad scope, direct
	Task 6	reading aloud: word list	individual	visual, language input: words, prompt = wordlist (24 words)	limited production response	non-reciprocal, broad scope, direct

The test tasks were designed to engage the test takers' language ability, which, according to Bachman and Palmer (1996, p. 67), involves language knowledge and metacognitive strategies (derived from Bachman's earlier concept of language competence and strategic competence (1990)). Topical knowledge was deliberately excluded so as not to favour certain test takers; all the information necessary to complete the tasks was prompted in the input or personal experience was called for (Černá, 2014). The topics were carefully selected in order to minimise their bias or sensitivity with respect to the test-takers. Although the team did not expect to get any negative reactions to any of the topics, topic relevance was also examined in the pilot phase (1.2.1.2).

It may be concluded that the degree of interactiveness of the individual tasks varies. It is relatively high for Tasks 1 and 4 (Table 1.1 above) since the involvement of the testee's language ability, i.e. regarding both language knowledge and metacognitive strategies (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 67), is unrestricted. Because of the use of rather extensive written input in Tasks 2 and 3, the language ability is restricted to a certain extent, specifically in the area of language knowledge. Therefore, the interactiveness of the two tasks is perceived as moderate. Regarding the two reading aloud tasks, their interactiveness is low because the test takers' language ability which is engaged by those tasks is highly restricted.

Impact

The diagnostic speaking test was designed in order to elicit data for creating a corpus of spoken English (Section 1.3) and for research purposes. The potential impact on the education system may only be hypothesised; it will depend on the extent to which the corpus is subjected to analyses by other researchers and on the implementation of the research results in (teacher) education. The impact of the test on the individual test-takers is much more obvious; it is related to the experience of taking the test and to the feedback they receive about their performance on the speaking and pronunciation test. The primary purpose of the test is to elicit research data; therefore, no decision about the students' future career will be based on this test. Consequently, the test-taking experience is not supposed to be so stressful for them. On top of that, knowing the format of the test and having a chance to choose a partner may contribute to a lower level of anxiety among the students. The backwash effect of the test will presumably be positive because of the feedback the students will receive: all the students will be provided with their own recording and also with opportunities to analyse their performance in detail. This will, it is hoped, result in raising their linguistic awareness and setting long-term and short-term goals in order to improve their attainment in spoken English.

Practicality

Both oral production elicitation tools were developed in the context of the research project which was introduced in the introductory chapter. Therefore, all types of resources, i.e. material and human resources and time, were defined by the project. For instance, the original idea was to provide students with a model reading performance as recommended by Celce-Murcia et al. (1996, p. 345). While one student was introducing himself/herself, the other student would be listening to a passage using a CD player and headphones. It turned out, however, to be impractical in terms of time and management (Section 1.2.1.2).

1.2.1.2 Pilot phase

The diagnostic speaking test and the pronunciation test were piloted at the University of Pardubice at the beginning of June 2013. Three researchers, who had previously been trained to administer the test, participated in the process. The respondents were eight students of the English for Education study field, i.e. students who were identical in type to those who were going to participate in the study. During the pilot phase seven students were completing the first year of their studies; one student was finishing the second year. Because of the format of the oral interview the five female and three male students were divided into pairs; two pairs were based on friendships, two pairs were formed by the researchers. Unfortunately, the number of students involved in the preliminary testing was low. Consequently, the researchers were not able to pilot all the versions of the test tasks. Therefore, they selected the tasks that were for some reasons (topic, instructions, prompts, etc.) believed to be potentially troublesome. The interviews were recorded using equipment and the Sound-Forge Pro 10 software (2003-2015) financed from the grant budget. Immediately after their interview the students filled in a feedback questionnaire in which they commented on various aspects of the interview. The recordings and the feedback questionnaires were subsequently analysed. The recordings were investigated from several perspectives, including the length of the interview, the talking time of individual participants, the preparation time for interactive tasks, and the relevance of the responses that were elicited.

Quantity of output

Considering the research aims, the quantity of the students' output was a major issue. The pilot recordings were analysed from the point of view of time in seconds and language production in the number of words.

(a) Time aspect

The whole test was constructed to last 25 minutes; five more minutes were planned for dealing with administration. The analysis of the recordings revealed that the length of the test

ranged from 24:47 to 28:57. The difference was primarily attributed to two student-related variables, namely individual talking time and preparation time for the interactive tasks.

The individual respondents' talking time ranged from 417 to 771 seconds, the average being 549 seconds (the black horizontal line in Figure 1.1). Two performances were of average length, four students' talking time was relatively close to the average, and two students differed considerably.
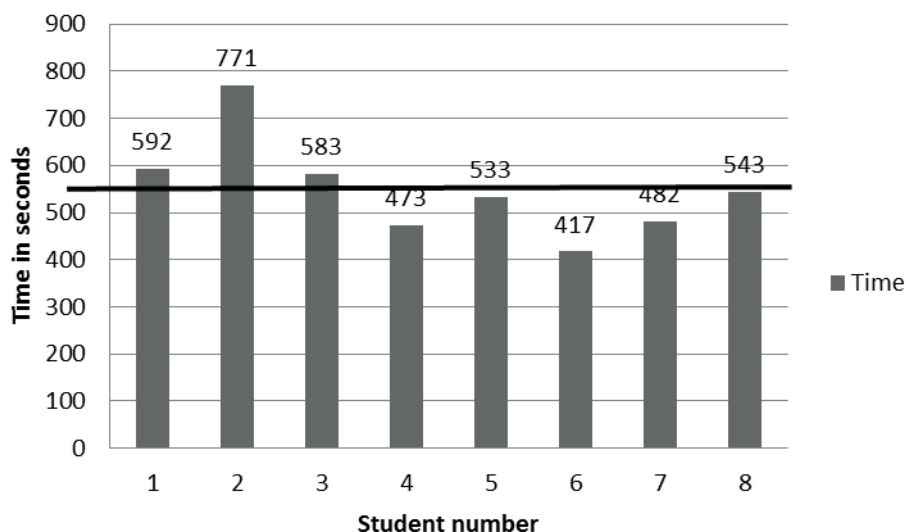
Figure 1.1. Individual students' total talking time in seconds.

Since the introductory task of the test is controlled by the interlocutor and the pronunciation tasks by input, the inter-individual differences in the talking time on those three tasks were expected to be minimal. The measured difference among the performances, however, turned out to be 64 seconds, which was attributed to an uneven length of the performances in the introductory task and to the speed of speech, especially of the reading aloud of the text.

Furthermore, the respondents' participation in the three interactive tasks (Figure 1.2) was explored since the researchers expected a lot of variation. They investigated individual students' talking time (five minutes on average) and concluded that it corresponded to the total talking time, with the exception of Student 5, who spent more time on the interactive tasks and outperformed Student 8, whose total talking time was longer.
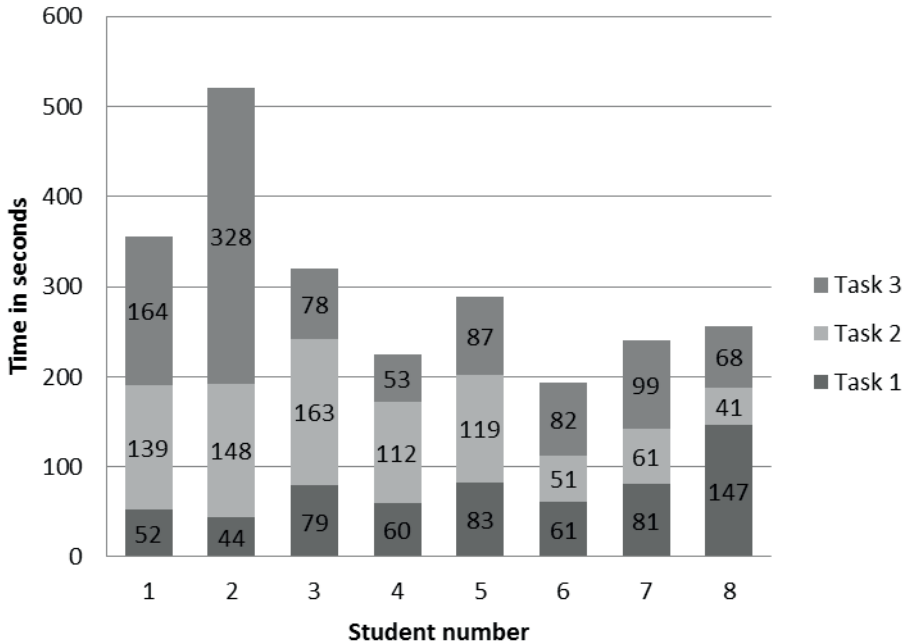
Figure 1.2. Individual students' output in interactive tasks measured in seconds.

The interactive tasks required some preparation time. Its span contributed to the varying length of the interviews. The interlocutor took the respondents' needs into consideration and provided them with differing amounts of time. Figure 1.3 below suggests that the intended preparation time (one minute) for Tasks 1 and 2 (i.e. Tasks 2 and 3 in Table 1.1 – asking for/giving information) was not sufficient for the students giving information. Figure 1.3 implies that in Interactive Task 2 (the same type of task, but with a different topic and roles) the students giving information needed more time than their partners in the same role in Task 1. There are several possible reasons. First, the topic could have made the difference – Task 2 was more difficult for the students giving information than Task 1 was for their partners. Second, in Task 2 the students may have utilised the experience they acquired in Task 1 – they learnt that thorough preparation was a prerequisite for successful accomplishment of the task. Last, they perhaps needed more time as a result of increased tiredness in the second half of the interview. a larger sample would have been necessary to identify the reasons more precisely. Figure 1.3 also implies that the respondents needed only up to 25 seconds to prepare for the third interactive task, the discussion (Task 4 in Table 1.1), even though a minute was allocated for that. Either the topics probably did not appear to require a lengthy preparation time or the students underestimated the task.
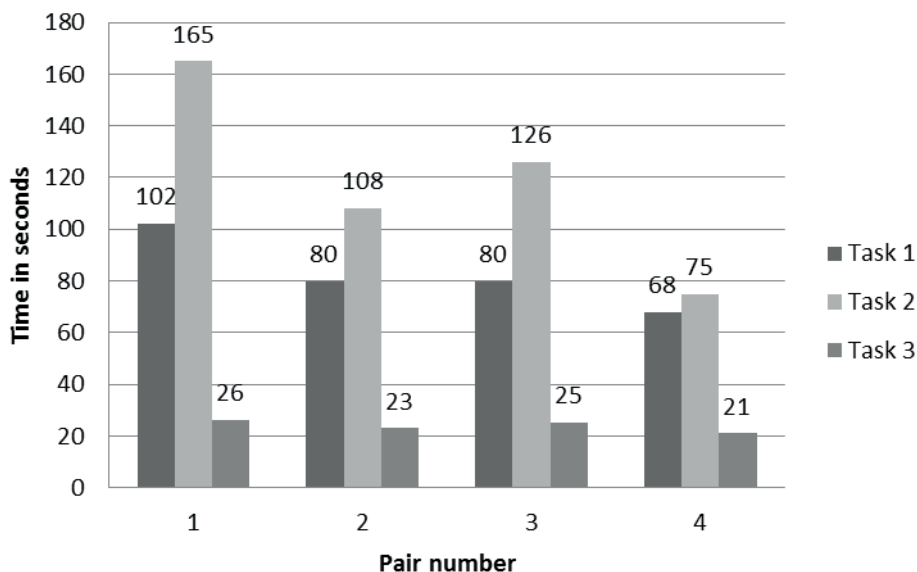
Figure 1.3. Preparation time for interactive tasks.

The temporal dimension was important to explore so as to ensure the respondents had enough space to perform. Nevertheless, from the point of view of the research it was mainly the students' language production which was the researchers' major concern. Its quantity was measured by the number of words uttered by individual students.

(b) Number of words

The students' output in the interactive tasks was measured by the number of words, which ranged from 313 to 627 words. If the number of words was taken into consideration, the size of the output of the fastest speakers (Students 5, 6, and 8) increased considerably (Figure 1.4).
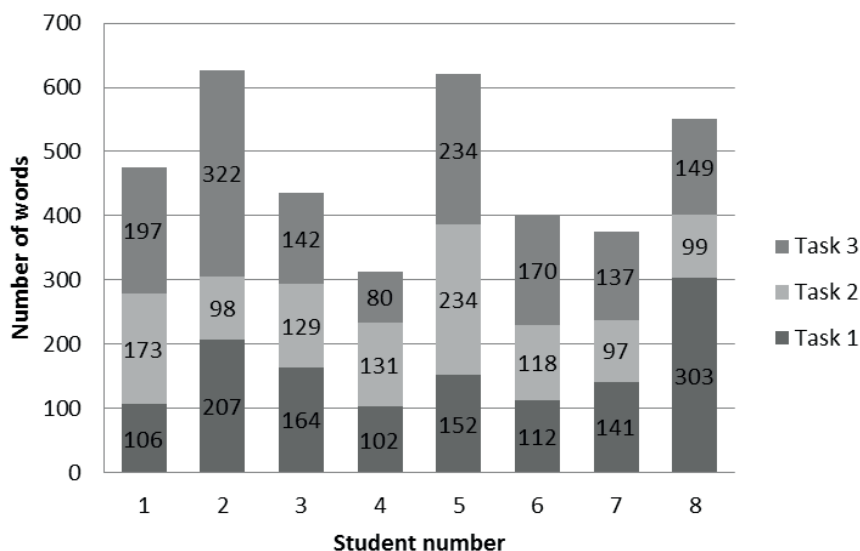
Figure 1.4. Individual students' output in interactive tasks measured in the number of words.

Consequently, the performances appeared relatively more balanced if assessed from the point of view of the number of words than from the perspective of the time aspect. The relationship between these two variables uncovered differences among the students' speed of speech.

(c) Speed of speech

Obviously, the speed of speech is an important aspect of one's idiolect. There are also inter-lingual differences; while Czech is believed to be average in terms of the speech tempo, spoken English is faster (Ivanová, 2011, p. 37). The speed was counted for individual students' performances in the three interactive tasks (Figure 1.5). Student 7 achieved 93 words per minute, which was close to the average (99 words per minute). The remaining students may be divided into two groups: (a) Students 1 to 4, whose speed of speech was below average; (b) Students 5, 6, and 8, whose performance was above average in terms of the speed of their speech. If compared with English native speakers, whose tempo in conversation is reported to be 210 words per minute (Buck, 2001, p. 39), even the fastest of the Czech students appear to be slower. It is important to take into account, however, that the Czech students were recorded in a testing situation; the topics were imposed and in two tasks they were restricted in terms of what they were to talk about.
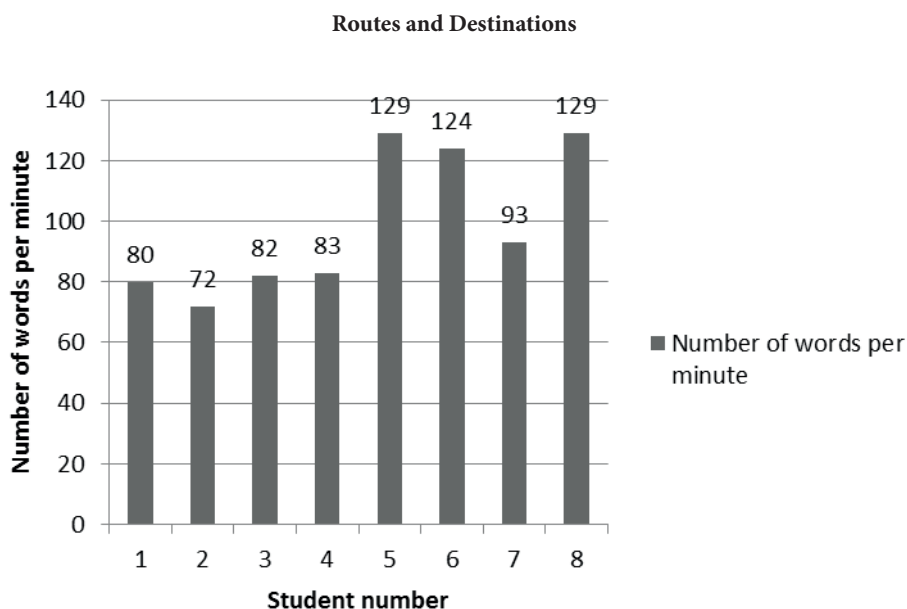
Figure 1.5. Individual students' speed of speech in interactive tasks.

Summary

To summarise, the quantity of the output in the interactive tasks was analysed in detail; intra-individual differences in terms of time and the number of words were observed in the performances of all the students; however, the majority of the performances could be considered relatively balanced. The differences were attributed to the respondents' preferences regarding the type of task, the topic or a particular question, the preparation time, or, generally, by their willingness to communicate and by their idiolect. Even participation is almost impossible to achieve in testing speaking. Therefore, the results of the pilot stage were regarded as satisfactory in terms of the quantity of the output which the students produced. The output proved to be adequate for the purposes of the research.

Pronunciation test

Two reading aloud tasks were designed as "language-focused tasks" in order to elicit certain types of language (Luoma, 2004, p. 40), here chosen pronunciation features. These two tasks were characterised by two different reading aloud styles requiring different degrees of attention to be paid to pronunciation: a careful reading style, i.e. the word list, and a less careful reading style, i.e. the short text (Nádraská, 2013). The selected pronunciation features were thought to be troublesome for Czech learners because of the basic differences between the Czech and English inventory of phonemes and/or their distribution in syllables or words: the front open vowel ash, the weak central mid vowel the schwa, voiced and voiceless dental fricatives, the bilabial approximant /w/, the velar nasal, the pronunciation of the word-final voiced consonants /d/ and /z/, and non-initial primary word stress as

identified in the literature (Černá et al., 2011; Skarnitzl, 2005; Skarnitzl & Poesová, 2008; Šturm & Skarnitzl, 2011; Volín, 2009.).

Both in the word list and the text, three occurrences of each pronunciation feature were examined within the context of a word, e.g. /w/ in *watch*, *waited*, and *twenty*, and within each word only one pronunciation feature was assessed at a time, even though some of the words that were examined contained two or three of the pronunciation features in question, e.g. the schwa, the placement of the primary stress on the non-initial position, and the word-final voiced consonant /d/ in *suspected*. In the word list, three different words were grouped in lines 1-9 and in each line three different phenomena were focused on (Appendix 5). The same words were examined in the text. As a result, there were 24 occurrences of each pronunciation feature in each reading aloud task.

As far as the computing procedure is concerned, the points on the individual pronunciation items were assigned as right (1) or wrong (0) and their mean as "an indicator of difficulty" was calculated (Bachman, 2004, p. 57).

Nádraská (2013) reported the results stemming from the pilot stage and claimed that both reading aloud tasks showed considerable variation in the mispronunciations of each sound. The numbers in brackets show the averaged results for the individual sounds in percentages, from their least to most acceptable pronunciations: the voiced consonants representing word-final voicing (18.8%, 41.7%), voiced dental fricative (58.3%), velar nasal (66.7%), ash (68.8%), voiceless dental fricative (83.3%), bilabial approximant (89.6%), schwa, and stress on the non-initial syllable (both 100%) (Table 1.2).

Table 1.2 also shows the variations between the acceptable pronunciations in the word list and in the text respectively: two different voiced consonants representing word-final voicing (21%, 39.5%), voiced dental fricative (70.8%, 45.8%), velar nasal (66.7%, 66.7%), ash (79.2%, 58.3%), voiceless dental fricative (83.3%, 83.3%), bilabial approximant (100%, 79.2%), schwa (100%, 100%), and word stress on the non-initial syllable (100%, 100%) (data provided by Nádraská, 2013).

Table 1.2

Acceptable pronunciations in the two reading aloud tasks

	Acceptable pronunciation in % out of 24 occurrences per pronunciation feature		
Pronunciation features	in both tasks	in a short text	in a list of words
word-final voicing	30.3	39.5	21.0
voiced dental fricative in *that*, *they*, *then*	58.3	45.8	70.8
velar nasal in *locking*, *long*, *everything*	66.7	66.7	66.7
ash in *lamp*, *bag*, *planned*	68.8	58.3	79.2
voiceless dental fricative in *everything*, *thought*	83.3	83.3	83.3
bilabial approximant in *watch*, *twenty*, *waited*	89.6	79.2	100.0
schwa in *away*, *suspected*, *again*	100.0	100.0	100.0
stress on the non-initial syllable in *away*, *again*, *suspected*	100.0	100.0	100.0

The data, however, shows that further examination may be needed in relation to the acceptable pronunciation of the sounds under study and with respect to different contexts of reading aloud. When the students' pronunciation performances on the word list, which is typical of a more careful reading style, and the text as an example of a more casual reading style, are compared, their performance is either nearly equal (the velar nasal, schwa, word stress, and voiceless dental fricative) or worse (the ash, bilabial approximant, and voiced dental fricative) in the case of the text, with the exception of the correct pronunciation of the final voiced consonants occurring more frequently in the text (Nádraská, 2013). Drawing on Skarnitzl and Poesová (2008), Nádraská (2013) explains it as possible misapplication of the Czech assimilation of voicing into unvoiced consonants, which in the text may actually have resulted in correct English pronunciation (e.g. ha*d* /t/ seen).

Although all the pronunciation phenomena that were examined were foreign to the Czech system, their control ranged from 18.8 to 100 per cent on average in both reading aloud tasks, and the students showed striking differences in their levels of achievement. Nádraská (2013) asserted that, although negative transfer from Czech in the case of both word-final voicing and stress was expected, only the former seemed to matter. The latter case might also be evidence of the learners' ability to stress two-syllable words such as *again* or *away* (66% of all occurrences) properly at B1 level, as well as a three-syllable word, *suspected*. Another surprising finding, unlike research data obtained from Czech university students (Černá et al., 2011; Skarnitzl, 2005; Volín et al., 2013), was the fully acceptable realisation of the schwa. All these might be consequences of the fact that the eight ELT students of the University of Pardubice who were examined were volunteers whose pronunciation was at a higher level than that of their fellow-students at the university and/or another assessor might have allocated points differently. In either case, a larger sample

of students was needed to confirm or oppose this data. As Nádraská (2013) claims, the results that were obtained regarding students' pronunciation are difficult to generalise.

As a result of this analysis, these modifications were made to the word list and assessment procedure: (a) all pronunciation features within the chosen words were examined; (b) context-bound pronunciation of function words was taken on board when assessing the reading aloud of the text; (c) the voiced consonants /d/ and /g/ will be examined at the end of words, e.g. *bag*, *bed*, in addition to the pronunciation of the grammatical ending -ed; (d) because of the different number of occurrences of each pronunciation feature in the word list and the text, an adequate mean will be calculated (Chapter 5).

Feedback questionnaire

The questionnaire contained 30 items, 28 out of 30 were dichotomic items (e.g. adequate – inadequate) or scales (e.g. too easy – easy – adequate – demanding – too demanding), always combined with the possibility of adding comments; two items were open-ended. The questionnaire was aimed at finding the respondents' perceptions of the test administration, specifically the length of the test, the sequence of the tasks, the cooperation with a fellow-student, and the interaction with the interlocutor. In addition to that the students commented on the individual tasks in detail. They evaluated the tasks from the point of view of language difficulty, topics (relevance, difficulty, suitability, and emotional load), the allocated time, and the instructions.

All the respondents perceived the test administration positively, and the length of the test and its structure were assessed as adequate. The interaction, both with the fellow-student and the interlocutor, was reported to be without any problems. The students also commented on the individual tasks in detail. They evaluated the instructions which the interlocutors provided, the topics of the tasks, the language difficulty, and the allocated time.

In relation to language difficulty (Table 1.3), the instructions, including the prompts (e.g. charts, pictures, and short texts on a task sheet), were comprehensible and contained relevant information, according to the evaluation of the majority of the students. Two students responded that the information in the giving information task sheet was very dense and for one student it was not organised well. One pair misunderstood the instructions for asking for/giving information – this task was designed as a simulation, i.e. the participants were expected to maintain their own identity and to act in a simulated situation, but they performed a role play.

The selected topics were appreciated by the respondents; they were viewed as appropriate, practical, and close to their real-life experience, with the exception of one topic; interestingly, plagiarism in relation to a bachelor's paper was found irrelevant by one student and difficult to deal with by another. As regards the task intricacy, the respondents assessed all the tasks individually in terms of language and topic; the results are summarised in

Table 1.3. Concerning the emotional load of the tasks, none of the topics was identified as insensitive or inappropriate. If the tasks stimulated an emotional response in the students, it was positive and desirable.

Table 1.3

Perceived difficulty of the tasks

Language-related task difficulty (% of answers)					
too easy	rather easy	adequate	difficult	very difficult	no answer
2.5	32.5	57.5	5.0	0	2.5
Topic-related task difficulty (% of answers)					
too easy	rather easy	adequate	difficult	very difficult	no answer
0	31.0	53.0	9.0	0	7.0

The last aspect to discuss is the allocated time. While the on-task time was found suitable, the preparation time for the interactive tasks was inappropriate – it was insufficient for asking for/giving information and redundant for the discussion, which was confirmed by all the students.

Tools and process modifications

From the researchers' point of view, both the procedure and the content of the test appeared to be suitable for the research needs. The test successfully elicited the required responses in terms of length and discourse type; however, the test administration procedure had to be adjusted.

The modifications included: (a) adjusting the preparation time to the type of interactive task, i.e. providing more time to prepare for giving information and less time to get ready for the discussion; (b) modifying the instructions to highlight the fact that the interactive tasks are not meant to be role plays but simulations; (c) reducing the amount of information provided on several of the task sheets; (d) as for the administration of the reading aloud tasks, each student was given 50-60 seconds' time for rehearsal in advance of their own reading; (e) the students were instructed to read the text comprehensibly at their own pace, and (f) making the decision not to use a CD player to provide a model performance of reading the text aloud. The piloting of the test revealed that operating the CD player interrupted the flow of the interview and also turned out to be rather time-consuming. On top of that, the student listening to the recording was disturbed by the interlocutor's interaction with the other student in spite of the headphones s/he was wearing. Furthermore, the humming noise of the CD player reduced the quality of the recording. Since the constraints outweighed the benefits, the decision was made to administer the pronunciation test without providing a model of reading the diagnostic text aloud, in spite of its being recommended

by Celce-Murcia et al. (1996, p. 345). This modification made the test more practical in terms of the comfort of the students being interviewed, as well as that of the interlocutor. Consequently, the interview became manageable by a single interlocutor.

In conclusion, the piloting of the diagnostic speaking test with a pronunciation test confirmed the usefulness of the research tools.

1.2.1.3 Administration

The research was conducted in three institutions located in different regions of the Czech Republic; therefore, it was demanding to prepare a schedule that was suitable for the participants as well as for the research team. It was crucial to record the students at the very beginning of their university studies in order to minimise the effects of university education. In order to organise that, the researchers were assisted by colleagues from the two cooperating institutions, which they appreciated. The total number of students recorded was 350 (176 in autumn 2013, and 174 in autumn 2014) since the testing would only have benefited the students if all of them were recorded. But only 228 students met the criteria for inclusion in the research sample (see Section 3 of this chapter). For the reasons explained above, the students could choose their partner for the test; however, this was not possible in all cases. Several times a researcher had to replace a student respondent, although it excluded the other student from the sample. The format of the interview was explained in detail at the beginning of the test. The performance was recorded using a laptop, a high-quality microphone, and the specialised software Sound Forge Pro 10 (2003–2015). Three academics were involved in the process of data collection, which was standardised. In spite of that the researchers occasionally failed to maintain internal consistency of time management. In the situations when the discussion was evolving smoothly, the researchers provided the discussants with unlimited time to finish the task. Since the diagnostic test was developed for research purposes, the value of the data was perceived as being more important than the timing.

1.2.2 Questionnaire

In order to obtain quantitative data about the subjects' individual learning histories and their biodata and family background, a questionnaire was constructed as a data elicitation tool in spring 2013. Then it was piloted with a group of students at the University of Pardubice and used to collect data in autumn 2013. After the first round of the data collection the researchers decided to modify the questionnaire before its administration in 2014. The piloting phase, as well as the changes made to the tool, will be discussed in Section 1.2.2.2.

1.2.2.1 Design

The questionnaire was designed in the Czech language to prevent any misunderstanding. It consists of 62 items, divided into six sections. Individual sections focus either on specific time periods in the respondents' lives (e.g. the pre-primary period) or on specific contexts in which they encountered English (e.g. real-life use of English outside school). Section 1 is designed to elicit the respondents' biodata and their current level of communicative competence in English and other foreign languages and the same data regarding their parents. Section 2 focuses on the respondents' encounters with English in the pre-primary period, i.e. up to the age of six. Section 3 targets the period of primary and lower-secondary education, in which learners between the age of six and fifteen attended the so-called basic school. The information of interest concerns the subjects' learning English at school, at language schools, or in private lessons, and their experience from English-speaking countries. The items in Section 4 elicit the same type of data as the previous section, but the attention is focused on the period of upper-secondary education. Section 5 pays attention to the respondents' English-related experience which they obtained between the secondary-school leaving examination, the so-called maturita, and the university entrance examination. Lastly, Section 6 aims to find out about the subjects' use of English in real life.

Regarding the type of items, closed and semi-closed types prevailed (48 out of 62). The respondents were required to choose one appropriate answer from several options (15 items); furthermore, in 10 items of this kind there was a possibility of complementing the choice with an open-ended answer. In 11 items there were lists of possible answers, and the respondents could mark all the relevant answers and add one of their own. In 12 items scales of various kinds were used. The remaining 14 items were open-ended and called for the subjects' response.

More details about the design of the questionnaire are provided in Chapter 2.

1.2.2.2 Pilot phase

The piloting of the questionnaire was planned for May 2013, but it was influenced by a lack of cooperation from the selected groups of students; the researchers received feedback from a couple of students only. Their comments were taken into consideration and a large-scale trial was postponed till August 2013. The respondents were newly enrolled students of the English for Business study programme at the University of Pardubice who were about to start their university studies in October 2013. Regarding the respondents, the choice was optimal since they represented a very similar group of students to the subjects of the prospective research. From the point of view of timing, however, it was challenging to process the data from the trial in time and to modify the tool, since the test-retest method was used to investigate the reliability of the questionnaire.

The test-retest method was selected because it allowed the stability of the answers to be checked over time, which was perceived as important (e.g. items 60 and 61 focused on the frequency of certain activities). On the day of their enrolment 60 students filled in the questionnaire; the time was provided according to the respondents' needs. The questionnaires were collected and the students were given a sealed envelope with a second copy of the questionnaire and a list of guidelines for the second administration. They were asked to open the envelope after at least two weeks, to fill in the questionnaire following the instructions, and to send it to the department together with their feedback. The researchers obtained 41 questionnaires out of 60, which is a response rate of 68 per cent.

Both sets of data were statistically analysed; the analysis revealed quite satisfactory results. The researchers investigated the level of agreement between the corresponding items, i.e. whether a student responded to all the items in the same way, which means that s/he provided the same answer to the same question or left identical items unanswered. For example, if the person did not visit any English-speaking countries while at basic school, s/he answered question number 29 negatively and did not respond to the related questions 30-34. The level of agreement was counted for all items; Table 1.4 presents a summary of the results, including the figures for the whole test and for individual sections.

Table 1.4

Summary of results – level of agreement

	All sections	Individual sections					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Answer	2504	392	113	430	495	91	983
No answer	1256	208	287	210	145	149	257
Agreement	2256.7	346	99	391.3	455.7	88	876.7
Disagreement	247.33	46	14	38. 67	39.33	3	106.3
Agreement (%)	90.122	88.27	87.61	91.01	92.05	96.7	89.18
Disagreement (%)	9.8775	11.73	12.39	8.992	7.946	3.297	10.82

Similarly, the Pearson's reliability coefficients were counted for the agreement of all items, Table 1.5 summarises the correlations for the whole questionnaire, as well as for the individual sections.

Table 1.5

Test-retest correlations

	All sections	Individual sections					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Number of items	2451	190	111	458	590	119	983
Correlation coefficient	0.9857	0.9999	0.8642	0.9335	0.9096	0.9988	0.8369
t statistic	289.5509	821.6627	17.9353	55.5943	53.0912	222.3229	47.8980
Critical value	1.9609	1.9727	1.9820	1.9652	1.9640	1.9804	1.9624
p-value	<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001

Since all the correlations revealed a very good or excellent agreement ($0.837 \leq r_p \leq 0.999$), the questionnaire was considered reliable enough to be used to collect the data. Furthermore, in their feedback the students did not report any major flaws. Consequently, only some minor adjustments were made before the first administration of the questionnaire in October 2013. For the purpose of the second round of data collection in October 2014, the questionnaire was slightly modified. None of the alterations, however, changed its content significantly. Section 1 was restructured, one item was divided into two for practical reasons, and new items were added to the self-assessment part. As a result, the 2014 version contained 70 items.

1.2.2.3 Administration

At the beginning of the 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 academic years the questionnaire was administered to 350 subjects of the study, who were all students entering the first year of the English language teacher education study programmes at three Czech universities (Section 1.1). The research team distributed the questionnaires with the help of colleagues from the other two universities. The respondents were expected to fill in the questionnaire and return it to the researchers on the day they were recorded. Unfortunately, not all the students did so. Thus they excluded themselves from the research sample, together with those who did not meet any other criteria (Section 1.1).

The questionnaire provided the data for the quantitative part of the mixed methods research of individual learning histories, background information for the Corpus of Czech Students' Spoken English (Ježková, 2015b), and data for the investigation of certain aspects of individual biographies in relation to selected pronunciation features.

1.2.3 Narrative interviews

1.2.3.1 Design

In order to elicit qualitative data regarding individual learning histories, a narrative interview was selected as a research method. This method was found appropriate since individual students' stories of their learning of English were of interest. a set of questions that directed the respondents' attention to learning English in a specific period of their lives was formulated; types of additional questions to encourage the student to be more forthcoming were also prepared. The interviews were conducted in the Czech language since producing a narrative in English might have been a serious obstacle to both the fluency of the performance and the richness of the story. To facilitate the respondents' production, sufficient time was allocated for each session; two sessions with each respondent were planned, with the aim being to elicit a main narrative in the first one and then answers to more specific questions in the second one. The interviews were audio recorded, which enabled the interviewer to concentrate fully on the interaction with the interviewee.

This method is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.2.3.2 Pilot phase

The format of the interview was piloted at the beginning of June 2014 with two students. The recommendations found in the literature on research methodology were followed; nevertheless, getting students to produce a narrative appeared a major challenge. They tended to wait for questions. The researcher used pauses more effectively or directed the respondent to an issue that needed to be elaborated more. It was obvious that it would not be possible to follow the originally planned two-session format using different types of questions in each session. The researcher analysed the recordings and prepared various types of questions for the subsequent data collection to encourage the respondents to talk more specifically about an event or a period in their lives.

1.2.3.3 Administration

The respondents for the qualitative phase of the study were selected on the basis of the analysis of the quantitative data. It uncovered several patterns of individual biographies which differed in the following variables: attitudes to English and to learning English while at school, learning English in courses or one-to-one lessons, real-life use of English, and visits to English-speaking countries. Students representing individual patterns were selected for the interview; altogether the cohort included 20 respondents (13 female and seven male respondents; the ratio reflects the structure of the research sample in terms of gender). The interviews were conducted in June and July 2014 and in February and March

2015. They were all recorded and later transcribed. The narrative interviews provided data for the qualitative analysis of individual learning biographies.

1.2.4 Multiple case study

A case study is defined by Stake (1995, p. xi, in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 151) as the study of the "particularity and complexity of a single case". In our study the individual cases are represented by the first-year university students, who constitute "a single entity in clearly defined boundaries" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 151) (Section 1.1). The 20 selected cases were studied by combining a range of data collection methods: oral production elicitation tools such as a diagnostic speaking test and a pronunciation test (Section 1.2.1), the questionnaire (Section 1.2.2), and narrative interviews (Section 1.2.3).

This research method is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

1.3 Corpus Compilation

As one of the outcomes of the whole research project was to create a corpus of Czech learners' spoken English, the diagnostic speaking test was used as a source of such language. The electronic version of the Corpus of Czech Students' Spoken English (CCSSE), which contains 153,295 words, was published on a CD-ROM (Ježková, 2015b). It is accompanied by a concise book including rather detailed information about the process of building the corpus.

1.3.1 Design

Since detailed information about the design of the diagnostic speaking test is offered in section 1.2.1.1, here only some comments from the viewpoint of corpus linguistics are added. As stated by Reppen (2012), the key considerations concerning building a corpus (such as the size, collecting and saving data, types of metadata, and ways of annotation) are determined by a research question. The particular objectives and research questions of the analyses in this project are discussed in detail in Chapter 4. Generally, the principles of corpus design are primarily guided by fundamental requirements for representativeness, balance, and homogeneity (Adolphs & Knight, 2012, p. 40). Additionally, the Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage (LINDSEI) was used as a guide in the processes of building the corpus.

For the processes applied in the pilot stage (Section 1.2.1.2), the previous research experience of the team members was utilised. The studies were based on a corpus of thirty-six interviews of university students recorded and transcribed in autumn 2010 which comprised 13,984 words in 858 sentences. Unlike the speaking tasks for the CCSSE,

this smaller corpus was based on student-teacher interviews consisting of three parts: (a) students introducing themselves – structured and quite short; (b) discussing their English language learning experience – structured, the longest and most important part; (c) picture description – semi-structured and of medium length. One of the analyses focused on selected syntactic features and approaches to discourse management and it revealed quite significant differences between the results of the research into English native speakers summarised in LGSWG (Biber et al., 1999) and the findings from this corpus (Ježková, 2012). Another study dealt with the use of verbs from the grammatical point of view (Ježková & Urbanová, 2012). In the course of these analyses we realised that the format needed some revision. Thus a number of modifications were suggested in order to achieve: (a) more symmetrical speaker contributions – two types of tasks based on student-student interaction (Table 1.1); (b) more authentic communication resembling a native-like type (i.e. student-student communication in three interaction tasks, while the teacher-student communication pattern was kept for the introductory task).

1.3.2 Transcription and annotation

The recordings were made in two rounds – autumn 2013 and autumn 2014. After recording the whole performance, students were supplied with mp3 files with their recordings. They were given a template and instructed by the research team how to transcribe them, e.g. emphasising "exact wording, including all mistakes, false starts, non-word elements" (Ježková, 2015a, p. 51). After anonymisation, the transcribed texts were edited by the research team (correcting, checking, and standardising the transcription).

The degree and strategies used for annotation are always a hot issue in the process of building a corpus, as Ježková (2015b) claims: "It is important to keep the balance between the readability of a text and its computer processing, and furthermore the balance between the time invested in tagging and its usefulness in the future" (p. 22). Thus the recordings were transcribed orthographically, and minimal tagging was used. For practical reasons, some of the mark-up conventions are identical to those in LINDSEI, while some of them were adapted (Chapter 4).

1.3.3 Structure of the corpus

The CCSSE includes 228 transcribed interviews which represent 153,295 words. In accordance with the suggestion by Reppen (2012, p. 33), every interview was divided into five separate files – two monologues, two information gap dialogue tasks, and a topic discussion. Thus it comprises 570 individual texts, 228 monologues, 228 dialogues based on the tasks listed in Appendix 2, and 114 discussions on given topics listed in Appendix 3. The texts are saved in the form of .txt files in order to be processed with the common concordance tools available. The metadata are stored in an Access database called "CCSEC"

and chosen basic ones are also added as headers of each text. They include: the file ID, number of recording, category of part, number of topic or discussion, number of words, length of recording, date of recording, student ID (number), and selected variables from the questionnaire on students' individual learning histories (age, gender, total number of years studying English, number of weeks spent in an English-speaking country, the student's other foreign languages, mother's foreign languages, father's foreign languages, number of years of pre-school English, number of years of English in school till the age of 15, extra lessons of English till the age of 15, and extra lessons of English after the age of 15 (for more details see Chapter 4).

1.4 Conclusion

The pilot phase confirmed the usability of all the tools to elicit the required data, but also necessitated a few content- and procedure-related modifications.

Regarding the oral production elicitation tools, the modifications reflected the results of the analysis of the performances recorded during the trial testing, as well as the analysis of feedback questionnaires. The piloting of the questionnaire confirmed its reliability by the application of the test-retest method and led to only minor changes. Contrary to that, the trial of the interview initiated major changes regarding the organisation of the process and questioning strategies.

Having revised the research instruments, the researchers then implemented them in two data collection periods in October-December 2013 and 2014, when the oral performance elicitation tools and the questionnaire were used, and in June-July 2014 and in February-March 2015, when the interviews were realised. All the students included in the research sample were informed about the purpose of the project, as well as about the means used for the data collection and presentation of its outcomes; all of them signed an informed consent to being included in the sample.

Individual learning histories

Quantitative study

This chapter represents the quantitative part of the retrospective study of individual learning histories. The theoretical background is presented first, followed by a description of the research design. After that the results of the study are presented and discussed, shedding light on what the subjects' learning histories have in common and what makes them unique.

2.1 Theoretical background

Language learners in general follow distinctive paths towards proficiency in a language. Learning a language is a multidimensional process which is shaped by the interplay of internal and external factors. An in-depth discussion of all the relevant issues, however, is beyond the scope of the chapter. Therefore, only selected factors that are deemed to contribute to the variation in the learning paths of Czech learners of English will be dealt with. Since the learner and language learning are the centre of attention, first, a distinction will be made between explicit and implicit learning of a language. Then, two internal factors, i.e. age and attitudes, will be examined in relation to language acquisition. It is impossible, however, to discuss other internal factors such as intelligence, language aptitude, learning styles and strategies, personality, etc., within the limits of the chapter. Afterwards attention will be shifted towards external factors; family influences on the educational outcomes of a child will be discussed first, then contexts of learning will be elaborated, and lastly, attention will be focused on the teacher.

2.1.1 Explicit versus implicit learning

Language learning happens in the mind of a learner. Psychological processes in language acquisition represent a widely discussed issue in SLA. With the research focus in mind, this part will briefly introduce the concept of explicit and implicit learning.

Explicit learning is characterised by the learner's conscious and deliberate attempts to master some material or solve a problem. Being a conscious process, explicit learning takes effort and strategic expertise (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 136). Compared to explicit learning, implicit learning is more difficult to define since many researchers have used the term with different meanings. Dörnyei (2009, p. 138) summarises the main properties of implicit learning: (a) bottom-up mechanisms are involved in language processing; (b) there is no conscious attempt to learn the target material; (c) learners are not aware of learning; (d) implicit learning is an automatic process; (e) learners lack awareness of the result. On top of that, a temporal dimension may be added since implicit learning needs a substantial amount of time (Ellis, 2005; Ellis, 2015).

The characteristics given above imply a link to Krashen's theory of SLA. Krashen (1985) made a distinction between two ways in which language development takes place, i.e. between conscious (explicit) learning and natural (implicit) acquisition. The two mechanisms result in different types of knowledge, which are used for different purposes. While acquired knowledge is used to produce language, the learnt system is used to monitor the acquired system. The central question is, however, whether the different types of knowledge interact.

Researchers share diverse opinions regarding the interface between explicit and implicit knowledge, a distinction related to explicit and implicit learning. Three standpoints are reported in the SLA literature: a non-interface position, weak interface position, and strong interface position (e.g. Dörnyei, 2009; Ellis, 2005; Ellis, 2008; Gass & Selinker, 2008). The non-interface position rejects "both the possibility of explicit knowledge transforming directly into implicit knowledge and the possibility of implicit knowledge becoming explicit" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 160). There is a consensus that this position is best represented by Krashen (1985), who concluded that what had been learnt could not become part of the acquired system. Although this idea has been debated and challenged (e.g. Ellis, 2009; Gass and Selinker, 2008), Nick Ellis (2005) agrees with Krashen (1985) on the point that acquisition and learning are different things, i.e. "explicit and implicit knowledge are distinct and dissociated" (p. 307).

Furthermore, Nick Ellis (2005) argues, unlike Krashen, that those types of knowledge are "dissociable but cooperative" (p. 305). The idea of cooperating systems is characteristic of the weak interface position, which is perceived as a dynamic process (Ellis, 2005). Dörnyei (2009, pp. 170–174) provides a research-based overview of the cooperation of explicit and implicit learning, which may have diverse forms; for example, explicit knowledge fills the gaps in implicit knowledge or explicit learning increases the overall level of accuracy of implicit knowledge.

The strong interface position claims (Dörnyei, 2009) that "explicit knowledge can be converted into implicit knowledge through practice" (p. 161). It is linked to the theory of

DeKayser, who proposes that "learning progresses from knowledge *that* (declarative) relating to some skill or behaviour to knowledge *how* (procedural) and finally to automatisation of procedural knowledge" (1997, in Gass and Selinker, 2008, p. 247).

Since explicit and implicit learning "involve different types of representation and are substantiated in separate parts of the brain" (Ellis, 2005, p. 307), they contribute to the development of different aspects of language proficiency. Therefore, it is desirable to create balanced learning opportunities. Dörnyei (2009) foresees that finding an optimal balance and sequence of the explicit and implicit components will be one of the main future directions in SLA research. So far researchers have identified factors which the optimal balance is likely to depend on:

– learner characteristics (the learner's metalinguistic sophistication, prior educational experience, motivation, cognitive style, and language aptitude, especially working memory capacity;
– L2–L1 similarities and differences;
– characteristics of the target structure/area (e.g. complexity, prototypicality, regularity, form- or meaning-based nature;
– characteristics of the available/accessible natural L2 input (e.g. overall amount and frequency and salience with which the target L2 structures are represented in it);
– the length of time available for the learning process.

(Dörnyei, 2009, p. 174)

From this point of view, the present study investigates selected learner characteristics (age, educational experience, and attitudes), the available natural L2 input (amount and frequency), and the length of time available for the learning process.

2.1.2 The age factor

Learners vary in terms of the age at which they are first exposed to a language other than their mother tongue. In the FL environment (Section 2.1.5) the first exposure may equate to the beginning of formal instruction (Section 2.1.5.1). In relation to the L2 environment (Section 2.1.5), researchers differentiate the age of arrival (AoA) from the age of onset (AO), if massive exposure to the target language was for some reason delayed after arrival in the country. How the starting age influences L2 acquisition is one of the most hotly debated issues in SLA. This chapter in no way aspires to provide a comprehensive review of research in this area. It rather intends to summarise recent findings relevant to the aims of the research project.

Considering the complexity of the influence of age on L2 acquisition, Rod Ellis (2015) distinguishes the effect of age on ultimate attainment, the rate of acquisition, and the route of acquisition. In this chapter the effect of age on ultimate attainment is of interest. Therefore, the inquiry as to whether early starters acquire higher levels of L2 proficiency than learners who start as adults will be in focus.

For decades the discussion in SLA has centred on the question of whether there is a critical period for language acquisition, which Brown (2007) defines as "a biologically determined period of life when language can be acquired more easily and beyond which time language is increasingly difficult to acquire" (p. 57). The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH, first proposed by Penfield and Roberts in 1959) claims that there is such a "biological timetable" (Brown, 2007, p. 57). Recently, a distinction has been made between a "sensitive period" and a "critical period"; the latter is a special category of sensitive periods resulting from irreversible changes in the brain (Knudsen, 2004, in Hummel, 2014).

Building on her own research and the research of others, Herschensohn (2013) concludes that there is "a maturationally sensitive period for L2 acquisition, with offset decline beginning at age 4, and steeper decline occurring through the teen years, but with no definitive terminus" (p. 320). Herschensohn's so-called "gradient perspective" is in contrast with the idea of a categorical divide between pre- and post-critical period L2 learners. There is no consensus among researchers as to when the sensitive period for language learning ends. While Herschensohn (2013) maintains no terminus position, some other scholars propose that the closure of the sensitive period might vary depending on the aspect of language under investigation. For example, Granena and Long (2012, in Ellis 2015) propose that the window of opportunity closes first for L2 phonology (perhaps as early as at four years old), then for lexis and collocation, and finally (in the mid-teens) for grammar.

Hummel (2014) summarises key critical period studies and concludes that the intriguing question has remained unanswered. Some studies have identified non-native pronunciation and grammatical mastery in the language of early-childhood L2 learners; contrary to that, some other studies rated the language of post-puberty L2 learners as that of native speakers (NSs). There are scholars who maintain that native-like ratings are influenced by the tasks which are used to measure learners' proficiency and by the subsequent data analysis. When demanding tasks are used, it comes out that the NS language differs in subtle but distinct ways from the language of testees who would be rated as NSs if insensitive measures were used. Hystenstam and Abrahamsson (2003, in Hummel, 2014) labelled the subtle difference "non-perceivable non-nativeness" (p. 182). Studies like this contribute to the growing evidence that learners who start learning a second language as adults are not able to achieve NS competence. It is disputable, however, as Hummel (2014) asserts, to use NS competence as a standard of reference. The variation between NS competence and the native-like competence of an NNS may be attributed to the difference between the monolingual competence of an NS and a bilingual's "multicompetence" (Ellis, 2015).

Unlike Hummel (2014), who calls for more unambiguous support for either opinion on the critical period, Herschensohn (2013, p. 330) advocates the existence of a sensitive period for learning a second language, i.e. the earlier-is-better position, having summarised research-based evidence on the effects of age on grammatical competence, foreign accent, and

speed of processing. Similarly, Rod Ellis (2015) also reports that young learners are capable of a higher level of attainment than older learners. He attributes the higher achievement to the fact that young learners are better equipped to engage in implicit learning. While implicit learning is a slow process, explicit learning may lead to more immediate results. In the long run, however, implicit learning wins out.

Along with considerations of the effects of age on the cognitive processes, it is also important to take into account the affective domain. Brown (2007, pp. 68–71) discusses various affective variables, including egocentricity, inhibitions, language ego, and second identity. If summarised, from the affective perspective an early start of L2 learning seems to be an advantage. The main reason is that young children have not developed inhibitions about their self-identity and negative attitudes towards the target language and the target culture.

The research findings which have been reported so far originate in the L2 environment. The question is, however, whether they are applicable in the FL setting. Lojová (2015) reports a growing body of evidence that "it is better to start earlier since the learners are likely to gradually achieve a higher level of FL proficiency and, what is of vital importance, their achievements will be more stable and long-lasting" (p. 135). Nevertheless, the findings of the research projects conducted in the FL environment, more specifically in the Czech Republic (Ivanová & Černá, 2016; Najvar, 2010; Najvar & Hanušová, 2010), imply that the age factor should not be overestimated; the effects of an early start seem to be eclipsed by the influence of other variables.

This conclusion resonates with the research-based opinion of Rod Ellis (2015), who asserts that the "provision of language instruction in most school systems is insufficient to enable the potential advantage that young learners hold to manifest itself" and doubts that "starting foreign language instruction early will confer any real benefit" (p. 34). He further explains that child learners rely on implicit learning, which requires massive amounts of exposure to the target language over a long period of time. In FL contexts such massive exposure is not available for the majority of learners. Unfortunately, researchers' voices are inaudible. Recently, in Europe there has been a trend to start formal instruction in English in the pre-school period (Mourão & Lourenço, 2015), including in the Czech Republic (Černá, 2015).

2.1.3 Attitudes

FL learners differ in terms of the attitudes they hold towards learning in general, towards languages and learning languages, and towards the target language and the target culture. Čáp and Mareš (2001) define an attitude as "an acquired motive expressing an individual's relationship to an object, i.e. to a thing, a person, an activity" (p. 149). Attitudes develop during the process of socialisation; therefore, the family (Section 2.1.4), the school class,

and the peer group are the main influences. Apart from those primary and secondary social groups, there are other sources of attitudes. Nakonečný (2013), with reference to selected studies, adds the following sources: (a) a specific experience undergone in social interaction; (b) models, which are imitated; (c) institutional factors (people adopt the values of various institutions).

Regarding changes in attitudes, they are either congruent or incongruent. The former denotes such a type of change as results in an alteration in the intensity of an attitude. The latter designates the changes in the quality of an attitude, e.g. turning a negative attitude into a positive one. In general, congruent changes are easier to achieve than incongruent ones, especially under identical conditions (Nakonečný, 2013).

In the context of SLA, attitudes represented a central component in Robert Gardner's motivation theory (1985). In his *Socio-educational Model,* attitudes towards the learning situation were believed to affect motivation and thus, indirectly, L2 proficiency. Brown (2007) summarised the outcomes of several large-scale studies conducted by other researchers and concluded that "positive attitudes toward self, the native language group and the target language group enhanced proficiency" (p. 193). Similarly, a failure to acquire the L2 appeared to be associated with a strong ethnic identity and negative attitudes toward the target language culture (Rampton, 1995, in Ellis, 2008). All the studies, however, were conducted in an L2 environment.

Attitudes towards the target language and the target language culture are closely linked to motivation. For example, in the model of Gardner (1985), they were related to an integrative orientation of motivation, i.e. to the desire to integrate into the community of L2 speakers. Burden and Williams (1997) proposed a model of motivation which is based on a social constructivist approach. The attitudes in this model represent one of many internal factors which are in dynamic interplay with external factors. In the *Process Model of L2 Motivation* (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998), attitudes towards L2 and its speakers are considered among the main motivational influences associated with choice motivation, i.e. the preactional phase of the process. In the most recent *L2 Motivational Self System* (e.g. Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, 2009), which has three components: Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and L2 Learning Experience, attitudes to the L2 and its speakers are conceived of as part of our idealised L2 Self. Csizér and Dörnyei (2005) explain that "the more positive our disposition toward these L2 speakers, the more attractive our idealized L2 Self" (p. 29). An ideal L2 Self is claimed to be a powerful motivator to learn L2. In this model Dörnyei (2005) redefined Gardner's original concept of integrativeness so that it is relevant to FL settings. It is now understood as a drive "to close the gap or discrepancy between the actual self and the ideal self, who in highly L2 motivated individuals happens to have been conceived as an L2–speaking self" (Ortega, 2009, p. 186). Because of the tight bond between attitudes and motivation, supporting the development of positive

attitudes toward the target language and its speakers is also of the utmost importance in the FL environment.

To conclude this section, Czech learners' attitudes to learning English as an FL at school will be presented in the light of research results. The first study was conducted by Rendl and Škaloudová (2004). They surveyed 500 selected basic school pupils from Prague schools, who were asked which school subjects they considered their favourites. Only 5.4 per cent of the pupils considered English their favourite subject, while 13.4 per cent chose it as the one they liked least. Similarly, Hrabal and Pavelková (2010) were interested in Czech learners' perceptions of school subjects, including English, which they investigated from various points of view. They summarised the results of several studies and concluded: the learners (in grades 6 to 9) perceived English as a moderately popular subject, which is rather difficult but very important. The authors did not identify any gender-related differences regarding attitudes to English. While the results provide a general idea about the learners' attitudes to learning English at school, it is more important for teachers to know their classes' attitudes so that they may influence them. Therefore, the teachers will find the book by Hrabal and Pavelková (2010) helpful, since the authors provide such diagnostic tools.

2.1.4 Family

The family is a social group with multiple functions. In this part of the chapter its educational function in relation to learning an FL will be discussed. Since FL learning is part of education, the general issues are raised first, then issues specific to learning an FL follow. Given the limits of the research project, bilingual families are not considered.

2.1.4.1 The influence of the family on the educational attainment of a child

Generally, the influence of the family on the educational attainment of a child is substantial. Among others, Průcha (2009, p. 107) asserts that along with the cognitive characteristics of a learner, the socio-economic status of their family is the main factor determining a child's level of educational attainment. Helus (2007, p. 167) also considers the socio-economic status crucial but adds two more factors: parents' educational style and family structure. Furthermore, he specifies components which are usually considered to constitute the socio-economic status: material resources and occupational and educational status. In particular, the level of the parents' education, or, more importantly, the mother's education, correlates strongly with the educational outcomes of a child.

Research-based evidence supporting this opinion and which originates in the Czech context will be provided. In his study of 500 Czech children Švancara (1986, in Průcha, 2009, p. 125) concluded that the educational status of their parents, specifically that of the mother, proved to influence the development of their personality more than the economic status. This conclusion is supported by Rendl and Škaloudová (2004), who investigated

schoolchildren at schools in Prague. Dědičová (2003, in Štech, 2004) explored the influence of parents on the choice of their children's career. While school results represented the key factor in all the parents' decision making, regarding other factors, there were considerable differences. More educated parents relied on their own life experience and on the child's interests, which were manifested in the child's actions. They respected the wishes of the child less than parents with lower levels of education, who at the same time relied on a teacher's opinion. Additionally, Štech (2004) concluded that more highly-educated parents tended to be "effective" in providing direct assistance to their children with home preparation since they were able to recognise what was needed in a particular learning situation, for example, whether a child needed to automatise certain skills or whether more illustrative examples needed to be provided. Contrary to that, "ineffective" parents were not able to analyse a learning situation and respond accordingly. Some other parents help their children indirectly; they enrol them in various free-time courses, arrange for private tuition, or consult specialists. These activities do not always have positive effects. This happens if parents rely too much on help coming from outside the family and they do not concurrently establish a family climate with positive attitudes to school.

Concerning the educational style, research findings suggest that children brought up by parents with an authoritative parenting style (Maccoby & Martin, 1983, in Fontana, 2003), which is balanced in terms of demands and support, tended to have higher self-esteem and better results at school, while at the same time they were more independent, happy, capable, and successful (Fontana, 2003).

As regards the family structure, parents represent role models for their children. Helus (2007, p. 170) asserts that living in an incomplete family may have a serious impact on a child. Such a structural deficiency of the family may hinder the development of a child more if it is hidden, i.e. if both parents are physically present but one of them does not function properly. Helus (2007) also discusses the role of siblings in the family. He emphasises that having siblings represents opportunities for a child to imitate them and/or to identify with them. Although imitating siblings may generate problems as well, from the educational perspective it is potentially very valuable. For example, the opinions of siblings may be much more influential than the opinions expressed by parents.

The above-mentioned findings converge with Coleman's (1988) social theory, in which he distinguishes three different components of family capital: financial capital, human capital, and social capital. While financial capital provides "physical resources that can aid achievement" (Coleman, 1988, p. 109), human capital provides "the potential for a cognitive development for the child that aids learning" (Coleman, 1988, p. 109) and is usually measured by the parents' education. The social capital of the family is different – "it is the relations between children and parents" (Coleman, 1988, p. 110). Since social capital gives the child access to the parents' human capital, it depends on the adults' physical presence

in the family and on the attention given by the adult to the child. Consequently, children benefit from their parents' human capital on condition that adults are physically present in the family and, at the same time, there are strong relations between adults and children. Otherwise the parents' human capital remains inaccessible to them and irrelevant to their educational attainment. Furthermore, Coleman (1988) argues that relationships outside the family (i.e. the family's social networks) are also significant. Altogether, all these forms of capital reflect the quality of the children's home environment.

2.1.4.2 The influence of family on FL learning

Presumably, in the context of FL learning parents' educational status will play a role, too. More highly-educated parents will probably acknowledge the role of English in contemporary society. This might be reflected in an array of important decisions, including, for example, the starting age of FL education, the type of school, their child's involvement in English-related free-time activities, and providing experience of studying abroad. Irrespective of their education, parents proved to be able to influence decision makers regarding the provision of language education – parental pressure accelerated the implementation of early-years English language education both in the European and the Czech context (Černá, 2015a; Edelenbos et al., 2006).

With reference to the research results presented in the previous section, parents with a higher level of education are assumed also to be effective in helping their children to learn a foreign language at home. Unfortunately, data about the quality of Czech parents' assistance with their children's language learning is not available. We can only refer to the quantitative study by Rendl and Škaloudová (2004), who reported that about 90 per cent of parents, irrespective of their own education, considered learning an FL very important. While 35 per cent of the parents were directly involved in their children's home preparation for FL classes, 5 per cent of the parents even tutored their children in FLs themselves. The study provides interesting insights; however, the results cannot be generalised since it was only conducted in Prague.

Furthermore, parents with a higher educational status will most probably be language learners themselves. Their children will have a model of a language learner to follow. The parents will demonstrate a habit of language learning and use, learning strategies, and also attitudes to the target language and culture. Regarding attitudes, parents are initially the major determiners of children's attitudes (Section 2.1.3). In the L2 environment the role of parents was explored by Gardner (1985, p. 110), who distinguished two roles of the parent: an "active" role and a "passive" role. The parents play an active role in those situations in which they encourage their children to do well at school, when they monitor their language learning performance, and when they reinforce their success at school. A passive role involves the parents' attitudes to the second language community. Parents

with positive attitudes to the community demonstrate those through actions or opinions. Thus they enhance the development of positive attitudes in their children. The two roles are independent and can be in harmony. If they are not, it is the passive role which is the more effective, as Gardner (1985, p. 122) concludes.

Although the theory originates in the L2 environment, it is relevant to the FL setting: demonstrating negative attitudes, for example toward Russians, may invalidate the parents' encouragement of their children to invest in learning the Russian language. It does not matter if the negative attitudes originate in the parents' life experience, including their language learning experience, or result from stereotyped images (social representations) of other countries and speakers of other languages, which, according to Castelotti and Moore (2002), have the power either to enhance or to inhibit learning.

If the findings are perceived from the perspective of Coleman's (1988) theory, it is the family human capital which influences parental decisions and involvement in FL learning. This is supported by an ethnographic study by Li (2007), who explored the role of the home environment in children's second language acquisition, more specifically four immigrant Chinese families from different backgrounds in Canada. She concluded that "it was not economic class, but educational and occupational (job circumstances) factors that shaped the parents' expectations for and involvement in schooling" (Li, 2007, p. 296).

2.1.5 Contexts of learning a foreign language

Learning in general happens in various contexts. With reference to the life-long learning paradigm, it is possible to distinguish formal, non-formal, and informal contexts of learning. While formal learning leads to diplomas and qualifications, non-formal learning includes, for example, workplace or civil society organisation activities or private tutoring to prepare for examinations, whereas informal learning is a part of everyday life and may not be considered significant by the individuals themselves (European Commission, 2000, p. 8; Kotásek, 2002, p.11). These three contexts are relevant for education in general, including language education. Apart from learning English at schools, learners often attend private one-to-one lessons and/or language courses in various institutions. On top of that, they engage in a variety of activities in which they communicate in English. Such activities, e.g. watching films in English, are unrelated to the school curriculum but respond to the learners' autonomous real-life needs. These contexts will be discussed later in this chapter.

Learning a language happens in different social settings; Ellis (2008, p. 288) makes a general distinction between natural and educational settings. Natural settings are irrelevant to the language learning situation in the Czech Republic, which complies with the characteristics of "non-forms" educational settings defined by Skuttnab-Kangas (2000, in Ellis, 2008), i.e. the types of settings "that do not use two languages as the media of teaching and learning" (p. 301). In Czech state schools English is predominantly only

a subject, although bilingual programmes have started to emerge. Therefore, the most appropriate label for the prevailing type of learning situation is "the language classroom setting" (Ellis, 2008, p. 302). Furthermore, a distinction should be made between a "foreign language classroom" and a "second language classroom". Language learning in the Czech Republic matches the characteristics of the former proposed by Cameron (2001): "very little experience of the language outside the classroom, and encounters with the language […] through several hours of teaching in a school week" (p. 11). Access to the community of English language users is very limited. Thus, learners of an FL learn a non-native language in the environment of their native language, unlike second language learners, who learn a non-native language, i.e. a second language (L2), in the environment in which that language is spoken (Gass & Selinker, 2008). In the L2 environment, apart from being exposed to English in everyday life, language learners may concurrently learn in second language classrooms. Generally, FL learners' exposure to English outside the class is minimal or even non-existent compared to that of L2 learners. Nowadays, access to English-speaking communities can easily be mediated by modern technology, especially by ICT. FL learners, however, have to be active in searching for opportunities to communicate in English.

Apart from the general distinction between natural and educational settings, there are further classifications of learning contexts (Batstone, 2002; Collentine & Freed, 2004). Batstone (2002) focuses on contexts of engagement within which cognitive processes (e.g. noticing, input, pushed output) inherent to language acquisition occur. He distinguishes "communicative contexts" and "learning contexts". Communicative contexts require the learner to use the language as a tool for "exchanging information and participating in important social and interpersonal functions" (Collentine & Freed, 2004, p. 155). Compared to that, in learning contexts input and learner output are fashioned with the assistance of a teacher. Collentine and Freed (2004) assert that this makes the learners "attend to form and take risks toward the ultimate goal of improving their linguistic expertise" (p. 155). Batstone (2002) argues, however, that communicative contexts do not necessarily facilitate attending to new language but may constrain or even prevent it (p. 2). This applies especially to initial language learners; they are aware of the need to produce socially acceptable language but this awareness inhibits their risk-taking in deploying new forms in their own output. From this perspective learning contexts may be superior to initial learners' intake.

The sections that follow discuss the contexts which are relevant for Czech learners of English.

2.1.5.1 Formal context

In the FL environment, for the majority of learners the learning of an FL is mainly linked to formal education. Thus school-based learning represents the foremost opportunity to

be exposed to and to interact in an FL. Therefore, the position of English in the Czech curriculum will be discussed in this section.

A new system of curricular documents, i.e. Framework Education Programmes (FEPs) for pre-primary, primary, and lower- and upper-secondary education, started to be implemented in the first decade of the 21st century (Greger & Walterová, 2007). The process of implementation has been referred to as the curricular reform. Furthermore, the field of FL teaching and learning was affected by the National Plan of Education in Foreign Languages for 2005–2008, (MŠMT, 2006) which has brought two important changes: (a) the start of the obligatory instruction in an FL has shifted from grade four to grade three of primary school, i.e. learners start to learn an FL at the age of nine at the latest; (b) English has been prioritised as the first FL from grade three. As a consequence, those who started their primary education in 2006 will have experienced at least eleven years of formal education in English when finishing upper-secondary education. Some of the learners might have been exposed to English in the pre-school period; however, pre-primary English language education is still implemented as an extra-curricular activity which does not involve a majority of learners (Černá, 2015a).

The current revised version of the Framework Education Programme for Basic Education (MŠMT, 2013) defines the general educational objectives and content of primary and lower-secondary education, which is provided by basic school, as well as the expected outcomes of individual educational areas. One of the areas, Language and Communication through Language, includes three compulsory subjects: Czech Language and Literature, Foreign Language (i.e. English), and Another Foreign Language, which pupils choose in grade eight. Regarding the first FL, the expected outcomes are formulated in relation to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001): learners are supposed to be at A1 level at the end of the first stage of basic school, at A2 level when completing the second stage of basic school, and at B1+ when finishing secondary school. The target level depends on the type of secondary school. While secondary grammar schools tend to aim at B2 level (VÚP, 2007); secondary vocational schools set the level of attainment at B1 level (e.g. MŠMT, 2009). This level is stated as the minimum, and individual schools may establish a higher target level according to their resources and students' needs.

Schools in the Czech Republic are autonomous institutions; they have to design their own School Educational Programmes (SEPs), which are in alignment with the respective FEPs. The SEP of any institution reflects its vision and human and material resources. It is the school's responsibility to find its own unique ways of achieving the general objectives and expected outcomes in individual educational areas. Consequently, it is the teachers who decide, consistently with the SEP, which teaching methods and techniques, as well as material teaching aids, will be deployed. This is also the case of textbooks for teaching

and learning English, which are selected to suit learner needs in achieving the respective level of communicative competence in English.

The FEPs contain a section called the framework education plan, which provides basic guidelines for the organisation of education. The allocation of time to individual educational areas and subjects is one of them. Since schools design their own SEPs, they also have freedom to distribute the lessons allocated to English to individual grades. Most commonly, however, there are three mandatory lessons of English per week in each year. They are sometimes complemented by an additional lesson, if a school takes one lesson from the quota which may be distributed across educational areas and grades, depending on the school's vision and resources. In the last two years of the secondary school, students may also choose a seminar in English as an optional subject, which increases the time allocation considerably. The opportunity to offer such a seminar nevertheless depends on the school's resources. The seminar is usually conceived as preparation for the school-leaving exam, i.e. the maturita.

Since 2011 the reformed maturita exam has been implemented after it was introduced by the New Education Act in 2004. As a consequence, nowadays the maturita exam is a complex system which consists of a common (state) part and a profiling (school) part. All the information is available at the official website (www.novamaturita.cz). Every student is obliged to take at least four obligatory exams, two in each part. For 2016 the common part included a mandatory exam in the Czech language and a mandatory exam in the first FL or mathematics, from which every examinee was obliged to choose one. As regards the profiling part, it contained the subjects which were stipulated by the principal of a school in relation to the relevant FEP. Optional exams in the common part included mathematics and an FL; optional profiling exams were specified by the leadership of schools. Consequently, in the current system the choice is up to the examinee; a student completing upper-secondary education may decide to take (a) no exam in English; (b) either the common or the profiling exam; (c) both of them; (d) according to a new ministerial directive from September 2015, students may pass a selected international exam in English at B1 level which may then act to grant an exemption from either of the exams.

Introducing the common maturita exam in the FL has brought a new format of the exam: it consists of a didactic test (including the use of English and listening and reading comprehension), a writing test (two writing tasks of different genres, lengths, and topics), and a speaking test (four different tasks, one of them prepared by the school). In order to pass the exam, one must succeed in all the partial tests. The introduction of the new format necessitated the large-scale training of FL teachers, who learnt to use new sets of standardised criteria to evaluate writing and speaking.

In the course of its implementation, the reformed maturita exam has undergone considerable changes concerning the FL. Originally, there were two levels of exams, B2

and B1, reflecting the target levels given by the relevant FEPs. The examinees were expected to choose the appropriate level. However, two levels of the FL exams were administered only in 2011 and 2012. Because of problems of various kinds, the policy has changed. Since then, only one level of exam has been prepared every year, which is, unfortunately, the lower one.

English is taught as an FL in the Czech context (Section 2.1.5). This means, among other things, that it is just a subject at school. English as the first FL has secured its space in the curriculum of the primary and lower- and upper-secondary schools. Schools have used various strategies to make the space larger; for example, they introduce classes from the first or the second grade, they offer optional classes, and they implement cross-curricular projects in English or content and language integrated learning (CLIL). The implementation depends very much on the vision of the individual school and on the human resources that are available.

2.1.5.2 Non-formal context

Learning English in a non-formal context complements the formal education of some learners. It is provided by numerous institutions, for example, by language schools, cultural and educational centres, clubs, or by individuals. Learners may be involved in different types of courses, which may or may not lead to certificates. Learning English in courses is in a way similar to formal education, since it is school-based learning. At the same time, however, it may be different – there is likely to be more space for learners' needs. It is the biggest advantage of one-to-one tuition since it can be tailored specifically to the needs of the learner. Another difference concerns the absence of formal assessment, which may lower the affective filter of anxious learners who may feel encouraged to participate and thus learn more than at school.

Various institutions also organise intensive courses, usually in the form of summer camps. This is what Collentine and Freed (2004) labelled the domestic immersion context of learning an FL. They argue that it is balanced in terms of communicative and learning contexts (Section 2.1.5): learners study the target language intensively in their L1 environment, and, at the same time, the target language is usually used in interaction outside the class, which is more natural and authentic, if it includes opportunities to interact with NSs.

Learners have different motives for enrolment in free-time courses of any kind. They may want to improve a specific skill, e.g. speaking, they may need more time to master some grammar, they may just like studying English, or they may want to progress faster because they aim at achieving a higher level of proficiency. It is either the learners themselves who make the decision to attend a course or it is their parents. The younger the learners, the more important the role of the parents is. A crucial factor, however, is whether they make a decision which is in harmony with their children's abilities and wishes, or whether the

decision is imposed. In the latter case the children's involvement in activities which they perceive as undesirable may be counterproductive.

To conclude this part, a potential drawback of learning English in a non-formal context will be mentioned. It is the qualification of teachers. Some institutions have a transparent policy for hiring new teachers and internal systems of quality management, some do not. It is difficult for a client to find out whether what the institutions advertise is true. Another source of information is word of mouth, which may or may not be reliable. Unfortunately, it is often the case that possessing the maturita in English qualifies people to teach young children in nursery schools. This is influenced by a false assumption that knowing some words in English is enough to teach pre-schoolers. If this policy is followed, the potential of the early start may be lost. What is worse, negative attitudes to English may be reinforced in young children, thus hindering their subsequent language learning.

2.1.5.3 Informal context

Consistently with the lifelong learning paradigm, learning English in an informal context complements learning in formal and non-formal contexts. Similarly to learning non-formally, it does not concern all learners. While learners who take various courses in English in their free time are well aware of their learning, learners who learn informally are not. They deliberately participate in activities which require the use of English; however, improving their English may not be the aim. Consequently, communication in English is a tool for achieving a different objective. For example, young people watch popular TV series for pleasure and enjoyment rather than to develop listening comprehension, or they play PC games in English because Czech versions are not available. Nevertheless, through *extensive* involvement in activities which require fluent comprehension and production, learners are engaged in implicit learning (Section 2.1.1).

In conclusion, each of the environments offers different types of input and interaction which typically occur in it. It does not mean, however, that a straightforward relationship exists between a specific type of environment and a type of learning. Nevertheless, in the FL environment opportunities for implicit learning will probably be superior in an informal learning context, compared to formal and non-formal ones, for two reasons. The first is because "implicit learning of language occurs during fluent comprehension and production" (Ellis, 2005, p. 306). The use of language in real life displays the characteristics of implicit learning discussed above. The second reason concerns the temporal dimension; implicit learning can result in a high-level performance but it takes a long time (Dörnyei, 2009; Ellis, 2005) and massive amounts of exposure to the target language are needed (Ellis, 2015). In an informal learning context the time is available; its duration depends merely on the learner's autonomous decision. Securing the time, however, must be accompanied by the learner's involvement in activities which necessitate communication in the target language.

The next part introduces the target culture context. Obviously, it is outside the Czech environment, but it is still relevant for some Czech learners.

2.1.5.4 Target culture context

Nowadays, it is not exceptional for learners of English to spend some time in an English-speaking country (ESC). Learners have a chance to communicate in the language they have been studying for some time in a culture associated with the target language. The nature of the experience they gain differs considerably, depending especially on opportunities to interact with NSs and on the length of the stay.

It also matters whether learners study in language courses or not. If they do, they find themselves in the "study abroad context" (Collentine & Freed, 2004, p. 158), which involves both communicative and learning contexts of language acquisition (Batstone, 2002), explained earlier. Thus formal FL study is situated in the target culture. According to Collentine and Freed (2004), this requires the learners to negotiate communicative contexts and, consequently, to develop strategies for social interaction. Batstone (2002) reminds us that communicative contexts do not always facilitate attending to new language; especially initial learners, being aware of the need to produce socially acceptable language, may have inhibitions about taking risks and using the new language in communication. Therefore, it depends on individual learners how they approach the challenges posed by communicative contexts.

Visits to ESCs have the potential to affect an individual's motivation to learn an FL. That is why schools often organise short-term school trips, mainly to the United Kingdom, hoping that positive effects will ensue from the experience. Shoaib and Dörnyei (2004, p. 34) provided evidence that experiencing a stay abroad may impact on a learner significantly, albeit both in a positive and in a negative sense.

To conclude, not all people benefit from spending time in the target culture. If people do, the benefits vary considerably, depending on the personal characteristics, the level of communicative competence on entry to the country, the length of the stay, the overall nature of the experience, and the amount of input and interaction a person has experienced. The gains may be observed in terms of communicative competence and/or motivation.

2.1.6. English teacher

Teaching and learning an FL is a multidimensional process which is characterised by the interaction of many factors. This part focuses on the teacher of English, albeit from a relatively narrow perspective reflecting the aims of the study: the teacher, an NNS and an NS, as a source of target language input.

In the Czech environment learning English generally happens in a formal educational context (Section 2.1.5.1). The teacher of English is the main source of target language

input. Rod Ellis (2008) summarises the outcomes of studies investigating teacher talk and reports that the teacher in L2 classrooms "takes up about two thirds of the total talking time" (p. 795). This is a substantial part of the lesson; therefore, it seems desirable that teachers try to maximise the target language input. This opinion is supported by Turnball and Arnett's survey of the research on the teacher's use of L1 (2002, in Ellis, 2008), in which they noted a number of studies reporting "a direct correlation between achievement and teacher use of the target language" (pp. 801–802). As regards the Czech educational context, the use of English and Czech by NNS teachers was investigated by Najvar et al. (2013). The team analysed 89 videoed lessons and concluded that the use of the two languages was balanced, if operationalised in terms of time, but, most importantly, the authors reported a great difference in the use of the mother tongue and the target language among individual teachers. Consequently, while NNS teachers vary considerably in the amount of input they provide, NS teachers in general are potentially a source of extensive input, which, according to the previously-mentioned findings, leads to higher learner achievement.

Both the NS teacher and the NNS teacher have much to offer to FL learners.

Communicative competence in English is the main asset which NS teachers bring to FL classrooms, together with knowledge of the target culture. Having a different educational background may be reflected in NS teachers' teaching style, which may be perceived as motivating by Czech learners. Since NS teachers do not know, at least initially, the learners' mother tongue and culture, they may experience difficulties with understanding the learners and the problems they have, especially those caused by L1 transfer. On the other hand, NNS teachers' communicative competence in English differs substantially, but they can build on the fact that they share a mother tongue with the learners. This enables an NNS teacher, for example, to anticipate problems resulting from the influence of the mother tongue, to prevent ambiguity, and to resolve misunderstandings in communication by the use of Czech, if other tools fail. Moreover, Medgyes (1999) provides research-based evidence that NNS teachers, in comparison with NS teachers, can provide a good learner model for imitation, teach language learning strategies more effectively, and supply learners with more information about the English language. Obviously, the cooperation of an NS teacher and an NNS teacher seems to be the best solution to the benefit of the learners.

On entry to university education, all learners have experienced a number of NNS teachers, some learners also NS teachers. In some schools the turnover of English teachers is high, which is perceived as a problem by schools, parents, and learners. Especially the parents often attribute the slow progress of their children in English to the frequency of the turnover of teachers. A common perception among learners is that they do the same things over and over again. Under such circumstances, progress may be difficult to sustain. In spite of that, if viewed from a different perspective, the changing of teachers brings

new people with a different personality and expertise. With dissimilar teachers learners have an opportunity to experience a variety of teaching styles; thus they are more likely to encounter the style which matches their needs best.

2.2 Research design

In this part of the chapter the research design will be dealt with, including the research aims, the design of the research instrument, and its implementation in the data collection.

The research was designed as a longitudinal retrospective study (Oppenheim, 2001). It is built on the principles of mixed methods research; more specifically, it is the quantitative part of an explanatory study of a sequential design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, pp. 217–218). In this type of study the quantitative data is elicited first, and then a research sample for the qualitative phase is selected (i.e. type QUAN → QUAL). The qualitative study is presented in Chapter 3; it provides deeper insights into the issues that were investigated. In conclusion, the outcomes of both studies are interrelated.

2.2.1 Research questions

The aims of the quantitative study were twofold: (a) to provide a comprehensive characterisation of the subjects' English learning histories; (b) to identify possible correlations between selected variables.

A comprehensive characterisation of the respondents' biographies of learning English will emerge in response to the following research questions (A1–A3):

A1. What is the educational and family background of prospective English language teachers?
A2. In what learning contexts (i.e. formal, non-formal, and informal) did they learn English?
A3. What was the nature of the English learning experience in individual contexts?

Conclusions are formulated in summaries, which appear in Section 2.3.

Apart from having value in themselves, the results of the quantitative study of individual learning histories also constitute background information for the studies which are introduced later in the book (Chapters 4, 5, and 6). On top of that, selected characteristics represent metadata for the CCSSE (Ježková, 2015b).

Furthermore, the relationships between selected variables were investigated (research questions B1–B27 below). The variables were the following: pre-school exposure to English, educational status of the parents, parents' knowledge of foreign languages, attitudes to the English language (i.e. *English* in the questions below), attitudes to learning English at school (i.e. *LE* in the questions below), number of teachers, type of textbook, participation in free-time activities (e.g. taking extra courses or private lessons, i.e. learning in a non-formal

context), engagement in autonomous English-related activities (i.e. learning in an informal context), and stays abroad (i.e. in ESCs). Some of the variables were considered in relation to the basic school and to the secondary school separately; in that case the abbreviations *BS* (for the basic school) and *SS* (for the secondary school) appear in the respective questions. I^{BS} and I^{SS} stand for indices counted to express the frequency and intensity of the subjects' involvement in informal learning (Section 2.3.2.3).

B1.   *Is there a relationship between the pre-school exposure to English and the educational status of the parents?*

B2.   *Is there a relationship between the pre-school exposure to English and the parents' communicative competence in foreign languages?*

B3.   *Is there a relationship between the pre-school exposure to English and the learners´ attitudes to English while at basic school?*

B4.   *Is there a correlation between the attitudes to English (BS) and the attitudes to LE (BS)?*

B5.   *Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (BS) and the number of teachers (BS)?*

B6.   *Is there a correlation between the attitudes to LE (BS) and the number of teachers (BS)?*

B7.   *Is there a relationship between the attitudes to LE (BS) and the type of textbook used?*

B8.   *Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (BS) and the participation in free-time activities?*

B9.   *Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (BS) and stays abroad?*

B10. *Is there a relationship between the attitudes to LE (BS) and stays abroad?*

B11. *Does the participation in free-time activities (BS) correlate with the engagement in autonomous English-related activities (BS)?*

B12. *Does the participation in free-time activities (BS) correlate with the educational status of the parents?*

B13. *Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (BS) and the engagement in autonomous English-related activities (I^{BS})?*

B14. *Is there a correlation between the attitudes to English (SS) and the attitudes to LE (SS)?*

B15. *Is there a correlation between the attitudes to English (SS) and the number of teachers (SS)?*

B16. *Is there a correlation between the attitudes to LE (SS) and the number of teachers (SS)?*

B17. *Is there a relationship between the attitudes to LE (SS) and the type of textbook used?*

B18. *Is there a correlation between the attitudes to English (BS) and the attitudes to English (SS)?*

B19. *Is there a correlation between the attitudes to LE (BS) and the attitudes to LE (SS)?*

B20. *Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (SS) and the participation in free-time activities (SS)?*

B21. *Does the participation in free-time activities (SS) correlate with the engagement in autonomous English-related activities (I^{SS})?*

B22. *Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (SS) and stays abroad?*

B23. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to LE (SS) and stays abroad?

B24. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (SS) and the engagement in autonomous English-related activities (I^{SS})?

B25. Are there correlations between pairs of autonomous English-related activities while at BS?

B26. Are there correlations between pairs of autonomous English-related activities while at SS?

B27. Is there a correlation between the engagement in individual autonomous English-related activities while at basic school (I^{BS}) and while at secondary school (I^{SS})?

2.2.2 Research instrument

In order to elicit the data, a questionnaire was constructed as a research instrument. The basic characteristics of the instrument and its piloting and administration were described in detail in Chapter 1. The 2013 version of the questionnaire contained 62 items, 77 per cent of which were closed. The remaining 23 per cent of the questions were open-ended. The questionnaire was designed in the Czech language to prevent problems with the comprehension of the items. The content of the questionnaire is divided into six sections, which will now be introduced in detail. The first section is introductory and focuses on the respondent and his/her family background. Each of the following sections targets a specific period of the respondents' lives or a specific context of learning.

Section 1 includes items 1 to 9, eliciting the subjects' biodata and their current level of communicative competence in English and other FLs. The descriptors from the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) are provided for the purpose of self-assessment. Furthermore, the questions concern the educational status of the respondents' parents, as well as their communicative competence in FLs, the level of which is to be assessed by the respondents with reference to the same descriptors.

This section consists of five open-ended items (age, region, languages) and four closed items (gender, residence, parents' educational status).

Section 2, involving items 10 to 18, focuses on the subjects' encounters with English in early childhood, i.e. up to the age of six. The questions were formulated to find out whether the respondent was exposed to English in the pre-primary period, who mediated the contact with the language, and how often. Moreover, any course the respondent attended as a child was of interest; specifically, who provided the course, who the teacher was, how frequent the tuition was, for how long the respondent attended the course, and what their perceptions of the course were.

All the items in this section are closed, either categorical or multiple-choice. Because of the nature of the questions, each multiple-choice item includes an "I do not remember" option. The item regarding the perceptions of the course offers the respondent a chance to complement the selected answer with a description.

Section 3 (items 19 to 34) targets the period of primary and lower secondary education, in which Czech learners between the age of six and fifteen attend basic school or after five years at basic school they start an eight-year secondary grammar school programme. The information of interest concerns the subjects' learning English in different contexts (Section 2.1.5) in this time period. As regards the formal context, there are seven items concerning the beginning of formal instruction in English, the number of teachers (both NNSs and NSs) the respondents experienced, the type of textbook they worked with in their English classes, and their attitudes toward the English language and toward learning English at school. Three questions are related to non-formal contexts; they are targeted at the subjects' participation in various language courses or private lessons. There are six items focusing on the respondents' experience of ESCs, i.e. whether they visited such a country, which one, how long the stay was, how they approached their communication with NSs, and what benefits the experience brought.

Most of the items, 12 out of 16, are closed. However, four different formats (Švec, 2009) are used, depending on the nature of the required response: categorical items (e.g. stays abroad), multiple-choice with one possible answer (e.g. type of textbook) or with several possible answers (e.g. reasons for attending a free-time language course), and a Likert-type scale (attitudes to English/learning English). The open-ended items elicit the number of NNS and NS teachers the subjects have experienced, the ESCs they have visited, and the length of their stay(s) abroad in weeks. The items identifying the respondents' attitudes toward English and toward learning English at school offer a chance to add an explanation of why they liked/did not like their lessons of English at school.

Section 4 (items 35 to 52) includes the same questions as the previous section, but the attention is focused on their time at secondary school, which students attend between fifteen and nineteen years of age. On top of that, there are two additional questions asking the respondents about the kind of secondary school they attended and about the maturita exam they passed.

The following section, Section 5 (items 53 to 59), concentrates on the period between the maturita exam and admission to the university. This part of the questionnaire is relevant only to those subjects who underwent at least one gap year; it aims to find out about their English-related experience in this period.

Since the questions are very similar to those in Section 3, the formats of the items are the same. The open-ended items elicit the length of the gap, the ESC(s) they visited, and the length of their stay there. The closed items are either categorical (e.g. whether they studied in a one-year intensive course of English) or multiple-choice with several possible answers (e.g. the benefits they derived from their stay abroad).

Lastly, Section 6 aims to find out about the subjects' experience of English outside the school. It contains two items (60 and 61) in which the respondents are asked to indicate

what they used English for outside school and how often while at basic and secondary school. The frequency was expressed using the following scale:

1–never, 2–occasionally, 3–weekly, 4–daily.

The activities in which the respondents might have used English outside school (Table 2.1) may be divided into three groups. The first group involves comprehension-based activities (a-e) in which the subjects were exposed to target language input and no production was required on their part. The second group contains activities (h-k) in which they used English to interact with other speakers. These activities will be referred to as interaction-oriented in order to differentiate them from those in the first group. The third group comprises specific activities: playing PC games (f), browsing the internet (g), translating (j), and self-studying (m). Browsing the internet might also be included in the first group, since it is mainly about comprehension, but because of its close link to ICT, it is considered as a specific category.

It is specified in the instructions that the subjects should not consider the activities which are somehow related to learning at school (e.g. reading books as a home assignment). The aim is the activity itself, not learning English. However, self-study is included as an option. Obviously, the aim of self-study is to progress in English but the decision to study is autonomous – not initiated by the teacher. The respondents have a chance to complete the list with up to two additional activities they were engaged in but did not find in the list.

Table 2.1

Use of English outside school

(a) Reading magazines
(b) Reading books
(c) Watching TV series, films, videos
(d) Listening to songs in English
(e) Listening to radio programmes (e.g. BBC)
(f) Playing PC games
(g) Browsing the internet
(h) Communication via social networks
(i) E-mail communication
(j) Personal encounters with English-speaking friends
(k) Talking to English-speaking friends via Skype
(l) Translating (e.g. lyrics)
(m) Self-study
(n) Other:
(o) Other:

The last item (62), a multiple-choice question, elicits how the respondents perceive the value of those activities in terms of learning.

Obviously, since the language learning histories of individuals differ, not all the questions will be relevant for all the subjects. There is navigation through the questionnaire – if a respondent was not exposed to English in early childhood, i.e. s/he responded negatively to question number 10, s/he is instructed to continue with question number 19.

The questionnaire was successfully piloted from May to August 2013 (Section 1.2.2.2) and was administered to the first cohort of subjects in October 2013 (Section 1.2.2.3). Several minor changes were made before the second administration: Section 1 was restructured for practical reasons and more questions were added to the self-assessment part. The respondents not only evaluate their level of communicative competence in English, but also assess which aspects of English are their strengths and weaknesses. As a result, the 2014 version contains 70 items.

2.3 Results and discussion – part 1

This part of the chapter aims to answer research questions A1–A3.

2.3.1. Family and educational background of prospective English language teachers

The participants in the main study are 228 NSs of Czech who are at the start of their English language teacher education at three universities (Section 1.3). There are 160 females (70.2%) and 68 males (29.8%); the average age of the subjects is 20.1 years.

2.3.1.1 Family background

Parents' educational status is believed to be a major determinant of the educational attainment of a child. This study revealed the following structure of the respondents' parents' level of education (Figure 2.3). If we consider parents as one group, 71.9 per cent of the parents achieved upper-secondary education, i.e. finished a secondary school with or without the maturita exam, depending on the programme. Then 24.8 per cent of the parents completed tertiary education. The remaining 3.3 per cent of the parents either completed lower-secondary education (0.9%) or no answer was provided (2.4%). Comparing the education of the mothers and fathers, more fathers than mothers achieved the tertiary level of education; the difference is less than 5 per cent (27.2% versus 22.4%).
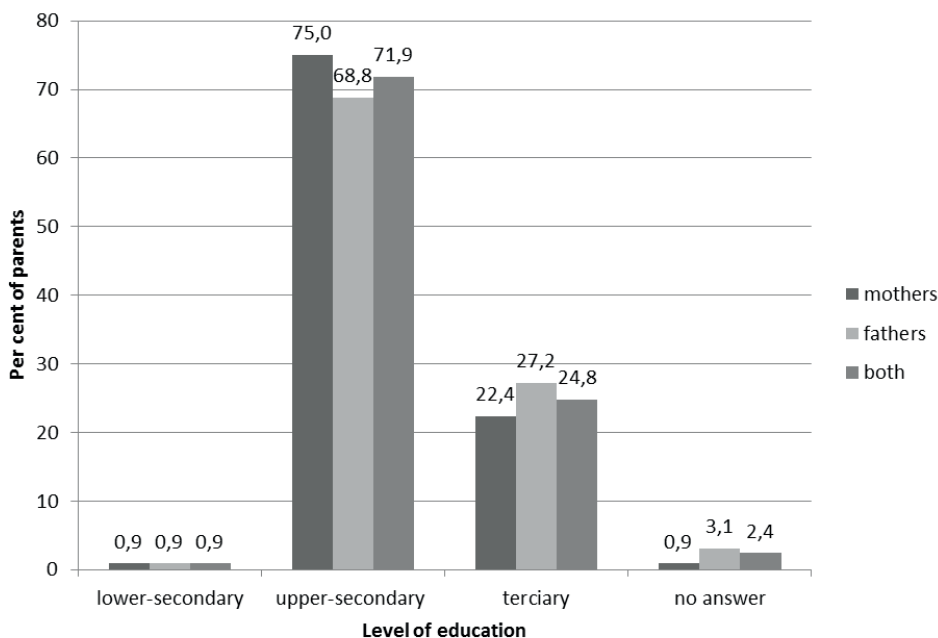
Figure 2.1. Parents' level of education (%).

Regarding the use of FLs by the parents, 81.4 per cent of the respondents' mothers are able to use one FL at least at A1 level; moreover, 41.2 per cent of the mothers can communicate in two FLs. Irrespective of the level, the mothers' first FL is mainly English (32.5%) or Russian (32.0%), or, less frequently, German (15.2%) or other languages such as Spanish, French, and Italian (altogether 1.7%). In comparison, 73.7 per cent of the respondents' fathers can communicate in one FL at A1 level, 38.2 per cent in two FLs. Apart from those who do not use any FLs (26.3%), the first FL of the fathers is Russian (29.8%), English (24.0%), or German (17.9%), and marginally also Spanish, French, or Italian (altogether 2.0%).

The parents of 80 respondents made the decision to expose their children to English before the age of six. It means that 35.1 per cent of the subjects encountered English before they started compulsory school attendance. In most cases, it was between three and five years of age (60.0%) or after the age of five (27.5%). Two respondents (2.5%) reported that their first encounters with English happened even before they were three years old. The rest of the respondents (10%) did not remember the age when they first encountered English.

The exposure to English may have been mediated by various means, including the parents, relatives, teachers, other persons, or the media. The respondents were asked to mark all the relevant answers, which were distributed as indicated in Figure 2.2. Those students (15 out of 80) who provided more than one answer usually reported a parallel

influence of the parents and the teacher or of a human factor plus the media. Obviously, the role of the parents was crucial; they were either directly engaged in exposing their children to English or they indirectly mediated the contact with English, especially by enrolling their children into courses.
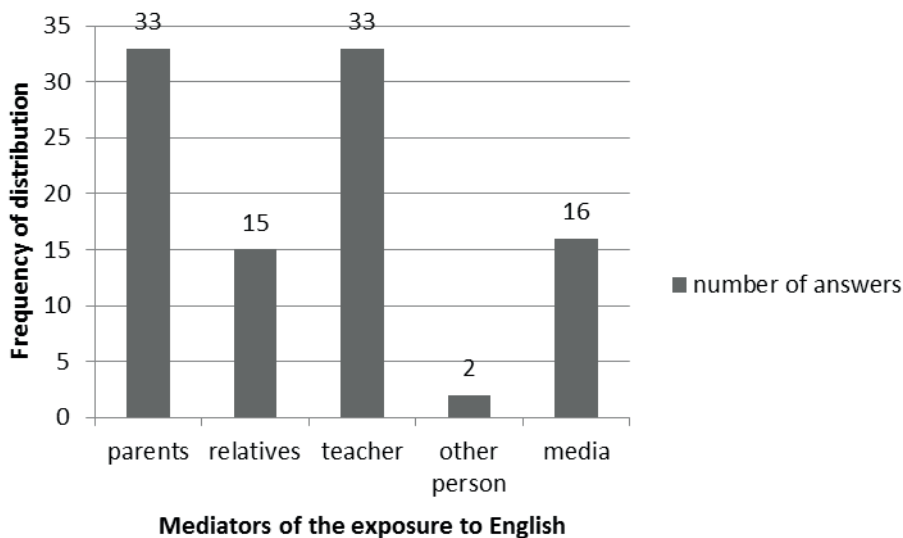
Figure 2.2. Mediators of the exposure to English – frequency of distribution.

Regarding the frequency of exposure, 46.2 per cent of those who encountered English in early childhood reported that the exposure was irregular. 32.5 per cent of the students were exposed to English several times a week; furthermore, 3.8 per cent of the respondents experienced English daily. The remaining 17.5 per cent of the students did not remember the frequency of their encounters with English.

Summary of the section

The figures shed light on the family background of the subjects entering the English language teacher education study programme. Their parents' education is prevailingly upper-secondary (71.9%) and tertiary (24.8%). While the fathers' education in general is higher, the mothers seem to be more inclined to learn FLs and to communicate in them. About a third of the respondents' parents decided to expose them to English in early childhood, and thus 35.1 per cent of the respondents are early starters. The number is relatively high considering the fact that the decision was made at the end of the 1990s, i.e. prior to the expansion of English to pre-primary education. It is because the research cohort is not a representative sample of the population, since only secondary school graduates with a professional interest in English are included.

2.3.1.2 Educational background

After finishing basic school, the subjects of the study graduated from various secondary schools (Figure 2.3); more than half of the students (55.3%) are grammar school graduates, 12.7 per cent of respondents come from a business academy, and 10.5 per cent of the students finished a secondary school of tourism. Nevertheless, there are also students with secondary technical education (4.8%) and graduates from nursing schools (3.5%) and from other types of secondary schools (13.2%).
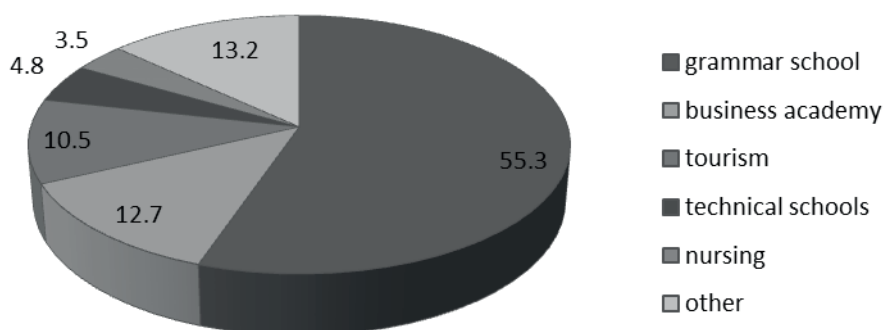
Figure 2.3. Types of secondary schools (%).

All the respondents studied English at the secondary school; however, not all of them studied a second FL. 46.9 per cent of the subjects chose German as their second FL, 17.3 per cent of the students took Spanish classes, and 12.4 per cent of the respondents learnt Russian as a second FL. 1.3 per cent of the subjects studied other languages than the four most frequent ones. Lastly, 13.2 per cent of the respondents did not study a second FL at all (Figure 2.4). On the other hand, 21.1 per cent of the students learnt a third FL prior to entering the university.
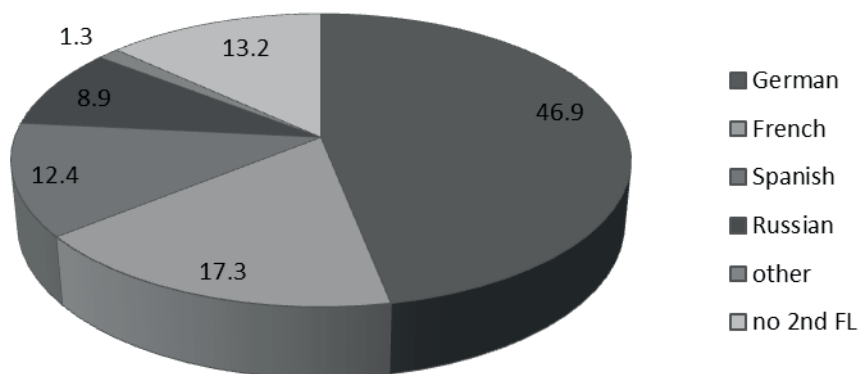
Figure 2.4. The second FL of the respondents (%).

With the exception of one student, all the respondents passed the maturita exam in English, though, as a result of the implementation of the reformed maturita (Section 2.1.5.1.), the exams vary in terms of their types and levels. 24 students passed both the profiling and the common exam. Table 2.2 provides a summary of the results.

Table 2.2

Participation in various versions of the maturita exam and average results

Profiling (school) maturita		Common (state) maturita 2011 or 2012 B2 level		Common (state) maturita 2011 or 2012 B1 level		Common (state) maturita 2013 or 2014 B1 level		No maturita exam	
Students (n)	Average result	Students (n)	Average result	Students (n)	Average result	Students (n)	Average result	Students (n)	Average result
75	1.44	10	1.50	52	1.44	114	1.17	1	-

When entering university education in October 2013 or 2014, the respondents self-assessed their level of communicative competence in English and in their second FL. They referred to the self-assessment descriptors taken from the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001). The results are summarised in Table 2.3. Some of the respondents were not able to self-assess their level or perceived themselves as being in between two levels; those answers are included in the *other answers* column. In the case of the second FL, the 19.8 per cent of the students in the *other answers* category also include those students (13.2%) who did not study a second FL.

Table 2.3

Level of communicative competence in FLs: self-assessment according to the CEFR (%)

English	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	Other answers
	0	0.4	36.0	48.7	10.1	0.4	4.4
Second FL	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	Other answers
	29.8	29.0	18.4	2.6	0	0.4	19.8

Not all the subjects started their university education the same year as that in which they passed the maturita exam. 110 subjects (i.e. 44.7% of the research sample) experienced a break between the maturita exam and entry to the university, which lasted from one (68.2%) to seven years. During the break those subjects attended a one-year intensive course in English (46.4%) or another course (19.1%); they also travelled abroad (20.7%) or studied at a university (13.8%).

Summary of the section

Regarding the subjects' educational background, several issues will be discussed. As concerns their level of communicative competence in English, the common maturita exam results may be used as a criterion, though this is problematic. Since the profiling exam is not standardised, it is not possible to estimate the level of those students who passed this exam. The percentage of students who have certified B2 level is low (4.4%). The majority of students (72.8%) achieved B1 level, but we do not know, however, how many of them would have passed the B2 exam if it had been available. Theoretically, the secondary grammar school students should be capable of doing that since the curricular documents state that learners should attain B2 level in the FL, which they started to learn as their first. Therefore, one would expect that all the grammar school graduates would score very high on the B1 exam, which was not confirmed. Though the prevailing grade was 1, there were 15 students (11.9%) with grade 2 and, surprisingly, even a student with grade 3. Remarkably, not all the grammar school graduates see themselves at B2 level – there are 126 grammar school graduates in the cohort (55.3%) and 50.8 per cent of them self-assessed their level of English as B2, 11.9 per cent as C1, and 0.8 per cent as C2. Consequently, more than one-third of the grammar school graduates (36.5%) perceive themselves as being at B1 level, i.e. at the level of the maturita exam. The reasons seem to be multiple. First, they may be related to the process of self-evaluation; the students may not have been familiar with the descriptors and/or may have had little or no experience of self-assessment of their level of English. Therefore, their self-evaluation does not correspond to their level. Second, though the target level for secondary grammar schools is B2, there may actually be a discrepancy between the projected curriculum on the one hand and the realised and/or acquired curriculum on the other. This may also be influenced by many factors, including the negative backwash effect of the B1 common maturita exam.

The educational background of the majority of the respondents (86.8%) includes some expertise in a second FL. Their self-assessment of the level of their second FL suggests that nearly two-thirds of the subjects (58.8%) are basic users of the second FL (level A1 and A2) and 21.0 per cent of the students are independent users (levels B1 and B2) of any second FL. The data confirmed the position of German, which is the most frequent second FL.

Viewed from the perspective of FL teacher education, i.e. the specialisation the students have chosen, being competent in a second or a third FL is definitely positive. The students will utilise their experience as language learners; obviously, the more languages they have learnt, the richer and more varied the experience is likely to be.

Apart from English and a second FL, the grammar school graduates are also likely to have an educational background in the humanities, unlike the graduates from the other types of schools. Those are the people who decided for a secondary school with a particular professional orientation at the age of fifteen; nevertheless, in the course of their secondary school studies their original professional interests changed. The causes can only be hypothesised; the qualitative study will uncover some of them (Chapter 3).

Interestingly, the path to university studies of English is quite indirect for a high percentage of the students – nearly half of them needed an additional year or more (up to seven years) to commit themselves to studying in an English language teacher education programme.

2.3.2 Contexts of learning English

This section introduces the proportions of students learning English in formal, non-formal, and informal contexts in the Czech environment.

2.3.2.1 Formal context

(a) The length of formal education in English

In the Czech Republic, an FL environment, learners are expected to learn English mainly in the context of formal education. The analysis of the data revealed that, with the exception of four students, all the respondents learnt English at basic school. Consequently, 224 respondents learnt English for two to nine years while at basic school. The majority of them (43.8%) started with English in grade 4, which was the mandatory beginning of FL instruction at that time. Some of the students (altogether 43.4%) started a year or two or three earlier in optional courses offered by schools. Together with four years of English at the secondary school, the length of the formal education of those students ranges from 10 to 13 years. There are students (12.8%), however, whose first FL was one other than English; they either did not choose English or the school did not offer English classes. Those students took English as an optional subject in the higher grades of basic school

and continued studying English at secondary school. The length of their formal education is between six and nine years. Lastly, the four students who did not study English at basic school at all represent 1.8 per cent of the entire research sample; their formal education in English is limited to the four years of their secondary school FL instruction.

Taking the secondary school studies into consideration, the length of the respondents' formal education ranges from four to thirteen years (mean = 10.3, median = 10, mode = 10). The frequency distribution is provided in Figure 2.5.
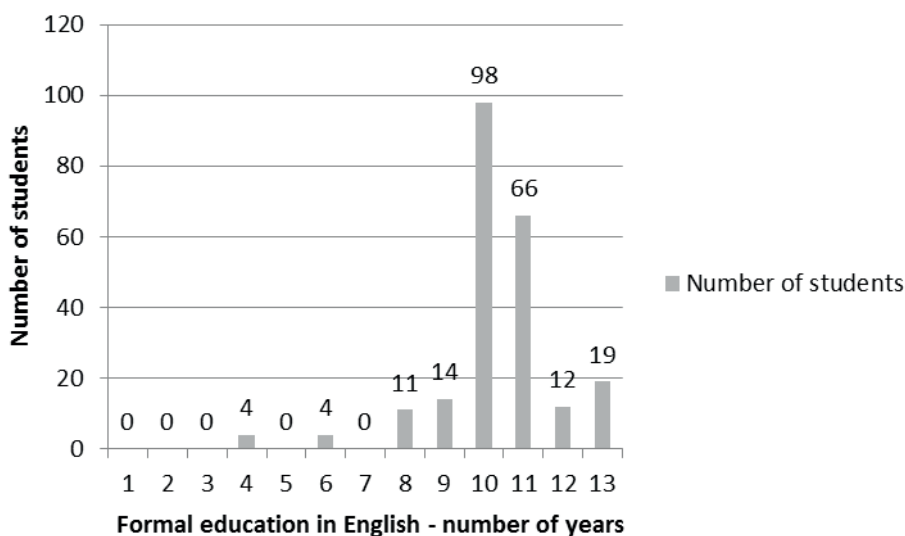
Figure 2.5. The length of the students' formal education in English – frequency distribution.

(b) NNS and NS teachers of English

During their formal education in English, the respondents experienced a diverse number of teachers. For basic school, the numbers varied from one to eight NNS teachers, for secondary school from one to six (Figure 2.6, NA = no answer). The majority of the students (78.4%) were taught by one to three NNS teachers while at basic school. The number is even higher for the secondary school period (86.4%). It is difficult to generalise whether a relatively low number of teachers benefits the learners. On the one hand, there is a potential for maintaining continuity if the lessons are taught by the same teacher or if teachers change at reasonably long intervals so that the learners have time to get used to a new teaching style. On the other hand, there is no possibility of changing things if, for example, a learner's learning style does not match the teacher's way of teaching. For the same reasons, having a higher number of teachers may or may not have a negative impact on the learners and their attitudes toward learning English. The issue was

also explored in this study; the outcomes are presented in Section 2.3.2 and in Section 2.4. Furthermore, some insights into individual students' perceptions of the issue are provided in Chapter 3.
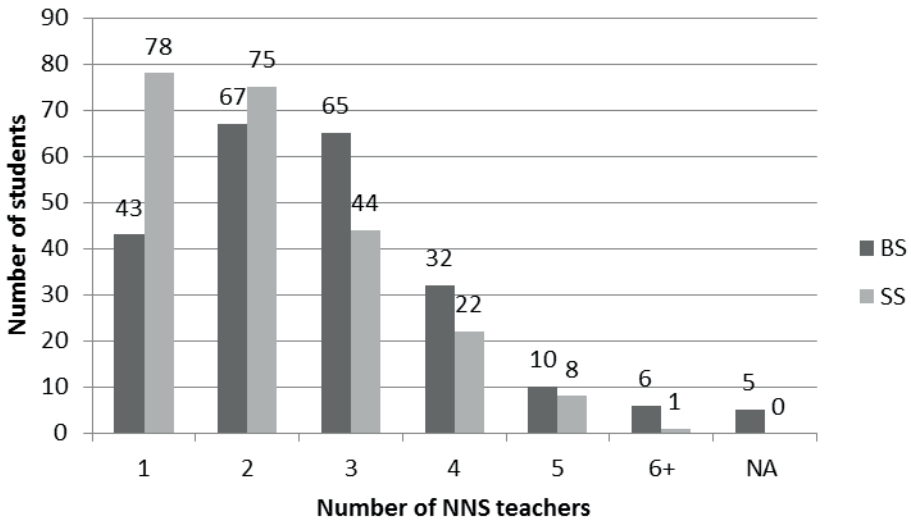
Figure 2.6. Number of NNS teachers the students experienced at basic and secondary school – frequency distribution.

Apart from NNS teachers, some respondents also encountered an NS teacher. While the proportion of the respondents who were taught by an NS is very small while at basic school (7.4%), it reaches 39.5 per cent for the secondary school (Figure 2.7). Those students were exposed to target language input; the influence which this experience might have had on the respondents' attitudes to English and to learning English is investigated in Chapter 3.
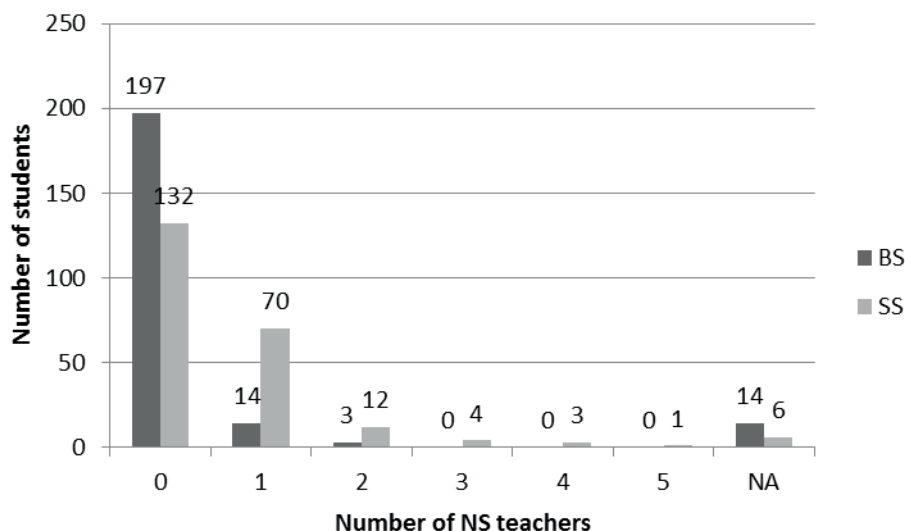
Figure 2.7. Number of NS teachers the students experienced at basic and secondary school – frequency distribution.

(c) Textbook

The textbook is one of the factors in the teaching process, an essential teaching aid in teaching and learning FLs. The data presented in this section show which types of textbooks were preferred by schools approximately in the first decade of this century. While at basic school, 61.3 per cent of the students worked with a textbook published in the Czech Republic, which included instructions and explanations in the Czech language as well as a bilingual dictionary. Only 18.0 per cent of the respondents studied from a monolingual English textbook at school and 2.3 per cent of the students had some experience of both types of textbooks. 18.4 per cent of the respondents did not remember the textbook used at basic school. Regarding the secondary school, the preference for international textbooks of English is clear (77.5%); only a lower percentage of the students (15.4%) worked with a textbook that also used the Czech language. Moreover, 1.8 per cent of the subjects learnt from both types of textbooks and 5.2 per cent of the respondents were not able to answer the question. The potential influence of the type of textbook on the students' attitudes toward learning English is considered in Section 2.4.

(d) Attitudes

Because of the significance of attitudes in learning in general, the quality and the intensity of the respondents' attitudes toward English and learning English were explored through the questionnaire. The item focusing on attitudes was a Likert-type scale complemented by an open-ended question.

The analysis of the data obtained through the scale suggests that while at basic school 91.1 per cent of the respondents had positive (56.7%) or rather positive (34.4%) attitudes to the English language. Only 8.9 per cent of the students had rather negative (8.0%) or negative (0.9%) attitudes. If compared with learning English at basic school, the results seem to correspond (the statistical significance will be explored in Section 2.4); however, the percentage of the respondents with positive (42.3%) or rather positive (36.9%) attitudes is lower (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4

Students' attitudes toward English and learning English at basic school

Attitudes toward:	++	+	–	– –
English (language)	56.7%	34.4%	8.0%	0.9%
Learning English (school subject)	43.2%	36.9%	17.6%	2.3%

The number of the respondents who, irrespective of intensity, reported positive attitudes toward the language while at secondary school is minimal (1.3%); the number of those who had negative attitudes to learning English at this time is 12.7 per cent. The results are presented in Table 2.5. The attitudes to the language seem to correspond with the attitudes to learning English; their relationship will also be investigated in Section 2.4.

Table 2.5

Students' attitudes toward English and learning English at secondary school

Attitudes toward:	++	+	–	– –
English (language)	80.3%	18.4%	0.4%	0.9%
Learning English (school subject)	49.1%	38.2%	8.8%	3.9%

The high percentage of respondents with positive attitudes toward English and learning English is not surprising, given that the subjects were people who decided to study English at a university. It can be assumed that their attitudes were positive at the beginning of their English language teacher education, which implies that the negative attitudes of some of the respondents had been altered. Prior to the investigation of what contributed to the change in the students' attitudes (Chapter 3), the factors determining the attitudes will be presented next further on. The results represent the outcomes of the analysis of the open-ended answers.

Out of 228 respondents, 19.7 per cent did not provide any explanation of why they liked/rather liked the English language while at basic school or not and 7.9 per cent of the answers were irrelevant – the respondents failed to provide a reason why they enjoyed English. The remaining 72.4 per cent of the responses were distributed as follows: 67.2 per cent of them were positive and 5.2 per cent were negative. Similarly, in response to the same question regarding the secondary school period, 20.2 per cent of the students did not answer the question and 6.1 per cent provided an irrelevant answer. The ratio between the positive and negative responses was 71.6 per cent versus 2.2 per cent.

Regarding the subjects' attitudes toward learning English at school, 18 per cent did not explain why they liked/rather liked learning English at basic school. Positive comments were provided by 61.4 per cent of the students; the remaining 20.6 per cent of the responses were negative. The same question about the secondary school period was answered by 79.8 per cent of the students in the following way: 59.6 per cent of the responses were positively oriented, while 15.4 per cent of the answers explained the reasons for not liking English as a subject at secondary school. 4.8 per cent of the respondents provided their reasons both for liking and not liking the school subject.

The analysis of the open-ended items yielded results with a distribution which is consistent with the outcomes summarised in Table 2.4 and Table 2.5. The answers to the open-ended questions were investigated further; content analysis of the students' responses revealed the determiners of their attitudes toward English and learning English at school. While the factors determining the positive attitudes are given in Table 2.6 and Table 2.7, the negative influences are commented on in the text below.

Table 2.6

Determiners of the students' positive attitudes toward English while at basic and secondary school (%)

Factors determining the students' positive attitudes toward English	BS	SS
Features of the English language (especially the sound of English; admiration of the language in preference to other languages)	25.9	11.4
Usefulness of English for communication or for the future	12.8	26.3
Novelty	8.3	0
Culture	2.2	13.2
Perceived achievement and personal goals	4.0	8.3
Reasons rather linked to learning English	14.0	12.3

Table 2.7

Determiners of the students' positive attitudes toward learning English at basic and secondary school (%)

Factors determining the students' positive attitudes toward learning English	BS	SS
Satisfaction with learning English for some reason (English was easy to learn/useful to learn/not demanding/challenging; achievement in terms of knowledge, position in class, grades)	19.3	20.6

Teacher (overall positive evaluation or appreciation of the teacher's personality and/or his/her professional competence)	18.0	21.0
Teaching methods and techniques (they appreciated a variety of techniques or a specific technique, e.g. projects, games, video-based tasks, well-explained subject matter, fun in lessons)	14.5	11.8
Both the teacher and teaching methods and techniques (they valued the teacher and some of their teaching techniques)	7.4	4.4
Features of the English language (some aspects of English, mainly pronunciation)	2.2	1.8

The factors which determine positive attitudes both to the English language and to learning English could be grouped into several broader categories as suggested by the tables above. Contrary to that, the determiners of the negative attitudes to learning English at the basic school were almost exclusively related (93.6%) to the teacher. Only 6.4 per cent of them concerned some aspect of English which the students hated, i.e. mainly grammar, but also listening and speaking. As regards the negative influence of the teachers on the students' attitudes to the school subject, it was reported to stem from: (a) the frequent changing of the teachers and its consequences; (b) teachers' inability to explain the subject matter well, to manage the class effectively, to plan varied and interesting lessons, to design adequately challenging tasks, and to motivate learners. Concerning learning English at the secondary school, the proportion of negative answers is lower, 15.4 per cent. All of them were related to the teacher. The students complained of: unclear presentation of the subject matter, predictable boring lessons, progress that was too slow/too fast, and no demands.

Summary of the section

The length of formal education of the subjects in the study ranged from four to thirteen years (mean = 10.3). During this period the majority of respondents experienced one to three NNS teachers, though some learners were taught by up to eight (BS) or six NNS teachers (SS) depending on the level of education. Additionally, 7.4 per cent of the respondents encountered an NS teacher at basic school; the number increases up to 39.5 per cent for the secondary school. A higher percentage of students experienced an NS teacher while at secondary school and also studied from international textbooks of English – 77.5 per cent compared to 18 per cent at basic school.

Regarding attitudes, the outcomes of the content analysis of the open-ended responses suggest that the individuals' foundations of positive attitudes toward the language are multiple and of an idiosyncratic nature (Table 2.6). While at basic school some learners appreciated the usefulness of English for their interests, e.g. playing PC games or watching films, or were fascinated by a new language. Furthermore, in the initial phase of learning a large group of students was attracted to English by its sound. The question remains, however, of whether this motivational potential was exploited at all; the interviews suggest that pronunciation was not in the teachers' focus.

While they were at secondary school, after several years of experience of the language, the usefulness of English for communication and for the future became the most influential factor (26.3%), followed by the culture factor; for this age group, i.e. fifteen to nineteen, English represents a gateway to the world of the literature and film culture of ESCs.

Regarding attitudes toward learning English, obviously, the influence of the teacher and teaching methods and techniques is enormous, as Table 2.7 implies. The variety of comments suggests major inter-individual differences. To illustrate the variation, several examples will be mentioned: some respondents selected various techniques that made them like the subject; some people appreciated the fun in lessons, while others needed cognitively demanding tasks; a few students valued having a strict teacher, while others did not; several students liked English because it was easy for them, while other learners appreciated the challenges posed by learning the language. Consequently, the results confirm the importance of knowing about individual learners' needs and respecting them in lessons.

The negative influences are related to the teacher. The finding is in essence negative; however, it has a positive side as well – there is a potential for change. It may come with a new teacher or teachers may alter some aspects of their teaching in the course of their professional development. But incongruent changes, i.e. turning negative attitudes to positive, are much more difficult to accomplish under similar conditions than changing the intensity of attitudes. The issue is discussed in Chapter 3.

To conclude, being aware of the factors determining learners' attitudes toward English and learning English is vital because attitudes are closely related to motivation. Reflecting this awareness in the planning and realisation of lessons is crucial for the success of learning.

In order to find out which variables are related to attitudes toward English and learning English, the relationships between attitudes and selected variables are explored in Section 2.4.

2.3.2.2 Non-formal context

Learning English in a non-formal context, i.e. for example at language schools or various clubs, complements the formal education of some learners. The data analysis revealed that it preceded the onset of formal education, ran parallel with it, or followed the completion of their upper-secondary education.

Apparently, non-formal learning concerns only a minority of the respondents. Only 30 students, 13.2 per cent of the total research sample, i.e. 37.5 per cent of those who were exposed to English before the age of six, attended an English course before starting school. Concerning the details of the course, obviously, the respondents did not remember some of them. To summarise, they attended a course for about one year, usually once a week, and the teacher was an NNS. Even though it was their parents' decision to enrol them in an English course and they could hardly influence it, their memories of learning English at pre-school age, if there are any, are positive (22 respondents).

While at basic school, 65 students (28.6%) were involved in some kind of non-formal learning: 20.3 per cent of the respondents attended language courses, 13.2 per cent of the cohort took private lessons, and 4.9 per cent of the subjects experienced both. The numbers decrease for the secondary school period: the overall involvement in non-formal learning is 22.2 per cent of the cohort. The same proportion of the students (13.7%) participated in language courses and in individual lessons; 5.2 per cent of them were involved in both types of activities.

Regarding the reasons why the students participated in various courses in English and took private lessons while at basic and secondary school, they are manifold. The reasons are provided in Table 2.8, together with the percentage of the students who found individual reasons relevant to their own situation.

Table 2.8

Reasons for students' involvement in non-formal learning while at basic and secondary school (%)

Reasons	BS	SS
(a) I did not have a chance to study English at school at that time.	4.5	0
(b) I was quite good at English but I did not have enough opportunities to learn (e.g. to speak).	15.5	16.8
(c) I wanted to improve in those aspects that were problematic for me (e.g. grammar).	20.0	25.7
(d) I wanted to have better marks at school.	1.8	2.7
(e) English was my hobby.	26.4	20.4
(f) I was getting ready for an exam (e.g. school competition, international exams).	3.6	25.7
(g) Because I liked the teacher.	4.5	0
(h) Because of my friends.	5.5	3.5
(i) It was my parents' decision.	12.7	0.9
(j) Other reasons	5.5	4.4

Considering the most frequent answers, the results, quite as expected, confirm that non-formal learning extends opportunities for doing something one wants to do (item e; item f for the secondary school period) or serves a compensatory function (items b and c) – it has a potential to compensate for what formal education fails to provide. While most of the reasons are learner-centred, during the basic school period the parents' influence is still obvious.

The involvement in non-formal learning of English increases in the post-maturita period, i.e. between the maturita exam and entry to the university. Nearly one-third of the cohort, more precisely 31.6 per cent, took either a one-year intensive course in English (22.4%) or some other type of English course (9.2%). Table 2.9 provides a summary of the results.

Table 2.9

Students' involvement in non-formal learning (%)

Pre-school period	Basic school		Secondary school		Post-maturita period
13.2	28.6		22.2		31.6
courses	courses	private lessons	courses	private lessons	courses
13.2	20.3	13.2	13.7	13.7	31.6

Summary of the section

Only a minority of the subjects were involved in non-formal learning; the percentage ranges from 13.2 per cent for the pre-school period to 31.6 per cent for the post-maturita period. The results proved that the value of non-formal learning lies in responding to varied learner needs, e.g. to progress faster, to compensate a lack of knowledge or to pass an exam. A question that remains is, however, why such a relatively high percentage of respondents needed post-maturita courses before entering the university. Chapter 3 will offer some answers.

2.3.2.3 Informal context

Learning in an informal context supplements formal and non-formal education. The extent to which learners are involved in informal learning is likely to differ considerably among individual learners. The participants in the study reported the frequency of doing selected English-related activities (Table 2.1) while at basic and secondary school. They used the following scale: 1–never, 2–occasionally, 3–weekly, 4–daily.

An index of the use of English was counted for each respondent; the index expresses the ratio between the number of activities done very frequently (i.e. daily or weekly) and the number of all the activities (e.g. 5 out of 15 equals 0.33). The index was counted for the period of attendance of basic school (I^{BS}) and secondary school (I^{SS}). The descriptive statistics for both indices are provided in Table 2.10.

Table 2.10

I^{BS} and I^{SS} values

I^{BS}		I^{SS}		$I^{BS} - I^{SS}$ comparison		
min.	0	min.	0	increase: 193 students	min.	0.07
max.	0.60	max.	0.87		max.	0.73
mean	0.23	mean	0.40		mean	0.21
median	0.20	median	0.40	decrease: 13 students	min.	0.07
mode	0.20	mode	0.40		max.	0.33

Furthermore, a histogram of the distribution of both indices is presented in Figure 2.8. While the I^{SS} is normally distributed, the I^{BS} is slightly positively skewed.
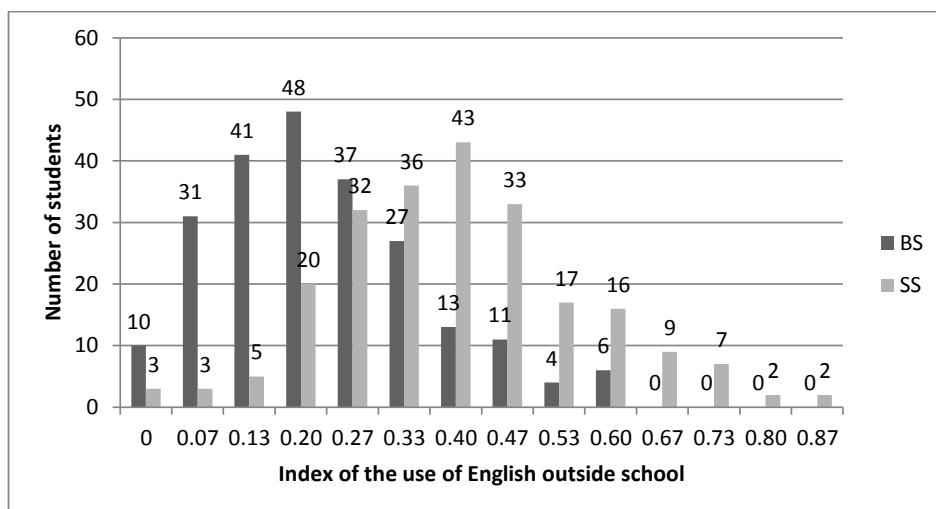
Figure 2.8. Index of use of English outside school during the basic and secondary school period – frequency distribution.

The figures presented above indicate that the intensity of the respondents' use of English outside school increased considerably during the secondary school period, i.e. they were involved in a higher number of activities more frequently compared to the basic school period. To uncover what types of activities the students were engaged in, Tables 2.11 and 2.12 are provided below: numbers 1–4 express frequency (1–never, 2–occasionally, 3–weekly, 4–daily), NA stands for *no answer*.

Table 2.11

Students' involvement in English-related activities while at basic school (%)

	Reading magazines	Reading books	Watching TV series, etc.	Listening to songs	Listening to radio programmes	Playing PC games	Browsing the internet	Communication via social networks	E-mail communication	Meeting English-speaking friends F2F	Skype conversations	Translating (e.g. lyrics)	Self-study
1	54.8	73.2	11.9	0.9	79.8	21.9	2.6	29.4	57.4	63.2	80.7	18.9	32.0
2	38.2	22.8	58.3	8.3	15.8	35.1	33.8	42.1	35.5	27.2	12.7	46.4	41.7
3	6.7	3.1	20.6	28.1	3.1	22.4	31.6	20.2	4.4	5.3	4.9	25.9	19.3
4	0	0	8.3	61.0	0.9	19.7	31.1	7.9	1.8	3.9	1.3	7.9	3.5
NA	0.3	0.9	0.9	1.7	0.4	0.9	0.9	0.4	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.9	3.5

The results in Table 2.11 show that while at basic school, the students were in contact with English especially through listening to songs: a high percentage of the students listened to songs daily (61.0%) or weekly (28.1%), conversely, a very low percentage listened to English songs occasionally (8.3%) or not at all (0.9%). Exposure to English was also provided by the internet, though the distribution of relative frequency is slightly different compared to the previous variable: a very similar percentage (33.1% to 33.8%) of the respondents reported that they spent time browsing the internet daily, weekly, or occasionally. Only 2.6 per cent of the students did not browse the internet while at basic school. The everyday contact with English during this period was mediated through playing PC games: interestingly, the percentage of daily players (19.7%) is lower than the percentage of those who never played PC games in English (21.9%), which is, at the same time, close to the percentage of the students who played weekly (22.4%). The highest number of students played only occasionally (35.1%).

The rest of the activities were performed daily by less than 10 per cent of the students; however, the lowest scores were obtained for reading books or magazines – no students reported daily reading, and the percentage of the respondents who read in English weekly is also very low. The frequency distribution is similar to listening to radio programmes, e-mail communication, face-to-face communication, and Skype conversations; nevertheless, there was a percentage of the students, albeit a very low one (0.9% to 3.9%), who reported daily engagement in those activities.

Another pattern of frequency distribution is observed for the basic school period: less than 10 per cent of the answers are found in the *daily* category and, significantly, the highest percentage of the answers is *occasionally*. This pattern applies to the following activities: watching TV series, films, and videos in English, communicating via social networks, translating lyrics, and self-studying.

As reported earlier, the secondary school period is characterised by an overall increase in the students' use of English outside school. Consequently, there are also changes in the frequency distribution of individual activities (Table 2.12). The percentage of the answers in the *never* category decreased for all the activities (for reading books from 73.2% to 14.5%), with the exception of playing PC games. The number of those who never played PC games while at secondary school increased from 21.9 per cent to 33.8 per cent.

Table 2.12

Students' involvement in English-related activities while at secondary school (%)

	Reading magazines	Reading books	Watching TV series, etc.	Listening to songs	Listening to radio programmes	Playing PC games	Browsing the internet	Communication via social networks	E-mail communication	Meeting English-speaking friends F2F	Skype conversations	Translating (e.g. lyrics)	Self-study
1	11.9	14.5	0.4	0	40.7	33.8	0.4	7.0	22.4	26.7	55.2	4.4	8.8
2	58.3	55.1	8.8	3.9	44.3	39.0	7.5	35.1	51.8	55.2	31.5	35.1	37.3
3	25.0	20.7	38.2	8.8	9.7	11.9	19.8	28.9	16.6	11.9	10.2	37.7	35.5
4	3.5	8.8	51.3	85.5	4.4	14.0	71.0	28.1	8.3	5.3	1.8	21.9	13.2
NA	1.3	0.9	1.3	1.8	0.9	1.3	1.3	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.3	0.9	5.2

Similarly to the basic school period, the students mainly encountered English through daily experience of listening to songs (85.5%) and browsing the internet (71%). The proportion of the students involved in the two activities increased by 40 per cent and by 130 per cent respectively. Unlike the previous period, watching TV series, movies, and videos became an important source of English input – for 51.3 per cent of the respondents it was an everyday free-time activity after the age of fifteen.

Regarding social networks, these were the most frequently used means of communication with speakers of English; 57 per cent of the cohort communicated via this sort of media daily or weekly. The remaining types of communication, both face-to-face and ICT-mediated, were not that frequent.

Translating lyrics was a daily or weekly activity of 59.6 per cent of the respondents, which corresponds to the high percentage of very frequent listeners to English songs (94.3%). Interestingly, autonomous learning, i.e. self-study, was reported by 13.2 per cent of the students as a daily occupation and by as many as 35.5 per cent of them as a weekly activity. These people are driven by a range of motives. With reference to Section 2.3.2.2, the driving forces may include pursuing personal goals (e.g. getting ready for an international exam), achieving success, enjoying studying English, appreciating the usefulness of English, etc.

Summary of the section

Learning in an informal context was part of the subjects' everyday life, though they differed considerably in the frequency and intensity of their use of English. Fluent communication in the language represents opportunities for implicit learning, which in the long run is more valuable than explicit learning. Therefore, those respondents with extensive involvement in activities requiring communication in English might eventually achieve a higher level of proficiency. Possible effects of the extensive use of English outside school on selected

features of the subjects' pronunciation, grammar, and discourse are investigated in Chapter 6 of this book.

The results show that the students used English in their life for some reason even while at basic school, at least occasionally. The extent to which they used English in the secondary school period increased considerably. This finding is valuable, especially for educational practice in terms of motivational strategies; it confirms that making the curriculum and the teaching materials relevant to the students, a strategy recommended by Dörnyei (2001), is potentially very powerful. Two steps should be taken. First, it is important to know what the learners' needs, goals, and interests are and then it is recommended to implement those in the curriculum as far as possible. Second, the subject matter should be related to the everyday experiences and backgrounds of the students.

2.3.2.4 Target culture context

Nowadays, it is not exceptional that learners of English spend some time in their lives in an ESC. Concerning the cohort, 49.6 per cent of the respondents had this chance. 25.5 per cent of the students experienced a stay in an ESC while at basic school. For obvious reasons, they mostly visited the United Kingdom (91.1%) or the USA (8.9%). The percentage of the students who visited an ESC while at secondary school increased to 36.6 per cent. They mainly travelled to the UK (89.2%), but also to the USA and Canada (altogether 10.8%). Furthermore, 10.1 per cent of all the subjects spent some time in an ESC (the UK 78.2%, the USA 13.1%, Australia and New Zealand 8.7%) after passing the maturita exam.

The reasons for travelling to ESCs were diverse. Before the age of 15, i.e. while at basic school, the subjects (25.5% of the cohort) mainly participated in school trips (75.0%), and less often they visited an ESC with their family (10.7%). Marginally, they took a course in English (3.6%) or they had a different reason for visiting an ESC (10.7%). The motivation of the students who travelled to an ESC while at secondary school (36.6% of the cohort) was the following: a school trip (59.0%), family holiday (10.8%), language course (8.4%), travelling with friends (6.0%), work (2.4%), and other (13.2%).

A stay in an ESC brings a need to communicate with NSs of English. This challenge may be approached differently by different individuals. The biggest proportion of the students (60.7%) who visited an ESC as basic school learners reported that they communicated with NSs only if it was necessary. About a third of those students (30.4%) were proactive and searched for opportunities to talk to NSs. There were students, however, who avoided communication with NSs (8.9%). The approach of the respondents who travelled to an ESC as secondary school students differs: the number of students who communicated with NSs only if it was necessary decreased (51.8%), as did the number of those who avoided communication with NSs (2.4%). Consequently, a higher percentage of students

were active in finding opportunities to interact with NSs (45.8%). The differences may be attributed to the effects of maturation and to a higher level of communicative competence.

When communicating with NSs, the priority of 58.9 per cent of the subjects who had a stay in an ESC while at basic school was to get their meaning across at any cost. 28.6 per cent of them tried to apply the knowledge learnt at school, and 12.5 per cent mainly wanted to avoid mistakes. Compared with the opinions of those who visited an ESC while at secondary school, the relative frequency distribution is slightly different. 50.6 per cent of the students reported the priority of negotiating meaning using any available means. 38.6 per cent of those students attempted to use the language they acquired at school. Lastly, 10.8 per cent claimed that they primarily wanted to avoid making a mistake. Those students' consciousness of mistakes, which might have been facilitated by an overemphasis on correctness in school lessons of English, prevented them from risk-taking in interaction with NSs. Obviously, personality features should also be taken into consideration, not only the introvert-extrovert dimension but also willingness to communicate in general.

Since staying in an ESC may have an impact on learners in both a positive and a negative sense, it was also explored in the study. The respondents were asked to choose all the relevant items from a list of possible effects of a stay in the target language environment Table 2.9. The relative frequency distribution was counted for all the listed effects for the stays during the basic school period, secondary school period, and post-maturita period (SS+). A summary of the results is provided in Table 2.13.

Table 2.13

Perceived effects of stays in ESCs in various life periods (%)

Benefits	BS	SS	SS+
(a) Getting experience of real-life communication in English	29.8	22.5	17.2
(b) Becoming more self-confident when communicating in English	9.3	14.8	18.2
(c) Motivation to learn English more intensively	19.2	18.3	17.2
(d) Experiencing the target culture	24.5	22.9	16.2
(e) Progress in English	10.6	11.0	14.1
(f) New friends	6.0	8.8	14.1
(g) No benefits	0	0	0
(h) Other benefits	0.6	1.4	2.0
(i) Negative experience	0	0.3	1.0

The results show that all the respondents found their stays in ESCs beneficial. Furthermore, they predominantly experienced the positive impact of staying in an ESC. Negative answers represent less than one per cent of all the answers for the secondary school period and one per cent of the answers regarding the post-maturita period.

The summary implies that the perceived impact of visits to ESCs varies in different life phases. Those who travelled to an ESC while at basic school, presumably for the first time

in their life, appreciated getting experience of real-life communication in English most. Moreover, they also valued the opportunity to experience the target culture. After the stay, they felt motivated to learn English more intensively. The respondents who had a chance to visit an ESC while at secondary school found the stay motivating for their subsequent study of English. Moreover, they benefited from learning about the culture of the respective ESC. The respondents who spent time in ESCs after the maturita exam especially appreciated becoming more self-confident when communicating in English. Additionally, they valued the same benefits as those who experienced ESCs as basic school learners. Furthermore, they also appreciated their progress in English and making new friends.

As concerns progress in English, only the respondents who stayed in an ESC while at secondary school or after the maturita exam (i.e. 96 people) were asked to respond to the question. Only 25 of them (26.0%) perceived progress in English as a benefit of the target culture experience. Regardless of the length of their stay in an ESC, they reported having improved various aspects of their English (Table 2.14).

Table 2.14
Perceived progress in English after staying in ESCs in various life periods (%)

Progress in English	SS	SS+
a) I started to understand better what people say.	16.9	17.4
b) I managed to overcome barriers to speaking.	14.5	14.5
c) My spoken English became more fluent.	16.1	13.1
d) I started to use previously learnt vocabulary actively.	13.8	10.1
e) I extended my vocabulary.	14.5	15.9
f) I became more confident in using the grammar I studied before.	12.1	13.0
g) I acquired new grammar structures.	4.8	10.2
h) My pronunciation became more native-like.	7.3	5.8

The distribution of the answers reflects interpersonal differences among the participants regarding their level of communicative competence in English at the time of the visit to an ESC, the length of the stay, the amount of interaction with NSs they experienced, and personality features. Therefore, only about a quarter of the respondents in question perceived progress in English as a benefit. Quite as expected, the biggest proportion of the students reported improved comprehension but also effects on fluency (while at secondary school) and vocabulary. Interestingly, they perceived the least positive impact as being on grammar and pronunciation. It may be attributed to the length of their stay in an ESC, which might not have been long enough to develop those two aspects of English.

Summary of the section

To conclude, the results confirmed the value of experiencing the target culture, especially its motivational potential. During individual phases of the lives of learners, stays in ESCs

generate incentives which energise their motivation to continue learning. Furthermore, under favourable conditions that depend on the factors mentioned above, a stay in the target culture environment is also likely to bring about progress in English. Nevertheless, expectations should be realistic.

2.4 Results and discussion – part 2

The aim of this section is to answer research questions B1–B27, i.e. to report identified relationships between the variables that were investigated (a 0.05 level of statistical significance was used). While the p-value is reported below, the other relevant values are presented in Appendix 6 (questions B1–B24) and in Appendix 7 (questions B25–B27).

2.4.1 Identified relationships

This section presents the relationships which were identified as statistically significant.

B1. Is there a relationship between the pre-school exposure to English and the educational status of the parents?

If considered separately, the relationship between the mothers' or fathers' educational status and the pre-school exposure of their children to English did not appear to be statistically significant. However, when taken as a single variable, the influence of the parents' level of education on the pre-school exposure was confirmed (p=0.0462).

The finding implies that parents with a higher educational status are aware of the importance of English in contemporary society and are involved in decisions regarding their children's FL learning. This is consistent with the research results presented in Section 2.1.4 and with the findings concerning the active role of parents in mediating the experience of English (Section 2.3.1.1). The parents probably perceive the early exposure of their children to English as a means of achieving a high level of proficiency. Therefore, they seem to be influenced by commonly shared myths regarding the effects of an early start more than by the research outcomes, which are either inaccessible to them or are outweighed by the "the sooner the better" opinion of the general public.

B2. Is there a relationship between the pre-school exposure to English and the parents' communicative competence in foreign languages?

The number of languages which the respondents' mothers speak is related to the pre-school exposure (p=0.0191), as is the total number of languages spoken by both parents (p=0.0116).

The conclusion suggests the importance of mothers' communicative competence in FLs, as well as that of mothers and fathers combined. Being users of several FLs, they are

aware of the benefits of knowing FLs. Consistently with the argument formulated above, the parents probably perceive an opportunity to be in contact with English from pre-school age as an advantage. That is why they expose their children to English in early childhood, ignoring possible negative effects, e.g. the impact of inappropriate methodology, which may be used in courses of various kinds.

B12. Does the participation in free-time activities (BS) correlate with the educational status of the parents?

Similarly to the previous question, the same clusters of activities were investigated in relation to the educational status of mothers and fathers separately and of both parents altogether.

Learning English in a non-formal context, i.e. learning in English courses and/or private lessons, turned out to correlate with the educational status of the parents, even if stays abroad were included in the cluster. If the activities are taken separately, the results are as follows. While the level of education of the respondents' mothers positively influences the participation both in language courses (p=0.0190) and in private lessons (p=0.0471), the respondents' fathers' educational status influences the latter only, though more significantly (p=0.0190). If the education of both parents is considered together, the relationship is positive for both types of activities (p=0.0465, p=0.0063). Contrary to that, a stay abroad is in no way related to the educational status of the parents.

While participation in free-time activities is not linked to the attitudes to English of the learners (B8), it does depend on their parents' educational status. The more highly-educated parents tend to enrol their children in courses or private lessons. The question is, however, whether this is in concord with their children's needs. The outcomes of earlier research in this area (Section 2.1.4.1) suggest that more highly-educated parents tend to be effective in providing assistance to their children with home preparation thanks to their ability to recognise their immediate needs. This makes us believe that parents with a higher educational status may also be sensitive to the needs of their children when making decisions about their involvement in free-time activities. The analysis of the reasons for participation in free-time activities (Table 2.8) supports this belief. More in-depth insights into individual learners' English learning biographies will be provided in Chapter 3.

B4. Is there a correlation between the attitudes to English (BS) and the attitudes to LE (BS)?

The relationship between the attitudes to English and the attitudes to learning English while at basic school appeared to be very strong and positive (p<0.0001).

Thus, developing positive attitudes toward learning English is very likely to enhance the development of positive attitudes toward the English language and vice versa.

B6. Is there a correlation between the attitudes to LE (BS) and the number of teachers (BS)?

The correlation between the attitudes toward learning English while at basic school and the number of NNS English teachers appeared to be positive (p=0.0493). It is important to mention, however, that the statistical significance was confirmed only if the attitudes were treated as a numerical variable (a t-test could not be used because of the zero variability of the second sample). Therefore, the finding should not be overestimated.

Unlike the attitudes to the English language, the attitudes toward learning English while at basic school are linked to the number of NNS teachers. Having a higher number of teachers seems conducive to the development of positive attitudes to learning English: different teachers bring a variety of personal characteristics, language models, and teaching styles. As a consequence, a new teacher will undoubtedly establish new conditions for learning, which is a necessary prerequisite for changing learners' negative attitudes to learning English (Chapter 3).

B13. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (BS) and the engagement in autonomous English-related activities (I^{BS})?

The attitudes toward the English language at basic school appeared to be related to the engagement in autonomous English-related activities (p=0.0191). However, the average I^{BS} is significantly higher for those with positive attitudes (0.2340) than for those with negative ones (0.1800).

The results indicate, as expected, that positive attitudes to English are conducive to the use of the language outside school: those with positive attitudes are involved in a higher number of activities and more frequently than those with negative attitudes. Consequently, working on positive attitudes to the language is likely to facilitate communication in English later. This finding confirms the importance of affective aims in the initial phase of teaching and learning English.

B14. Is there a correlation between the attitudes to English (SS) and the attitudes to LE (SS)?

The relationship between the attitudes to English and the attitudes to learning English while at secondary school appeared to be very strong and positive (p<0.0001).

Similarly to the basic school period, the attitudes toward English and the attitudes toward learning English while at secondary school are tightly linked. Supporting the development of positive attitudes to the English language is likely to influence attitudes to learning English in a positive manner and vice versa.

B18. Is there a correlation between the attitudes to English (BS) and the attitudes to English (SS)?

The correlation between the attitudes toward English while at basic school and while at secondary school appeared to be very strong and positive (p<0.0001).

The finding suggests that the attitudes toward English which the learners develop while at basic school tend to continue with the same quality and intensity during the secondary school period. This brings us back to the importance of affective aims in the initial stage of language learning.

B19. Is there a correlation between the attitudes to LE (BS) and the attitudes to LE (SS)?

Correspondingly to the previous item, the attitudes to learning English at basic school correlated positively with the attitudes to learning English while at secondary school (p=0.0151).

Obviously, the attitudes to learning English, which were established while at basic school, have a tendency to persist into the secondary school period.

B24. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (SS) and the engagement in autonomous English-related activities (I^{SS})?

The relationship between the attitudes toward English while at secondary school and engagement in autonomous English-related activities appeared to be statistically significant (p=0.0039).

Similarly to the relationship between these variables for basic school learners (B13), it is also positive for secondary school learners. Consequently, those students who are involved in autonomous English-related activities hold positive attitudes to English, and, conversely, students with positive attitudes to English tend to use English for communication outside school.

B25. Are there correlations between pairs of autonomous English-related activities while at basic school?

For the period of basic school attendance, a number of relationships were identified; the correlation matrix is presented in Appendix 7 and in Table 2.15. Though the 0.05 level of statistical significance was used, a high proportion of correlations meet the criterion of the 0.01 level of statistical significance.

Regarding the index of use of English outside school while at basic school (I^{BS}), very strong positive relationships (p<0.0001) were identified between the index and all the individual variables (Table 2.1 and Table 2.15). This finding allows us to make inferences concerning the individual students' overall involvement in informal learning on the basis of knowing the score for a single activity and vice versa.

Furthermore, whether a selected activity correlated with all the other variables was also investigated. A summary of the results is provided in Table 2.15; all the statistically significant relationships that were identified were positive (+ denotes a positive relationship, ++ a very strong positive relationship, i.e. $p<0.0001$).

Table 2.15

Correlations identified between pairs of variables for the basic school period (BS)

BS	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m
(a) Reading magazines													
(b) Reading books	+												
(c) Watching TV series, films, etc.	+	++											
(d) Listening to songs in English	+		++										
(e) Listening to radio programmes	+	+	++										
(f) Playing PC games			++	+									
(g) Browsing the internet			++	++	+	++							
(h) Communication via social networks	+	+	++	+	++	+	++						
(i) E-mail communication	+	+	+		+		++	++					
(j) F2F com. in English with friends	+		+				+	++	++				
(k) Skype conversations		+	+		+	+	+	++	++	++			
(l) Translating (e.g. lyrics)	+		++	+	++		+	+	+	+	+		
(m) Self-study	+	++	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	++	

The results suggest that there are two variables, watching TV series/films and communicating through social networks, which correlate with all the other variables (highlighted grey cells in Table 2.15). Concerning the types of activities, watching TV series/ films belongs to the group of comprehension-based activities (Section 2.2.2). Within the comprehension cluster of activities, nearly all the variables correlate mutually; however, no relationships were identified between listening to songs in English and reading books, or listening to songs and listening to radio programmes. Compared to that, in the interaction-oriented group of activities, correlations were identified between all the possible pairs of variables. Apart from two relationships, all of them were revealed as being very strong.

As regards the activities in Group 3, playing PC games turned out to be distinctive in that it showed the lowest number of correlations with the other variables: there appeared to be very strong relationships with browsing the internet and with watching TV series/films, and, moreover, relationships with listening to songs in English, communication via social networks, and Skype conversations in English. Playing PC games is the only variable which does not correlate with self-studying.

Browsing the internet, on the other hand, appeared to correlate with all the variables except for reading magazines and books.

Interestingly, both translating and self-studying were shown to correlate with the majority of variables: the exceptions include non-existent relationships between translating and reading books, translating and playing PC games, and, lastly, self-studying and playing PC games.

The findings suggest that if the learners use English while at basic school, they tend to be involved in a number of activities. Especially, watching TV series/films and communicating through social networks may function as an indicator of the learners' involvement in informal learning. Furthermore, the learners' engagement in any comprehension-based activity implies their engagement in other activities. Because of the non-existence of correlations, we cannot make predictions about the learners' reading books or listening to radio programmes on the basis of knowing about their frequency of listening to songs. Within the cluster of interaction-oriented activities, such predictions may be formulated: a learner who uses one mode of communication is likely to use various modes, both face-to-face and technology-mediated. The results also confirmed the specific nature of playing PC games – though in terms of communication in English it may be perceived as a comprehension-based activity, it actually facilitates interaction.

B26. Are there correlations between pairs of autonomous English-related activities while at secondary school?

The correlations which were identified between the pairs of variables for the period of secondary school attendance are presented in Appendix 7 and in Table 2.16. The statistical significance was investigated at the 0.05 level; however, a majority of relationships turned out to be significant at the 0.01 level as well.

As concerns the index of the use of English outside school while at secondary school (I^{SS}), very strong positive relationships ($p<0.0001$) were identified between the index and all the variables (Table 2.1 and Table 2.16), with one exception – playing PC games. The relationship is quite strong anyway. Similarly to the results for the basic school period, we may draw conclusions about the individual students' overall engagement in informal learning on the basis of knowing about the frequency of doing a single activity and vice versa.

Furthermore, similarly to the basic school period, whether a selected variable correlated with all the other variables was also researched. In comparison with the basic school period, the number of relationships which were found statistically significant was much lower. Moreover, not all the correlations were positive; the analysis revealed two negative relationships. Table 2.16 provides a summary of the results (+ denotes a positive relationship, ++ a very strong positive relationship, i.e. $p<0.0001$, – a negative correlation).

Table 2.16

Correlations identified between pairs of variables for the secondary school period (SS)

SS	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m
(a) Reading magazines													
(b) Reading books													
(c) Watching TV series, films, etc.		+											
(d) Listening to songs in English			++										
(e) Listening to radio programmes	++	+											
(f) Playing PC games	−		+										
(g) Browsing the internet		+	++	+		+							
(h) Communication via social networks	+	++	+		++		++						
(i) E-mail communication	++				+		+	++					
(j) F2F com. in English with friends	++				+		+	++	++				
(k) Skype conversations	+	+			+	+	+	++	++	++			
(l) Translating (e.g. lyrics)	+	+	+	+				+					
(m) Self-study	++	++			+	−		+	+	+	+	++	

Unlike the basic school period, there is no single variable which correlates with all the other ones. In the group of comprehension-based activities, only four relationships were identified as statistically significant, compared to nine in the basic school period. Contrary to that, the relationships in the group of the interaction-oriented activities persisted, the majority of them being very strong.

Playing PC games was confirmed as being a distinctive activity for two reasons: first, the lowest number of correlations with the other variables was uncovered; second, two

negative correlations were identified in relation to playing PC games. Consequently, the analysis revealed that three positive relationships persisted: playing PC games was shown to correlate with browsing the internet, watching TV series/films, and Skype conversations in English. Furthermore, playing PC games turned out to correlate negatively with reading magazines and with self-studying.

The relationships between browsing the internet and the other activities changed as well in comparison with the basic school period. Links to listening to radio programmes, translating, and self-studying were not identified; conversely, the relationship with reading books was newly recognised.

Changes were also observed as far as the links between translating and the other variables are concerned: translating correlated only with all the comprehension-based activities, except for listening to radio programmes, then with communication via social networks and with self-studying. By the same token, in the secondary school period the number of relationships between self-studying and the other variables decreased. There appeared to be no link between self-studying and watching TV series/films, listening to English songs, and browsing the internet. Remarkably, the non-existence of a relationship between self-studying and playing PC games in the basic school period turned into a negative correlation.

B27. Is there a correlation between the engagement in individual autonomous English-related activities while at basic school (I^{BS}) and while at secondary school (I^{SS})?

The relationships between variables representing the basic school period and those representing the secondary school period were investigated, thus providing a longitudinal perspective. The correlations which were identified are presented in Appendix 7 and in Table 2.17.

There are two obvious findings: first, involvement in a selected activity while at basic school correlated with involvement in the same activity while at secondary school ($p < 0.0001$; highlighted grey cells in Table 2.17). Second, there exist pairs or clusters of activities which correlate (very) strongly with each other both concurrently and successively: prevailingly very strong relationships were identified in the cluster of four interaction-oriented activities (the large highlighted area in Table 2.17). Playing PC games turned out to be tightly linked with browsing the internet; similarly, watching TV series/films was found to correlate with listening to English songs (the two small highlighted areas in Table 2.17). Moreover, there is an obvious link between these two pairs of activities.

Table 2.17

Identified correlations between pairs of variables for the basic and secondary school period

SS \ BS	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m
(a) Reading magazines	++								+	+			+
(b) Reading books	+	++	+		+			+					++
(c) Watching TV series, films, etc.			++	++		+	+					+	
(d) Listening to songs in English			+	++			+					+	
(e) Listening to radio programmes	+				++				+				+
(f) Playing PC games		+	+	+		++	++			+			
(g) Browsing the internet			+	++		++	++	+		+	+		+
(h) Communication via social networks	+	+	+		+	+	+	++	++	++	++		+
(i) E-mail communication	++							++	++	++	+		
(j) F2F com. in English with friends	+							++	++	++	++		
(k) Skype conversations		+			+			++	++	++	++		
(l) Translating (e.g. lyrics)	+		++	+								++	+
(m) Self-study	+				+				+	+			++

Moreover, further patterns of links were discovered. For example, reading books while at basic school (column b) appeared to correlate with the following activities done while at secondary school: reading books, playing PC games, communication via social networks, and Skype conversations in English.

The findings confirmed that there were very strong links between the activities done while at basic school and their counterparts in the secondary school period. Therefore, predictions regarding the learners' future behaviour, i.e. their involvement in a particular activity, may be formulated on the basis of diagnosing their habits connected with using English in real life while at basic school.

Moreover, the analysis revealed both concurrent and successive correlations in the group of interaction-oriented activities; this finding allows us to make inferences about the learners' current and future levels of interaction in English. Similar inferences may be

constructed about two pairs of variables: watching TV series/films and listening to English songs and playing PC games and browsing the internet.

The learners' future use of English may be anticipated on the basis of the correlations which were identified between the two sets of variables.

2.4.2 Non-existent relationships

This section presents the relationships which were not identified as statistically significant.

B3. Is there a relationship between the pre-school exposure to English and the learners´ attitudes to English while at basic school?

Some of the benefits of an early start which are presented in the relevant literature are linked to the affective domain: if the learners are exposed to an FL early, they do not develop negative attitudes toward the target language and the target culture (Section 2.1.2). Pre-school exposure to English in the FL environment does not seem to contribute to the development of positive attitudes. The reasons may be several; only 35.1 per cent of the respondents were exposed to English before the age of six and nearly half of them reported that the exposure was irregular (Section 2.3.1.1). Consequently, the exposure may not have been significant enough to have influenced their attitudes toward English.

B5. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (BS) and the number of teachers (BS)?

B15. Is there a correlation between the attitudes to English (SS) and the number of teachers (SS)?

B16. Is there a correlation between the attitudes to LE (SS) and the number of teachers (SS)?

The number of teachers does not influence learners' attitudes toward the English language while both at basic and secondary school; they are most probably mainly determined by language-related factors (Table 2.6) that are independent of the teacher or the number of teachers in itself is not influential – it is more significant how individuals perceive the changing of teachers and its consequences. Some insights into individual learners' perceptions are provided in Chapter 3.

While at secondary school the number of teachers does not influence learners' attitudes toward learning English. Being more mature, learners seem to be unaffected by the turnover of teachers. Furthermore, they might have found sources of positive attitudes outside the formal educational context.

B7. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to LE (BS)
and the type of textbook used?

B17. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to LE (SS)
and the type of textbook used?

Though the textbook is an indispensable part of teaching and learning English at school, it does not seem significant, however, which type of textbook, monolingual or bilingual, the learners use. The type of textbook does not influence their attitudes. The finding applies both to the basic and secondary school period.

B8. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (BS)
and participation in free-time activities?

B20. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (SS)
and the participation in free-time activities (SS)?

The participation in free-time activities, more specifically in language courses and private lessons, is not only a matter of the learners' attitudes to the English language. The interest in free-time activities is also generated by some other learner needs, e.g. a perceived deficit in a specific ability such as speaking, or even by other people, specifically by parents (Table 2.8). For secondary school learners a need to pass an international exam (Table 2.8) is also a powerful incentive.

B9. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (BS) and stays abroad?

B10. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to LE (BS) and stays abroad?

B22. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (SS) and stays abroad?

B23. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to LE (SS) and stays abroad?

Since there are no statistically significant relationships between the pairs of variables, it is impossible to predict the effects which a stay in an ESC may have on the visitors' attitudes to English or to learning English. Conversely, not all the learners with positive attitudes travel to an ESC; there are more factors which influence the decision to travel to an ESC in this particular life phase, for example, having an opportunity, financial resources, and the necessary personality features.

B11. Does the participation in free-time activities (BS) correlate with the engagement
in autonomous English-related activities (^{BS})?

B21. Does the participation in free-time activities (SS) correlate with the engagement
in autonomous English-related activities (I^{SS})?

No relationship was identified, though it was investigated both between clusters of activities (i.e. language courses & private lessons & stays abroad; language courses & private lessons)

and individual activities and the index expressing the frequency and intensity of real-life use of English while at basic school (I^{BS}) and while at secondary school (I^{SS}).

The finding implies that participation in free-time activities while at basic school is unrelated to the use of English outside school for different purposes. Consequently, those who attend language courses and private lessons and travel abroad are not necessarily involved in autonomous English-related activities. Participants in language courses and/or private lessons have diverse motives for attendance (Table 2.8), which are linked to language learning; nevertheless, some of them may be imposed. Compared to that, those who are engaged in various activities requiring the use of English are autonomous. They pursue their own goals; however, learning English is a by-product of the activity. It is the learners with positive attitudes toward English who are likely to be engaged in autonomous English-related activities (B13).

Similarly, participation in free-time activities while at secondary school is unrelated to the use of English outside school for various purposes. The lack of a relationship is attributed to the distinct types of involvement with English: while learning in language courses and private lessons is mainly explicit, the use of English for communication represents opportunities for implicit learning.

2.5 Conclusion

In the FL environment learners primarily learn FLs in the formal educational context. The research results confirm that learning English in the Czech Republic is no exception, as the vast majority of learners are only in contact with English in school lessons. Nevertheless, for a proportion of learners non-formal, informal, and target culture contexts extend substantial opportunities for their language learning.

Given the importance of learning English in a *formal context*, the central issue is that of attitudes. The research uncovered the relationships between: (a) attitudes toward the English language and attitudes toward learning English while at basic, as well as secondary school; (b) attitudes to learning English and the number of teachers while at basic school; (c) attitudes toward the English language and involvement in autonomous English-related activities while at basic school and while at secondary school; (d) attitudes toward the English language while at basic school and attitudes toward the English language while at secondary school; (e) attitudes toward learning English while at basic school and attitudes toward learning English while at secondary school.

The outcomes corroborate the importance of the initial phase of language learning at school for the development of positive attitudes toward the language and learning the language. Since the quality of the attitudes tends to persist into later phases, therefore, efforts should be invested into establishing positive attitudes at the beginning of English

language education. Prioritising affective goals in teaching young learners should be the teachers' guiding principle.

Since attitudes are closely linked to motivation to learn an FL, it is of the utmost importance to know what influences them. The research revealed which factors determine attitudes toward the English language and learning English. Regarding the positive attitudes, the sources are diverse, e.g. features of English (phonology, usefulness), novelty, the culture of ESCs, personal goals, perceived satisfaction with learning English, the teacher, and teaching methods and techniques. On the contrary, the negative attitudes are predominantly related to the teacher and the way of teaching. The finding is not very encouraging, but the way of teaching is something that may potentially be changed under favourable conditions.

The positive correlation between the attitudes to learning English and the number of teachers seems to disprove the common perception that the turnover of teachers while at basic school is a disadvantage. The finding may be interpreted as an acknowledgement of the variety which diverse teachers inevitably bring into classes. Nevertheless, individual perceptions of the significance of the issue might vary.

The positive relationship that exists between attitudes toward English and engagement in autonomous English-related activities while at basic school implies a potential link between formal and informal learning. The results suggest that the link is established for the secondary school period, too.

Learning in a *non-formal context* complements formal education; it either precedes or follows formal education or runs parallel with it. Thus it provides additional time for learning; however, it concerns only some of the learners. The research suggests that the percentage varies in individual phases, the highest being in the post-maturita period (31.6%). The main asset of non-formal learning rests in responding to varied learner needs.

Regarding pre-school age, involvement in non-formal learning depends on the parents' educational status and communicative competence in FLs. More highly-educated parents and those who are able to use more FLs tend to enroll their children into pre-school English courses. Those parents, building on their experience, consider learning English as a necessity and an early start as an advantage. Interestingly, although educated, they do not approach the issue critically. The reason may be that expert opinions are not accessible to them. The pending question is whether the subjects in this study benefited from their early exposure to English – some answers are suggested in Chapter 6. Currently, the issue is one the researchers in the team are focused on, and the preliminary results, which were presented at a conference, imply a positive correlation between pre-school exposure to English and the level of correctness of selected pronunciation features.

Basic school learners' engagement in non-formal learning is also a matter of their parents' education. Parents with a higher educational status, who are also very likely to possess the necessary financial resources, decide about their children's participation in language

courses and in private lessons. Being aware of the reasons for attending language courses and private lessons, which were identified by the analysis, it is possible to conclude that parents with a higher educational status were sensitive to their children's needs; imposed decisions represented only a small proportion of all the answers.

Secondary school learners' involvement in non-formal learning is not substantial and is driven mainly by learner needs. The percentage of learners who attend language courses of various kinds increases after the maturita exam. The participants improve their level of English and also gain extra time to choose an appropriate programme to study at a university.

A percentage of students (49.6%) also learnt English in the *target culture context*. Those students reported a predominantly positive experience with an array of benefits, which were mainly motivational. Nevertheless, if progress in English was stated as an outcome of a stay in an ESC, it was primarily a higher level of comprehension and extended vocabulary that the respondents mentioned. The study did not reveal any mechanisms behind making a decision to travel to an ESC. The influence of the parents' educational status, as well as the influence of attitudes to English/learning English on the respondents' stays, in ESCs was not confirmed.

Learning in an *informal context* appears to be a crucial component of learners' overall English learning experience because it discloses the learners' autonomous goals and their real-life use of English. The research informs us what Czech learners use English for and how often. The conclusions suggest that some learners use English very frequently, even while at basic school. Those are the learners with positive attitudes to English who are involved in a number of activities. Watching TV series/films and communicating through social networks, which correlate with all the other variables, may indicate a basic school learner's involvement in informal learning.

The secondary school period is marked by an increased involvement in informal learning, which is related to attitudes toward English, as discussed before. Learners who use English daily for their own purposes (e.g. browsing the internet, communication via social networks, or playing PC games) are influenced, as might be expected, by their positive attitudes to the English language. Furthermore, knowing about the frequency of doing individual activities while at basic school enables us to predict the learners' behaviour while at secondary school.

Consequently, the findings uncovering the Czech learners' patterns of behaviour in an informal learning context are valuable for educational practice since they suggest how to make learning at school more relevant for the students. Being aware of their needs and reflecting them in more learner-centred and internally differentiated classes is more likely to synergise formal and informal learning.

To conclude, this chapter offered a quantitative perspective on Czech learners' individual learning histories. It confirmed inter-individual differences among the learners' biographies, as well as certain common tendencies. The next chapter will provide a qualitative perspective. Chapter 6 will investigate the relationships between the contexts of learning and learning outcomes.

Chapter 3

Individual learning histories

Qualitative study

This chapter represents the qualitative part of the retrospective study of individual learning histories. After the presentation of observed trends, this chapter introduces selected participants' perspectives on their English learning biographies.

3.1 Theoretical background

The retrospective study of individual learning histories is built on a sequential design. Therefore, the theoretical background, which was presented in Chapter 2 as part of the quantitative study, is also relevant for the qualitative enquiry.

3.2 Research design

This section of the chapter will introduce the research design of the qualitative study of individual English learning biographies; the research aims will be presented, as well as the research instrument and its implementation in the data collection.

As discussed in Chapter 2, this mixed methods research has been designed as a longitudinal retrospective study (Oppenheim, 2001), or, more specifically, as an explanatory study of a sequential design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, pp. 217–218). After the elicitation and analysis of the quantitative data, a research sample for the qualitative phase is selected (i.e. of the type QUAN → QUAL) and the second phase of the data collection and analysis follows. Such a design is preferred if there is a need to "not only obtain quantitative results but to explain such results in more detail, especially in terms of detailed voices and participant perspectives because little is known about the mechanisms behind the trends" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 151). The qualitative study falls within the framework of (auto-)biographical research in SLA, which, according to Benson (2004, p. 17), is gaining ground, though it still remains a minority interest. Aiming at a holistic description of second

language learning experiences, the present study aspires to enlarge the body of biographical research in SLA. Its characteristic feature is putting an emphasis on the social and affective dimensions of the learning process, which is, consistently with Benson (2004, p. 12), desirable. Consequently, the main contribution of the chapter lies in uncovering the personal significance of events in the learners' lives, i.e. the identification of critical incidents. Consistently with Tripp (1993, in Finch 2010), a critical incident is understood as an interpretation of the significance of an event. The way of looking at a situation is crucial; therefore, the participants' perspectives on their English learning experience are of interest.

3.2.1 Research sample

The quantitative data which was obtained through the questionnaire (Chapter 2) provided the basis for the selection of the respondents for the qualitative phase. The basic facts were already introduced in Section 1.2.3.3 – out of 228 respondents twenty students were selected for the second phase of the study (thirteen female and seven male respondents).

The questionnaire data enabled the researchers to divide the students into four groups. The first group included the students who learnt English mainly in a formal educational context; English outside the school did not play an important role. The second group involved the students who used English extensively in their lives, i.e. learnt it in an informal context. In the third group, there were the students whose biographies of learning English were characterised by the richness of the contexts in which they learnt the language. Lastly, the fourth group comprised the students with exceptionally long residence in an ESC. Moreover, each group had two sub-groups: the students whose attitudes toward English and learning English were positive all the time and the students whose negative attitudes underwent considerable modifications in the course of their lives. After the students had been grouped, the respondents to be interviewed were chosen randomly from each group. The number of students selected from each group was roughly proportionate to the size of the group. The choice was influenced by the unwillingness of some students to cooperate and by students' availability in the time period allocated to the interviews in individual towns.

3.2.2 Research questions

The aim of the qualitative study was to find out in what learning contexts the participants in the study learnt English, whether the process of learning was continuous, and what factors influenced the process, how, and in what life phase.

Consequently, the following research questions were formulated:

C1. What factors influenced the learning process significantly?
C2. In what way did the factors influence the learning process?
C3. When did the critical incidents happen?

The letter *C* is used to indicate that this is a self-standing set of questions but in the context of a larger study (Chapter 2).

3.2.3 Research instrument

The basic information about the research instrument and its trial and implementation was already presented in Chapter 1. The study is based on recollective data elicited by means of narrative interviews; this technique was perceived as being the most appropriate tool, considering that the aim was to obtain individual respondents' English learning biographies.

This elicitation technique is widely discussed in the literature on social and educational research (e.g. Elliot, 2005). Nevertheless, there is a lack of agreement among scholars regarding certain aspects of the technique. Two issues were especially relevant to the present study: the number of interviews with each participant and the formulation of the questions.

Concerning the number of interviews with one respondent, there are researchers who argue that the most appropriate procedure involves three interviews with different goals and content (Seidman, 1998, in Elliot, 2005, p. 32). Rosenthal (1995, in Hendl, 2012, p. 177) proposes that researchers should first elicit the main narrative covering the respondents' whole life story, and only then should they focus on the selected phase of their lives, i.e. the interrogative phase. Researchers use various procedures; frequently, two interviews are organised with each respondent. If one interview is to be used, then ninety minutes is recommended as the optimum length for a qualitative research interview (Elliot, 2005, p. 32).

The number of sessions available with each participant also influences the formulation of the questions for each session. If the approach proposed by Rosenthal (1995, in Hendl, 2012) is followed, it may lead to a large amount of data of low relevance being obtained. In order to prevent that, Hollway and Jefferson argue that "the best questions for narrative interviews invite the interviewee to talk about *specific times and situations* [my emphasis], rather than asking about the respondent's life over a long period of time" (2000, in Elliott, 2005, p. 30).

Consistently with this recommendation, the questions used to elicit the main narrative were directed to specific times, i.e. the pre-school, basic school, secondary school, and post-secondary periods, and to specific situations, i.e. learning English in various contexts.

1. *Could you tell me about your first contacts with English?*
2. *Could you talk about your learning of English at basic school?*
3. *Could you tell me about your contacts with English in your free time while at basic school?*
4. *Could you talk about your learning of English at secondary school?*
5. *Could you tell me about your contacts with English in your free time while at secondary school?*
6. *Could you talk about your contacts with English between the maturita exam and the university entrance exam? (if relevant)*

On top of that, the questions for the interrogative phase were formulated for the interview. More precisely, types of questions were prepared to be used by the researcher in the second phase. Hendl (2012, p. 177) suggests several types of both internal and external narrative questions that might be used. While internal questions are linked to the content of the narrative, external questions are not; rather, they concern topics which have not been mentioned by the interviewee, but in which the researcher is interested. Out of the types of questions which were proposed by Hendl (2012, p. 177), the following types are relevant for the present study:

– questions about a particular phase of life: e.g. *Can you tell me more about the time when you …*

– questions about a topic: e.g. *Can you talk about …*

– questions about a situation/issue which has already been mentioned by the respondent: e.g. *You mentioned …; could you tell me the details of what happened?*

– questions for clarification: e.g. *Can we go back to the situation when …*

Apart from formulating the questions, decisions were made regarding the number of sessions and the language of the interview. Two sessions with each respondent, each one lasting 60 minutes, were planned. The intention was to elicit the main narrative in the first session and then to elicit answers to internal and external narrative questions in the second one.

For the reasons explained in Chapter 1, the interviews were conducted in the Czech language. Obviously, even the use of the respondents' mother tongue did not guarantee success, but at least potential problems stemming from the respondents' inability to produce an extensive narrative in English were prevented. The interviews were audio recorded for practical purposes, using a voice recorder. During the interaction with the respondent the interviewer's attention was not distracted by continuous note-taking and she was able to concentrate fully on the interview. The recording allowed a word-by-word transcription, which contributed to the reliability of the research. In order to preserve the highest possible level of authenticity, the technique of commented transcription (Hendl, 2012, p. 208) was used. The text remained unedited; however, comments indicating emphasis and laughter occurring during the interview were inserted. Furthermore, extra-linguistic information regarding the use of pauses and time-gaining devices was provided.

3.2.4 Procedure

The research tool was piloted at the beginning of June 2014 with two students (Section 1.2.3.2). The outcomes of the trial led to considerable changes to the procedure – it turned out to be unrealistic to separate eliciting the main narrative from the questioning phase as the respondents needed additional questions to stimulate their narration. Therefore, instead

of having two sessions with each student, one ninety-minute session was scheduled with each participant; combining the main narrative phase with the questioning phase within one session appeared to be the most suitable procedure. The researcher was prepared to ask the questions to elicit the main narrative and then to react flexibly with a question responding to the informant's narration.

At the beginning of the interview the researcher referred to her previous encounter with the respondent in the earlier part of the project so as to establish a friendly atmosphere. Then she informed the respondent about the purpose of the interview and its format and time allocation. The researcher also asked for permission to record the interview, which she obtained. After that the researcher invited the interviewee to ask any questions they might have. If there were any, they usually concerned the selection procedure for the interview or outcomes of the research.

The interview started with questions focused on current issues, which were posed first to prepare the informants to think and talk about the past. Then the researcher asked questions to elicit the main narrative, i.e. the questions directed to specific times (the pre-school, basic school, secondary school, and post-secondary periods), and to specific situations (learning English in various contexts). If necessary, the researcher asked a question to learn more about a particular period in the interviewee's life, about a topic of interest, etc. In order to maintain the momentum of the interviews, the researcher implemented some strategies recommended in the relevant literature (Dörnyei, 2007, pp. 142–143); she provided carry-on and reinforcement feedback, used attention-focusing devices, and tried to encourage elaboration through the use of various probes (e.g. silent probes, echo prompts).

3.2.5 Administration

As introduced in Chapter 1 (Section 1.2.3.3), the interviews with the 20 selected respondents were conducted at their universities in June and July 2014 and in February and March 2015. They were completed successfully thanks to the cooperation of the English departments, which provided suitable rooms for interviewing. The major constraint appeared to be some respondents' availability. When the researcher secured the necessary time, it did not always fit the students' schedule optimally and it was not always possible to arrange a different appointment. Therefore, several interviews were shorter. On the other hand, the procedure necessitated arranging a second session with several interviewees. Two interviews were influenced by the health status of the respondents. The average length of an interview, without the introductory and concluding parts, was 50 minutes and 19 seconds. Which was considered satisfactory.

After the data collection, the interviews were transcribed by student assistants and prepared for analysis, which was conducted using the Atlas.ti7 software (1993–2015)

using the method of open coding. With reference to Mishler's framework, the analysis was focused on the content of the interviews; attention was paid both to its descriptive and evaluative function (1996, p. 38). First of all, three randomly selected interviews were coded by two researchers with 79 per cent agreement, which was considered satisfactory. The rest of the interviews were analysed by a single researcher.

3.3 Results and discussion

The analysis of the twenty histories of learning English confirmed their individual nature; however, at a certain level of analysis patterns may be observed; the patterns emerge from individual profiles, which are built on the outcomes of both the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the students' individual learning histories; they are presented in Chapter 6.

Sections 3.3.1–3.3.3 of the chapter will provide the outcomes of the qualitative analysis structured according to the factors which were identified as having influenced the students' biographies of learning English.

Instead of the respondents being labelled by a number or a letter, all the students who were interviewed were given nicknames in order to protect their identity and at the same time not to lose the human being behind the story. The quotes which appear in the text were translated by the author of the chapter, with an attempt being made to preserve authenticity to the highest possible extent. […] is used to indicate that irrelevant parts of the quote were left out; otherwise, square brackets are used conventionally. Furthermore, … before or after a quote indicates that just part of it is presented; … within a quote signals a pause. The numbers following each code, e.g. 8:17, relate the quote to the person, i.e. 8 is the respondent's number, while 17 denotes the number of the quote.

3.3.1 The influence of the family on English language learning

Not surprisingly, the respondents' families influenced their learning of English in many ways. First of all, the family-related influential factors will be organised into three broad areas suggested by Střelec (2009), within which the significance of events in the family for the respondents' learning of English will also be discussed. Obviously, because of the complexity of the phenomenon under investigation, it is not possible to make clear-cut distinctions between all the kinds of influences, and therefore, some overlaps might occur.

3.3.1.1 Material and economic influences

Material and economic influences are mentioned first, though they are not, consistently with the theoretical part (Section 2.1.4), considered to be the most important determinant of educational attainment. The analysis revealed that the material conditions of the

interviewees were ensured. All of them had access to information and communication technology, including PC games, which could have been used to mediate contact with English; each of the respondents, however, used the opportunity differently, which will emerge from individual students' profiles (Chapter 6). Those who desired also had access to books and magazines in English or to various devices for playing music. None of the interviewees reported that s/he would love to do something, e.g. browse the internet, but could not do so because of a lack of the necessary equipment. This may be surprising in the context of playing PC games since having the most recent games meant having updated equipment and a fast internet connection. Obviously, all the "players" in the research sample possessed the necessary technology, since they never mentioned financial demands as an obstacle to their hobby.

The respondents' parents supported their children's involvement in language courses and private lessons. Most of them did it for a short time; they either reflected their children's current needs or they wanted them to start learning English prior to their compulsory education. Others, however, paid for extra lessons for many years, fortunately, to the benefit of their children (Section 3.3.1.3).

The parents of eleven interviewees enabled their children to travel to an ESC. Only one respondent would have liked to attend a language course in the United Kingdom, but her parents, who had four children, could not provide financial assistance. The rest of the respondents did not mention any specific reasons during the interview why they did not decide to travel to an ESC; they usually commented on not having a chance. Financial resources are needed for such a trip, but it is not possible to guarantee positive outcomes. The respondents described all kinds of experiences. Cindy did not like her school trip to London much, since she perceived it as moving hurriedly from one place to another. Furthermore, she did not like the fact that the host family just provided services but did not communicate with the children much. George experienced several stays in English-speaking countries but he did not feel that he was making any progress, though he had opportunities to communicate. Contrary to that, Harry appreciated the interaction with his host family: *"… it was such a training ground … you asked someone, you wanted to practise what you were able to say, how the NS would respond, if you … if you get any response from the NS."* (8:17) Harry viewed his experience positively: *"… the main benefit, in my opinion, is that … one is, I would say, thrown into the environment and has to use … the knowledge one gained before in practice to survive, to make oneself understood … the main benefit is that one can't avoid the contact with English, there is no other alternative"* (8:20). Cindy appreciated her experience from an English camp in the USA, Bill and Eve became enthusiastic about England, Jane about Scotland, and Simon about Australia. They experienced communication in the target culture environment and learnt about the culture of those countries, which made them motivated to return one day. Eve's and Jane's

enthusiasm persisted, since both of them returned to their favourite country several times; the length of Eve's residence in the UK was more than three years.

Nevertheless, Eve's experience is unique in that it shows how her perceptions have changed since her first visit, when she was 18: *"I felt alone, I blamed myself [for going there], but then I felt that my English … I became more self-confident … I made myself understood, I didn't die, so I would certainly pass the maturita exam"* (5:3). Furthermore, her story illustrates her personal determination to overcome her initial difficulties by being active: *"At the beginning it was difficult; my pronunciation was terrible … but they [the family] said it was super that I kept asking when I wasn't sure about something"* (5:9). During her long-term stay in Britain, where she was an au pair, she was lucky enough to work for a family that was willing to communicate: *"The first family was awesome, they really helped me a lot with English, they talked to me a lot and their grandma sometimes spent a whole day with me, talked to me, explained new words… and while living with them I made big progress"* (5:10). Needless to say, she did not rely only on communication with the family; she also attended several courses, including a preparatory course for the FCE exam or a course specifically targeted at pronunciation. In conclusion, what makes Eve's story one of success is hard work and a proactive approach to communication combined with good luck.

3.3.1.2 Demographic and psychological influences

This category includes the following factors: (a) living in an incomplete family; (b) being the only or the youngest child in the family; (c) having siblings.

(a) Living in an incomplete family

Most of the respondents lived in a complete family and they were able to benefit from the human capital of both parents. Nevertheless, there were two respondents whose learning of English was influenced by their parents' divorce – Cindy and Frances. Cindy's parents got divorced when she was very young; she does not remember the time. Consequently, since then she has lived with her mother and an older handicapped sister. She could always rely on her mother, a source of endless support, who influenced her learning of English in many ways, which will be discussed in later in the chapter.

In the life of Frances it was her father who affected her language learning in a substantial way. While her parents decided to enrol Frances into a language course before she started to learn English at school, it was her father who was regularly involved in her home preparation for English classes from the very beginning: *"… it was mainly my dad who practised English with me; he tested my vocabulary and used to go through it [the subject matter] with me from the first grade"* (6:3). His involvement in his daughter's learning of English was consistent with his high educational status and also with the importance which he explicitly attached to learning English. Frances's father also played both the active and the passive parental

roles (Section 2.1.4.2), which was effective, since they were in agreement. However, the situation, learning English included, changed considerably after her parents divorced. While the avowed emphasis on education remained, the direct participation in Frances's learning of English did not continue. Later in her life, her father also influenced several important decisions, including the choice of her study programme.

(b) Being the only or youngest child in the family

Nearly half of the respondents were the only children in the family; nevertheless, this fact seems to have influenced the English learning histories of three students together with other conditions. Those students, all of them males, compensated for a lack of relationships with siblings and/or peers by spending time on the computer, especially by playing PC games.

In his childhood and teenage years, and although he had a much older brother, Harry spent the bulk of his free time playing PC games: *"I lived in a village … there were not many children of the same age, so it was a natural choice that I used to spend a lot of time on a computer"* (8:1). His parents tried to influence the choice of games in early childhood, preferring those with educational potential; however, they were not at all successful in limiting Harry's screen time. Thus his hobby generated serious conflicts in the family: the parents believed that playing PC games was an undesirable activity which did not contribute to the child's overall development. At the same time they accepted his hobby, because they provided the necessary technology and they did not attempt to involve him in other free-time activities. *"I was never pushed to do this or that by my parents; they left me … free to choose what I liked to do."* (8:3). In Harry's opinion it was because they respected his delicate personality – *"… in front of others, I'm utterly, utterly distressed and … a shy person"* (8:23).

While his parents did not see any benefits of playing computer games, Harry is convinced about their positive effects on his English acquisition: *"I would say that I learnt more from the passive reception of English than at school … though I did not know why a word is pronounced like it is or why a sentence has got a particular structure and how it is used, I wasn't able to explain it, but I was able to use it"* (8:2). It is important to clarify that his experience of English was not limited to mere exposure but with the arrival of multiplayer online games he began to interact with other speakers of English. His childhood with the computer, as he labelled it, if perceived from the perspective of language acquisition, was actually a long period of implicit learning.

David was the only child in the family. Being an introvert, he did not have many friends but he quite enjoyed the atmosphere in the class while at basic school. David did not like English at school but used it outside school: *"I did some other activities in which I used English … [PC] games; though they say that it is a bad influence, I think they influenced me positively because the game required me to communicate with native speakers"* (4:16). David

mentioned in the interview that he discovered English himself thanks to PC games which were not available in Czech. His parents limited his screen time initially, but nevertheless they later resigned themselves to it: *"… originally, it [screen time] was structured, I was allowed a certain number of hours, but it gradually grew greater, so I … I think, was able to spend five or six hours playing without problems and the following day the same"* (4:14). David admitted that after moving to a bigger flat he did not control himself any more, which previously he did to a certain extent so as not to disturb his parents, and started to play till late at night. Being in a prestigious team of players, regular participation in the game was required. There was no way out of this vicious circle. While at secondary school, he sometimes skipped early morning classes just because of being tired after a nocturnal game session. When reflecting on his experience as a player during the interview, he was critical of the negative aspects of his behaviour; nevertheless, he considers the effect of playing PC games on his English acquisition significant: *"… in my opinion, playing [PC] games had an enormous impact on the level of my English, and I'm quite happy that I spent so much time on the computer"* (4:15). Furthermore, he was able to describe the nature of language acquisition in the context of online communication with other players: *"I started to understand them and we used to chat a lot. I picked up some grammar from them without learning it. So at school, when writing an essay or suchlike, I used some structures we hadn't studied yet. Rather than following … some memorised rules, towards the end [of the secondary school], I relied on my intuition …"* (4:17).

Unlike the previous stories, the relationship between Victor being the only child and his playing PC games may only be hypothesised. The information provided in the interview is insufficient for a straightforward conclusion to be drawn. It appears that it was one factor, together with his interest in information technology. He started to play PC games roughly about the same time as he began his education in English. In the initial phase he could hardly understand a word but gradually he improved: *"I'd say that what I learnt at basic school helped me understand what was going on in the game"* (19:6). Playing PC games became what Victor called *his prominent hobby*, with more than 30 hours of screen time per week. Surprisingly, his playing PC games never caused problems or conflicts with his parents. As a result of his extensive exposure to language input and his involvement in interaction with other players, he gradually started to observe an improvement in his English, which helped him to do better at school: *"… and thanks to it [the hobby] I did … I did well in lessons. And it was not about remembering grammar rules. Even now I wouldn't be able to recall most of them. But I was able to use them in practice. When somebody asked me which tense to use, I wouldn't be able to answer, but if the person asked me how the sentence should be said correctly, I would answer without problems"* (19:6). Victor nicely contrasted the different outcomes of learning and acquisition or of explicit and implicit learning.

These three stories illustrate the power of informal learning in the context of playing PC games. Subjectively, all three players prioritise acquisition over learning as concerns their level of communicative competence in English. The researchers conclude that regarding the ultimate attainment, implicit learning wins out, but not in the FL environment (Section 2.1). Chapter 6, in which individual students' learning contexts are related to their selected outcomes of learning and/or acquisition, will suggest whether the exposure mediated through the technology was massive enough to differentiate those students from the others.

(c) Having siblings

As discussed in Section 2.1.4, having brothers or sisters is potentially a valuable influence. This emerged clearly from Bill's and Eve's stories. In the lives of the remaining respondents, siblings certainly played a role, though they did not overtly influence their brothers' or sisters' learning of English.

Bill was enormously inspired by his brother. In early childhood, the brother mediated his exposure to English through TV programmes, books, and PC games. Later, he also provided advice about what to do to improve his English; some of the learning strategies were then used by the younger brother. They also shared common interests, e.g. listening to music and playing the guitar. Most importantly, however, he appreciated Bill's progress in English: *"My brother came home when I was playing with them [players from Sweden] and I was talking to them and he said 'wow, it's good', you'll certainly improve by doing this"* (4:69). Bill perceived his brother as a model not only in terms of learning English, but generally. Bill selected the same secondary school as his older brother. Moreover, it was also his brother who directed Bill's path toward English: *"My brother helped me more, because he was interested in English, so … he gave me some, as I've said, songs … and we watched films in English with subtitles … yes, my brother, our parents let me find myself what I want to do"* (4:106).

Eve's sister represented a major influence on her language learning. She became her source of inspiration and model to follow. By making unprecedented decisions, she showed Eve novel routes: *"And then my sister left for England as an au pair and I went there to see her and I liked it there a lot and I was sorry that I couldn't understand the people and I couldn't buy a train ticket myself. So I decided that … that I would also improve in English"* (5:1). Eve's sister in fact initiated her interest in the English language and the culture (Section 3.3.1.3): *"She certainly influenced me a lot because if it hadn't occurred to her to work as an au pair, it would never have occurred to me …"* (5:4). Apart from that, her influence had another dimension: *"She also influenced me because she has never been a good student, but she liked the language and was good at it, so I said to myself that it is something I might be good at, too, and might like it …"* (5:4). Knowing about her sister's progress in English and about her potential made Eve's own goal, i.e. to improve in English, realistic and achievable.

In both stories the parents are somewhat "hidden"; they provided Bill and Eve with parental support and with the freedom to decide about a professional orientation themselves, but otherwise they did not directly interfere in their children's learning of English. Compared to that, the role of siblings in Bill's and Eve's lives was significant.

3.3.1.3 Cultural and educational influences

This section will deal with an array of cultural and educational influences which were identified in the interviewees' narratives. They were divided into three sections: (a) parents' decisions in relation to their children's learning of English; (b) parents as language users; (c) parents' participation in their children's home preparation for English classes.

(a) Parents' decisions in relation to their children's learning of English

Pre-school exposure

A very important decision with long-term consequences is the one concerning the age at which English language education starts (Section 2.1.2), which may or may not equate to the first exposure to English. Several respondents, Bill, Olivia, and Victor, were exposed to English either through books or media, usually by family members. George, Kate, Paul, and Wendy were enrolled into a pre-school course of English. While Kate did not remember this learning experience at all, Paul could even remember how strange he felt when he was expected to produce the sounds of English. The rest of the interviewees could recall only the pictures they worked with. Their perceptions of the experience are rather positive or neutral. Most importantly, the pre-primary learning experience does not seem to have had any harmful effects on the learners' attitudes to English or to learning English. Whether it had an impact on the early starters' level of English will be investigated in Chapter 6.

Choosing the first or the second foreign language

Before the curricular reform in the first decade of this century, parents were responsible for picking the first FL for their children, if there was a choice at a particular school. The pragmatic choice was English since the respondents' parents were well aware of its usefulness for the future. The same strategy was applied by Paul's parents; however, he would have preferred German. Thus he started to learn it later in grade seven. The preference for German reflects his learning experience: *"I have a feeling that my basics of the English grammar are rather chaotic"* (15:4), which he attributes to the changing of teachers in the lower grades of basic school. *"… when I want to make a sentence, I look at a chest of drawers and I always open different drawers and pick up what I need … In German I know what to pick up, but in English, I don't know … there is a mess. And I keep opening the upper drawers, where the most basic things are stored … but the lower drawers are not*

organised" (15:5). The metaphor he used to explain his point of view implies his analytic learning style. Therefore, the systematic teaching and learning of German in the final grades of basic school probably suited him more than the more holistic approach which might have been applied in teaching English in the lower grades of basic school. Moreover, he apparently did not manage to cope with the different teaching styles of different teachers. Interestingly, he attended a Czech-English secondary grammar school, which obviously did not compensate for his lack of systematic knowledge: *"At the grammar school, the emphasis was put on … simply using the language at any cost, even with mistakes"* (15:20). It was probably because he was primarily interested in science, especially biology, and English was just a communication tool, not the aim of his studies.

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Selecting the secondary school

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While choosing the secondary school may seem to be unrelated to the topic, it has a lot to do with learning English, since its position in the curricula of different types of secondary school varies, starting with the attainment levels (Section 2.1.5.1). Simon's parents consulted their intention to enrol him into a secondary grammar school with an eight-year study programme with his class teacher and another person with an expert opinion. They received conflicting opinions, but they decided to follow the teacher's advice, i.e. to apply for the secondary school. Additionally, they took Simon's opinions into account – he did not like his classmates at the basic school much and hoped for a change. When talking about this decision during the interview, he emphasised how significant it was. Not only was he satisfied with the school, but he joined it at the right time to have a chance to participate in many interesting activities, including exchange trips to England, Russia, and Australia; the last one in particular turned out to be very influential.

Compared to that, David's story might be called *"such a big mistake"* (4:7), since this is how he perceives the effects of the wrong choice of a secondary school after years. While at basic school his teachers suggested that he should apply for an eight-year grammar school. As a student he tended to do what people whom he perceived as authority figures recommended. Therefore, he followed his parents' advice *"to enjoy his youth"* (4:4) rather than to study difficult subjects. Unfortunately, they were not aware of his cognitive needs. Consequently, he did not apply to the grammar school and instead stayed at basic school for four more years. In grade nine David decided to join his peers and to study at a secondary technical school. *"I'm sorry that I didn't choose a different school; I think my pronunciation would be better, my English would be better than it is now … I'm sorry that I didn't choose the grammar school"* (4:3). Neither was the second decision a good one. Being interested in English and history, he had problems coping with the requirements of mathematics. This necessitated a change of school, which eventually turned out to be positive since David met an inspiring English teacher there (Section 3.3.2).

Initiating free-time activities linked to learning English

The interviewees' parents varied considerably in terms of the extent to which they initiated their children's participation in free-time language courses of various kinds or in private lessons, English camps, etc. The first group includes the parents who never encouraged their sons and daughters to take part in any free-time activity, including those related to English. They left their children to find their own hobbies – the stories of "the players" have already been described in the previous section, as were the stories of Bill and Eve, who were largely inspired by their siblings. The second group comprises the parents who encouraged their children to participate in various free-time activities which were not linked to English. For example, in Alice's family a major emphasis was put on music. Alice's parents did not enrol her into a pre-school or any other course in spite of being active in organising their daughter's free time. At the same time, English was valued in the family, Alice's father often reminded her of the usefulness of English: *"My father uses English at work … he supported me … he kept saying that English is important and in demand"* (1:55). The parents probably did not consider a pre-school course or any other tuition necessary. This finding does not agree with the conclusions of the preceding chapter, which confirmed the relationship between the parents' educational status and pre-school exposure to English. Alice's parents might have had reservations regarding the pre-school learning of English or such courses may not have been available in the village the family lived in.

The third group includes the parents who were active and who initiated their children's free-time activities concerning English. There were four respondents, Cindy, Olivia, Wendy, and George, whose involvement in some kind of non-formal English learning preceded the start of formal education and then ran parallel with it nearly till the maturita exam. Nevertheless, each story is different.

Cindy's mother was her close companion on her path through her school years. It has already been mentioned that after Cindy's parents divorced her mother became her only source of support. She always initiated many free-time activities, ranging from gymnastics to scouting, and Cindy sometimes felt under pressure *"… if she pushed me to do something, I didn't like it [the activity], I wasn't good at it. When I look back now, I understand that she wanted me to find a hobby for myself"* (3:23). In her learning history Cindy underwent several episodes of motivational fluctuations; whenever her motivation declined it was in response to the harmful effects of the teacher or the learning experience (Černá, 2015b). When this happened her mother did something to counterbalance her loss of motivation: *"… my mother pushed me … that English is important … and tried to find someone [a private teacher] … now I'm grateful for it, but at that time it bothered me"* (3:11). In spite of her initial reservations, Cindy started to appreciate her private lessons: *"Without the extra lessons … I wouldn't have been able to make progress"* (3:22). Apart from arranging private lessons

and pen-friends for her daughter, Cindy's mother also supported her regular participation in English camps organised by a local church in cooperation with an American one. This was undoubtedly significant in Cindy's life since the camps activated her desire to learn: *"there I realised what English is … at school I didn't like it at all … [in the camp] I tried to learn something"* (3:47). The quality of the learning experience in the camps influenced her decision to study English considerably: *"If it hadn't been for the English camps, I wouldn't have decided to study English"* (3:46).

In addition to encouraging her daughter's participation in free-time activities, Cindy's mother was also directly involved in her home preparation; the ways in which she was involved are introduced in the next section.

Interestingly, Olivia's story also underpins the role of English camps of a similar nature in her life. However, the perspective is different. Her parents were members of the team that organised the camps. For years Olivia was a regular participant, but later, following her parents, became an organiser herself. Thanks to this she was involved in extensive communication with NSs throughout the year but especially during the camp. She felt that she was able to function effectively in everyday communication; nevertheless, she was not a successful learner while at secondary school: *"simply, there was a conflict in that … on the one hand, I was able to function in the team quite, quite well, and, on the other … my results at school were the same [not good]"* (14:14).

Wendy's parents arranged for private lessons, which she attended with one more child, the son of her mother's friend. They started as pre-schoolers and continued up to the end of secondary school. Being friends, they appreciated the opportunity to spend time together every week since they did not see each other often.

George's parents have always been very active themselves; therefore, they enrolled their son into numerous courses and afternoon clubs, including lessons of English: *"I tried many things; I attended music lessons, karate lessons for a long time … I liked the activities but I wasn't able to manage everything, I was overwhelmed by all that"* (8:128). While he refused to attend some of the clubs, luckily, learning English was an activity he has enjoyed since the pre-school period. When reflecting on his experience during the interview he concluded that his parents *"simply were not able to estimate what I was or was not able to manage"* (8:130). At the same time, however, he appreciated the richness of the experience he has gained.

Diagnosing specific learning difficulties

During her interview, Cindy repeated several times that she was a learner who needed more time to learn, and that it was her mother who helped her prepare for various lessons, including English. It only emerged towards the end of the long interview that both Cindy and her mother believed that she was dyslexic. *"I have always thought that I've had some*

disorder, dyslexia, something, I don't know exactly what. I've always asked my mother: 'Why don't you go there [a counselling centre] with me?' I would at least know whether it really was dyslexia" (3:24). While Cindy would like to undergo the assessment procedure, her mother refused "*… she always replied that it would not help me in my life … that I will always be like this, she simply thought I didn't need it*" (3:24). This decision was significant for Cindy's learning history, though it is impossible to predict what would have happened if her mother had agreed with the assessment in the counselling centre. The reasons why her mother rejected the idea may only be hypothesised. It is possible that she wanted to prevent Cindy from being labelled by her teachers or peers. During Cindy's schooldays, she could not anticipate that one day it might be important to have a problem diagnosed because then one becomes eligible, for example, for having more time to do the common maturita exam. Furthermore, when they are diagnosed with dyslexia, people usually report that they feel relief – they are not stupid or lazy, they are just different. Therefore, knowing this might have helped Cindy to become more self-confident, which she needed desperately. On the other hand, her mother was aware of the fact that dyslexia was a lifelong condition and she knew her daughter would have to develop compensation strategies for her life. Her mother tried to suggest how to learn: "*I remember that my mum always forced me to use what worked for her … and that she learnt best when she kept writing one word over and over again*" (3:30). However, Cindy was critical about her mother's strategies and used her own: "*If I don't remember anything, I write it on a piece of paper and stick it above the table and look at it many times … I need to see things, see them everywhere, use coloured pencils …*" (3:32). With her mother's assistance, she finished secondary school successfully. Sadly, none of her teachers during her thirteen years of formal education ever suspected that she might have specific learning difficulties. Her description of all her symptoms, which she has observed all her life, implies that her own diagnosis is right. This also explains her need for long-term assistance and private lessons. Obviously, in the course of her life she has developed her own effective learning strategies, since as a university student she was successful.

(b) Parents as language users

The quantitative study of individual learning histories suggested that 32.5 per cent of mothers and 24.0 per cent of fathers speak at least some English, but most of the parents do not. Consistently, the majority of the interviewees' parents have never learnt English. Their children, such as Jane, noticed the difficulties which the parents experienced when travelling: "*For instance, I can see my parents; they do not know any English … and when you arrive somewhere, you cannot make yourself understood without English*" (10:02). The observed lack of knowledge became a driving force in her learning.

Since the parents who can speak English studied mainly German or Russian while at school, they must have attended lessons of English in adulthood. Thus they provided a model for their children. It was usually the mothers who attended language courses; sometimes the motive was to help their children in the future. Cindy's mother attended lessons of English together with her daughter at a time when support was needed.

Alice's father functioned as a model of a language user who communicated in English at work. Therefore, she believed in his frequently repeated opinions about the usefulness of English: *"My father uses English at work … he supported me … he kept saying that English is important and in demand"* (1:55). Being an organiser of English camps, Olivia's mother also provided an influential model of a language user.

(c) Parents' participation in their children's home preparation for English classes

Only those parents with a certain level of proficiency in English were able to assist their children with home preparation for school lessons. Occasionally, grandparents were involved in helping the children. In the learning histories of three students, parental involvement in their children's learning of English appeared to be more systematic. For example, Kate's mother provided assistance at the beginning of secondary school: *"… in the first year or the second year I had problems with learning English. I struggled with it a lot and I know that my mother helped me a lot with it, with English"* (11:6). More specifically, her mother assisted Kate with grammar exercises or with translations. Through providing this support, her mother tried to contribute to the changing of Kate's negative attitudes toward learning English.

The father of Frances was also involved in her home preparation, as discussed in Section 3.3.1.2. He provided tuition himself and also tested his daughter's vocabulary. Unfortunately, it was a time-limited experience, which ended with the parents' divorce.

Compared to other parents, Cindy's mother supported her learning most extensively; she assisted her with her studies regularly and for years. The high level of the mother's involvement in Cindy's home preparation, as discussed earlier, was connected with her learning difficulties. After Cindy became a university student of English, the roles changed and she started to help her mother learn English.

3.3.1.4 Summary of the section

Individual parents impacted on the English learning histories of their children in various ways, which ranged from a once-in-a-lifetime decision to a long-term and profound influence. It was illustrated that both one-off and long-term events are potentially significant. The analysis suggests that the parents with higher educational status tend to be "more visible" in their children's English learning biographies – they are directly involved in their children's home preparation because they are sensitive to the needs of their children

and they are able to recognise a moment when an intervention is necessary. Moreover, they are more active in initiating their children's free-time activities related to English. It is important to admit that the parents of three respondents, although they had university education, remained aside and did not play a major role in their learning histories. Obviously, this might have been influenced by the respondents' unwillingness to share personal information regarding their families.

To conclude, from the perspective of the theory on motivation (e.g. Williams & Burden, 1997) parents, i.e. significant figures in one's life, represent an external source of motivation. With reference to the process model of L2 motivation (Dörnyei, 2001), it may be concluded that they mainly generated their children's choice motivation and to a certain extent also energised executive motivation and were involved in motivational retrospection.

With regard to how they did that, considering choice motivation, most importantly, the parents manifested their positive attitudes toward English and learning English using different means: by being learners and/or users of English themselves; by making decisions in favour of English; by supporting their children's learning of English both directly and indirectly, i.e. giving the green light to various activities aiming at improving their English, and, lastly, by providing material conditions for activities leading to their learning English. Playing either an active or passive role contributed to the development of their children's positive attitudes. In addition, the parents clearly communicated their view that learning English was highly valued and provided environmental support.

The executive motivation was supported by ongoing appraisal; in this phase influences stemming from teaching and learning processes are plentiful and potentially more powerful. They will be dealt with in the next section (3.3.2). The parental involvement in motivational retrospection is linked especially to providing positive feedback.

Furthermore, the role of siblings should not be underestimated; the study confirmed that they may have become a source of inspiration and a model to follow.

3.3.2 Influences related to the teacher and teaching and learning English at school

In this section it is mainly learning in a formal context, i.e. basic and secondary school experience, which is investigated. However, there are a few quotes referring to an individual's post-secondary learning, especially in intensive courses. They are presented in order to provide two contrasting experiences from a single person's life or to include a critical incident from the post-secondary life phase to complement the story.

3.3.2.1 Teacher

Obviously, it is impossible to separate the influence of the teacher from the influence of the process of teaching and learning English. Nevertheless, various events in the interviewees'

lives are distributed through the individual sections of the chapter to imply how the effects were perceived by the respondents.

(a) Turnover of teachers

A number of interviewees raised the issue of the frequent changing of their English teachers, especially in the basic school period. Although the quantitative analysis uncovered a positive relationship between the attitudes toward learning English while at basic school and the number of NNS English teachers (Chapter 2), the subjective perceptions of the individual respondents varied.

First, the turnover of teachers was not perceived as a problem by some students. This was the case of George, who also experienced various teachers during his eight years at grammar school: *"We had one, two, three, four … five teachers, I'd say. And of course, they differed in how they knew the subject and how they managed to teach it"* (8:81). Then he described aptly how he perceived the teachers: a female teacher with a high level of expertise, who was oriented towards the subject matter, but did not focus on the learners' learning; a female teacher who was also an expert but whose lessons were routinely based on reading only; a female teacher, very nervous and unable to manage the class; a female alcohol addict; a young male teacher who did well and also tried to establish good relations with the class using humour, which the students sometimes found embarrassing. George admits that the teacher who was not able to manage the class and later left the profession represented the worst experience. Nevertheless, he dealt with the changing of teachers without problems, since his attitudes at that time were safely established and resisted the potential negative influences of the changes. English was his hobby; he had attended language courses since childhood and, on top of that, he discovered a special method for learning languages (Section 3.3.3), which accelerated his learning. Moreover, he frequently used English in real life for a variety of purposes. He experienced stays in the target language environment and maintained contacts with NSs of English. Therefore, he was able to meet the teachers' varied requirements effortlessly.

Second, there were students, such as Rose, who tended to panic when they were confronted with a new situation. After some time, however, they managed to cope with the challenge successfully: *"Well, we had about five teachers; they changed terribly often … It was a problem for me to get used to the accent of a new teacher … The last teacher [at the secondary school] spent a long time in America; she spoke fluently and quickly; for the first time we were really scared … later we got used to it and it was OK"* (16:98). And finally, they were able to see the positive side of the turnover of teachers: *"… but I think it is good to listen to different teachers' speech, but it was a shock to get used to a new one"* (16:94).

Third, several respondents, for example Lara, Eve, and Wendy, disliked both English and learning English while at basic school. They attributed their negative attitudes to the

initial changing of teachers and their teaching styles. Nevertheless, later they benefited from such a change. Lara's third teacher at an eight-year grammar school initiated the modification of her attitudes: "*…a new teacher came; she taught us for two years and she was great, we played games, we spoke English only, we practised forming sentences … The lessons were varied, so we enjoyed them and if you like them, you look forward to the lessons and learn more easily*" (12:24). Her current perception of the issue matches the interpretation of the positive correlation formulated in the previous chapter: "*Well, it is interesting that my teachers changed very often. I think that on the one hand, it may be good because if you had a worse teacher for many years you wouldn't learn anything … and so I could try different styles and learnt something …*" (12:28). Similarly, Eve's formal education in English did not start well: "*It was terrible, how often they [teachers] changed*" (2:9). The harmful effects of the changes emerge quite clearly from her story: "*It was enough to learn some words at the beginning of the school year and one was OK till the end of the year, because when the teachers changed, they always started at the beginning*" (2:60). Eventually, she experienced the positive side of the changing of teachers and encountered one she found inspiring: "*The character of the teacher influenced it [change of attitudes]. She never shouted at us, she never looked stressed and when we didn't do a task, she said that we were learning for our own benefit, not for her. But she said it calmly. […] She also said that whether we'd study or not didn't depend on whether she was strict or not*" (2:46). Obviously, the teacher tried to make her students more responsible for their learning. Eve appreciated that since she was autonomous enough to make important decisions on her own, inspired by her sister and with the support of her parents (Section 3.3.1.2).

Equally, Wendy struggled with the arrival of new teachers: "*It was such a vicious circle … we didn't make much progress because the teachers kept changing … and always, when we got used to the teacher and she found out about the level of the class so that she could adjust to it, she was replaced by a new teacher again*" (20:22). Everything changed for the better with her transition to secondary school.

Fourth, even though they were negative about learning English because of the turnover of teachers, Nicole, Cindy, and Kate later managed to find other driving forces. In Nicole's opinion the changing of teachers turned her initial English learning into an unpleasant experience: "*We started in grade four, perhaps… And it was a terrible shock, because we had, maybe, six teachers during the first year. In short, we had a new teacher all the time*" (13:14). Moreover, her negative attitudes to English and learning English were reinforced by entirely textbook-based lessons or pointless lessons: "*We had a teacher who was nervous all the time, and instead of doing something with us, we watched films, often in Czech, since she was not able to manage the boys. Simply, we didn't do anything at all*" (13:16). In spite of that, English played an important role in her life – from the age of twelve she was a keen follower of YouTube beauty bloggers and a TV series fan (Section 3.3.3).

Cindy experienced a shock after one year of learning English, when her first teacher, whom she liked, was replaced. The way of teaching altered substantially; the atmosphere in class was not friendly any more, and, most seriously, the new teacher did not respect the learners' prior learning experience and knowledge at all: "*… a different teacher, different learning materials and … what my classmates learnt in the previous year I had never seen before … she expected us to know it as well and she did not respect us*" (3:5). Cindy was not able to cope with the new situation. As a result, the average grades which she obtained in her mid-term report in grade five affected her self-image negatively. Luckily, as discussed in Section 3.3.1.3, her mother reacted promptly and found her a private tutor with whose assistance she managed to accommodate to the requirements of the other teacher and after some time regained the motivation to learn.

Similarly, Kate was not keen on frequent changes of teachers, the impact of which negatively influenced her attitudes to English and to learning English: "*We definitely didn't have very good English teachers at basic school … … we had about six teachers, substitute teachers taught us all the time, there was no system and the last two years there were no requirements, you could do well just with cheating during tests*" (11:32). However, later in her life she discovered the world of Korean and Japanese TV series (Section 3.3.3) but to understand them she needed to comprehend the English subtitles, which was her powerful driving force to learn the language.

To conclude this section, Harry's opinion, representing those who experienced more stable conditions for learning at school, will be quoted. Harry is convinced that the changing of the teacher may ruin the previously established relationship to the subject: "*… in my opinion it is really stupid to change a teacher, unless s/he is somehow problematic or the pupils have problems with her/him, so I think, if the teacher is … good, then it's stupid to change the teacher … With a new teacher the relationship to the subject may be influenced negatively, if it was positive before … So I say … I was lucky that I had the same teacher and I'm really glad about that, because my relationship with English was formed on the basis … of the good influence of the teacher. Undoubtedly*" (3:42).

(b) Teachers' knowledge base of teaching

In their narratives the interviewees described an array of NNS English teachers. Some students' accounts remained at the descriptive level and did not provide deeper insights beyond that: "*I just liked/didn't like the teacher.*" Several students appreciated the teachers they had experienced before entering university, such as Bill, for example: "*I haven't had any problems [with teachers of English], I think they've just done a great job, they've guided me […] to this place [to the university]*" (4:56). By the same token, Harry was also positive about his former teachers: "*I must say that English was the only subject in which I have always had an awesome teacher*" (3:37).

Some other students were not so fortunate and when talking about their teachers they were able to formulate pertinent comments. The analysis revealed that the success of the teachers' job depended, in the students' opinion, on the teachers' ability to choose and mediate the subject matter appropriately to the particular class, i.e. on their pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987). Though teaching and learning English involves more aspects, all the interviewees considered just the teaching of grammar. Two students, Alice and George, touched upon the relationship between content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge.

Bill's overall experience was positive: *"They tried to explain it in the simplest possible way"* (4:61). Similarly, Frances was satisfied with her basic school teacher: *"She was really great, she guided us through the grammar, she explained it nicely"* (7:76).

Olivia also experienced a young lower-secondary teacher *"… who was so enthusiastic and … she was able to explain the subject matter well … I remember that she explained the present perfect, such a complex thing, so well that I didn't have any problems at the secondary school"* (14:08). Later in her life, she found inspiring teachers at a language school. Olivia's learning history was quite long, since it took her years to find an appropriate study programme at a university. She talked extensively about her teachers at the language school, which she attended after several years at various universities and before she applied for the English language teacher education programme. She especially acknowledged that *"they were able to explain things in such a way that we remembered them and later, when writing tests, we didn't have any problems"* (14:99).

Contrary to that, Alice was rather critical of her teachers, more specifically about those at her secondary school: *"One would expect a different approach when mediating the information. This concerned about 90 per cent [of teachers], because you recognise easily that he could speak nicely and that he had the knowledge about English nicely sorted out in his head, but then he wasn't able to mediate it to us"* (1:125). Alice perceived one of the teachers as an educated and experienced person, i.e. a teacher with content knowledge; however, she believed that he was not able to teach well: *"… and I missed a little bit the transfer of the information between the teacher and learners; they weren't able to say … they weren't able to teach us the right things … we were not sure how to say basic things but we had to learn complex phrases … his English was good … he had all the knowledge but failed to teach it"* (1:28).

George formulated his opinion clearly: *"… at basic school the teacher must know, first of all, how to teach and not what to teach because … you do not have to have a Ph.D. in maths to know how much 1 plus 1 is, but you should know how to explain it to the learners"* (8:38). He aptly emphasised the importance of pedagogical content knowledge but prioritised it over content knowledge, which is a rather simplified point of view. Both types of knowledge are

interdependent – without sound knowledge of the content, pedagogical content knowledge is impossible to develop.

The importance of subject matter knowledge was emphasised by Frances and Harry, who put it in a straightforward way. Frances formulated her general requirements for a teacher: *"The most important thing for a teacher is to understand, to be able, and to know"* (7:58). Probably, her belief in content knowledge is so strong because during her school years she experienced the opposite in one of her teachers' classes: *"When we asked her about some words, for example, I don't know, not a difficult word, she started to google it, to search for it on the internet, so it seemed to be unprofessional. It is obvious that the teacher can't know everything, of course, but the words weren't that difficult"* (7:37).

Additionally, Harry commented on the lack of content knowledge in terms of pronunciation: *"Regarding some teachers' pronunciation, it wasn't on the best level and I think, that what is worse is that they mediate the language to students and then it inevitably impacts on the students, I'd say. Native speakers should be in charge of the spoken language"* (3:46). The requirement is obviously unrealistic; moreover, with reference to the relevant research (e.g. Medgyes, 1999), even NNS teachers are capable of functioning as a pronunciation model. In the Czech context, secondary school teachers outperformed those from basic schools (Ivanová, 2011).

Consistently with this finding, George believes that secondary grammar school teachers have the necessary content knowledge: *"At the secondary grammar school, the teachers are experts in what they teach but they can't teach"* (8:39). He was reflecting on his experience when describing one of his many teachers: *"One teacher with an RNDr. degree, who I really respected, who was really very clever […] but she just: 'OK, this, this, this, OK, you understand, and let's practise it.' And for ten minutes she explained the subject matter; perhaps two or three people understood and the rest … It was a pity, wasn't it? […] If only she taught us less and we understood …"* (8:40). At the same time he was aware that the teacher would not discuss the issue with the class, which he found inappropriate anyway.

Interestingly, Tess experienced such a situation; her teacher was willing to respect her students' needs and tried to make her lessons more learner-centred. Remarkably, this quality was perceived as being 'soft': *"… I was in a group with a teacher who was rather 'soft'; she tried to modify lessons according to the suggestions that we made"* (18:29). More specifically, the suggestions concerned the following aspects of the lessons: *"Regarding those discussions, we could choose a topic which would be discussed, for example. And also … about the form, whether we wanted to watch films or analyse songs … that it wasn't only about the subject matter but also about our interests, so, so, the rules were set in a slightly different way. But the rules concerning tests were fixed"* (18:30). Sadly, Tess was the only interviewee who mentioned a teacher who reflected her learners' needs by making the curriculum more relevant to the students. The teacher thus implemented one of the motivational strategies,

which obviously worked: *"The teacher then saw that when we enjoyed the lessons it was easier to work with us than if we hadn't been interested in the topic and wouldn't have anything to say … she saw that when we were passive, it was possible to change and it was much better for both sides"* (18:28).

The interviewees repeatedly mentioned another related issue – that of appropriate demands. The issue will also be considered in relation to differentiation further on in this chapter. Therefore, only two illustrative quotes will be provided. Frances thinks *"… that a good teacher should be strict about certain things in order to teach an appropriate amount of things … not to be … not to demand too little, simply, the learners should know something"* (7:59). Similarly, Irene recalls: *"It was terrible those four years at the secondary school […], simply, her approach, which the others liked because she was not demanding at all, but I didn't like it"* (9:21). The respondents described many teachers during the interviews and, interestingly, they only mentioned a few times that their demands were too high. In contrast, it emerged quite clearly that teachers' making no or low demands had a negative impact on discipline, willingness to cooperate, and learners' attitudes to the subject, and, subsequently, on their motivation to learn.

(c) Sensitivity to learner needs

We cannot agree more with Harry, who proposes:*"… really, the teacher's influence on mediating the information related to the subject is crucial, undeniably"* (3:89); nevertheless, we should add another perspective.

In the section devoted to the discussion of the turnover of English teachers, it appeared several times that with the arrival of a new teacher the approach to the learners changed. Teachers differ in how sensitive they are to the learners' characteristics and needs. Irene experienced such a caring approach after she moved to another town: *"The teachers there [at the new basic school] approached us in a nicer way, I'd say. The approach … she cared, she kept saying 'If you want to know something, ask me, that's why I'm here'"* (9:41).

Cindy, on the other hand, was taught by teachers who were rather insensitive, which is mentioned in this chapter in the sections related to the issue of the changing of teachers (Section (a) above) and to evaluation (Section 3.3.2.2). It is no wonder that she considers the teacher to be a major influence: *"I think teachers have an immense impact on students of a particular subject. Well, I must learn it myself but how they approach us … it's very influential"* (5:63). She experienced for herself the harmful effect of her teachers' approach on her attitudes to learning English at school.

With reference to humanistic psychology, respecting the learner should be a natural thing, which, unfortunately, is not always the case at present. Cindy's story may function as an example.

(d) Native speaker teacher phenomenon

The respondents' biographies offered many anecdotes regarding various kinds of encounters in a range of contexts with NSs, who played a more or less important role in the interviewees' lives (see also Sections 3.3.1.1, 3.3.1.2., and 3.3.3). This section concentrates on NS teachers in schools as they were viewed through the eyes of the respondents.

In her perception, Nicole's lessons with an NS teacher from Canada was her only positive experience of teachers of English at school: *"He always prepared a topic, we played games and we really talked for the whole lesson. It was not like 'Fill in the exercise, then we'll check it together,' which I don't like because everybody always waits till somebody answers and then fills it in. In his lessons we really talked, I liked it, we had fun … he was the best teacher I have ever had"* (13:15). Nicole especially appreciated the opportunity to talk in English and to be engaged in other types of activities than those that were textbook-based.

Having experienced three NSs from different ESCs, Paul found the cultural variety which they represented very enriching: *"For me it was very interesting to learn about the culture, how they live, how English differs in various regions […] it was interesting to compare our opinions about America, which were based just on films, with what he presented, what he talked about"* (15:104). Furthermore, he enjoyed confronting his own, usually stereotypical, perceptions of various ESCs with those of the NSs.

Similarly, Bill liked the discussion mode of the lessons, as well as the information about England from an insider's perspective: *"It was great that sometimes we had a native speaker from England. So, it was … He was really great, we discussed the topics which we were supposed to know for the maturita exam. We talked about the history of England, about different places in England, what they looked like, he presented his opinions …"* (4:41). The students felt safe in his classes in comparison to the lessons of their regular NNS teacher: *"The atmosphere was more pleasant with the native speaker, I don't know, we knew the lesson would be fine, we wouldn't get bad marks"* (4:52). He so appreciated the contact with the NS that he often talked to him informally in his free time.

Lara also appreciated the varied lessons taught by an NS teacher, with a considerable proportion of the class time devoted to discussions; however, she mentioned a negative side of this type of lesson: *"He [an American NS] prepared a topic for the lesson, then we watched a video or played a game or discussed a topical issue; everybody could give her/his opinion, so it was based on discussions. I think that on the one hand it was good that … someone who wanted to could use English, could speak, but on the other hand, when somebody didn't want to speak or was not active, so s/he didn't speak. It was me […] I wasn't eager to say what I know in front of others"* (12:50). Since the teacher did not attempt to involve everyone in the discussion, Lara only benefited from his lessons to a limited extent.

Regarding NS teachers, Tess's opinion evolved in the course of time: *"At the beginning nobody was enthusiastic about an NS teacher. You have to talk to the person and be active. But now I know that it was good to communicate with an NS and to hear that the NS speaks in a different way compared to the slow speech of the teacher that you are used to. Thanks to this you realised that you have to listen to songs in English, watch films in English to get used to the fact that spoken English is faster than the speech of your teacher who tries to help you with every word"* (18:38). Only after some time was she able to recognise the positives of the interaction with an NS teacher. The confrontation with the fast speech of an NS initiated her involvement in various comprehension-based activities, which helped her improve considerably. Such a confrontation, however, may have a negative effect if a person is discouraged and gives up.

Harry believes in NSs' exclusive role in pronunciation teaching: *"The contact with native speakers is absolutely necessary if a person is to learn the sound of the language properly"* (3:45). As mentioned earlier in the chapter, he doubts whether NNS teachers are able to teach English pronunciation. Similarly, Jane is persuaded that communication may only happen with the participation of NSs: *"Schools miss NSs and a chance to communicate more. During lessons you just follow a textbook and you don't learn to speak. You learn the grammar but then you arrive in a foreign country and you don't know what to say. This is what I missed most at school"* (10:136).

Lastly, the impact of the interaction with an NS teacher on a student's motivation should be mentioned. Irene's story is an example. She studied at a language school after the maturita exam. It was an intensive course which was tutored by both NNS and NS teachers. She especially appreciated two days with NSs every week: *"It was such satisfaction: 'Wow, a native speaker understands me, it's super, I'm at some level. It's getting better.' It was so encouraging, motivating to study more and more"* (9:14). Thanks to this experience, she eventually started to enjoy learning English after a long period of negativism: *"We had native speakers, so it was just … it was the most beneficial … I said to myself: 'Yes … a person from abroad can understand me.' … So, it was the main impulse for me"* (9:30).

(e) Summary of the section

On the basis of the analysis, conclusions may be drawn regarding the teacher as a significant factor in individuals' learning biographies. In relation to the teacher, four issues were identified by the interviewees: turnover of teachers, their knowledge base and sensitivity to learner needs, and the native speaker phenomenon.

Regarding the turnover of English teachers, it impacted on individual students in different ways. The respondents' stories suggest that under certain conditions the effects of the turnover do not necessarily have to be harmful: if a person's attitudes are firmly established or if alternative sources of motivation, unrelated to school, are found to energise

the learning of an individual. More autonomous learners are likely to cope with changing conditions more easily, since they are less teacher-dependent. Obviously, the influence of random factors, especially of luck, is evident – several interviewees eventually benefited from one of the changes.

The analysis of the interviews shows clearly that a major source of dissatisfaction with lessons of English was teachers' lack of pedagogical content knowledge. Conversely, having a teacher who was able to provide comprehensible explanations, especially of grammar, was highly appreciated. Some students observed a discrepancy between teachers' high level of subject matter knowledge and their inability to mediate it to a particular class of learners. A few students also noticed a lack of content knowledge in the area of pronunciation and vocabulary, which they perceived very negatively, as they did teachers' insensitivity to learner needs.

As regards NS teachers, they may contribute to students' learning in many ways. First, they create opportunities for authentic communication, which is usually a novel experience for learners. Being successful in negotiating meaning with NSs has a positive impact on the learners' motivation to learn. Conversely, being unsuccessful in communication with an NS is a potential drawback.

Second, communicative competence in English is NS teachers' main asset; obviously, their lessons are based on communication, predominantly on discussions. The interviewees appreciated that, as well as the variety of lessons as a feature distinguishing NSs' lessons from those of NNS teachers. This implies a conclusion, which will be discussed later, that some NNS teachers' lessons lack this variety.

Third, NSs have a different cultural background from their students, which creates opportunities for sharing and reflection. Fourth, for some students NSs also function as a model they may wish to imitate; this applies especially to pronunciation, since it is an aspect of English, which some learners admire.

Apart from the obvious benefits, potential drawbacks should be mentioned. As suggested by the interviewees, some students may be overwhelmed by NSs' spoken language and may not be willing to respond to the challenge. Furthermore, NSs do not always make sure that all the students are involved; they expect them to be responsible for their own learning. Thus, for example, individual students' personal characteristics or possible barriers to speaking may considerably limit the benefits they gain from the lessons with an NS teacher.

3.3.2.2 Teaching and learning English at school

The respondents talked about years of learning English; their experience consisted of hundreds of school lessons. Obviously, it is not the aim of the study to generalise and to characterise teaching and learning in Czech schools, but some voices are quite strong. There are voices claiming that lessons taught by NNS teachers are rather grammar-oriented

and textbook-based. At the same time there are voices asserting that lessons of English are interesting, enjoyable, and beneficial. When considering the prevailing focus of the lesson, it is grammar which is mentioned most frequently, followed by vocabulary. Contrary to that, speaking and pronunciation are believed to be neglected aspects of English.

This section focuses on three central issues related to teaching and learning English which were articulated by the interviewees: the role of the textbook, evaluation, and differentiation.

(a) The role of the textbook in teaching and learning English

The textbook had various roles in the learning experience of the interviewees. While it was a symbol of English for Alice: *"I immediately remember blue Chatterbox, the blue textbook …"* (1:11), it determined, together with the teacher, Harry's positive attitudes to the subject: *"… if I remember the textbook, the textbook we used, so, it was very entertaining, and it was really in the form of one big story and in each chapter, there was a part of it, so the child really reads it as a fairy tale. […] I think that both factors [the textbook and the teacher] made me like the subject"* (3:40).

For some other students following a textbook represented a typical way of teaching English, which they, including Cindy, George, and David, did not mind. Thus, the textbook was the main or even the only source of content in English lessons. Some other students perceived following a textbook step by step as a routine they found incredibly boring. For example, Irene, when describing her secondary school experience, she said *"We did exercise one, then two, then exercises three and four, exercise five and a 45–minute lesson was over … I don't remember anything else but working with the textbook all the time"* (9:48). Jane's experience was similar: *"Well, we followed one unit in the textbook after another […] there was no chance to speak or the like. We followed the textbook all the time, we kept filling in the textbook"* (10:36). Those two students were discouraged most by the textbook-based approach, which had a negative influence on their attitudes to English and to learning English.

The rest of the interviewees did not speak critically about the textbook-based lessons, but they rather appreciated if the teacher used diverse teaching techniques. They used formulations such as, e.g. *"It was not just about the textbook, s/he used to bring videos, games, songs, etc."* Olivia, for example, enjoyed the variety in lessons, though they were mainly focused on grammar: *"She was rather strict … but it was good; she used to bring songs, which were in at that time, we had to fill in words, which was fine, or she found a short series of videos; we also filled in words we were able to catch … I know she talked in English a lot"* (14:37). Non-routine lessons of English contributed to the change of Lara's attitudes to learning English as discussed in relation to the turnover of teachers.

(b) Evaluation

In general, evaluation is an inherent part of teaching and learning, including FL education. During the interviews several respondents mentioned occasions in their life when they experienced a demotivating effect of evaluation on formal education.

Lara's story described a negative backwash effect of vocabulary tests at basic school: *"She wasn't able to manage the class. She often shouted … She probably wasn't able to make learners interested, that's probably why they disturbed the class. And we wrote vocabulary tests and it was always so demotivating to learn that this is incorrect, incorrect, incorrect … and you had a feeling that one must know how to spell words because it is the most important thing which matters. […] If she had tried to make us interested in English instead […], if she had talked to us in English, shown us pictures … we would probably have learnt more"* (12:12). Rather than testing a variety of aspects of English, the teacher's attention was focused only on vocabulary, and, moreover, in the written form. This type of testing reinforces the learners' false belief that the aim of learning English is to be able to write words correctly.

Rose used to be a learner for whom formal evaluation was of the utmost importance: *"I've always wanted to have a one for English, so I've worked hard […] I've always known that I want to be a teacher of English and that I must be good. So I studied, but I liked it"* (16:26). She remembered a strict teacher who tested several learners' vocabulary every lesson: *"She tested them in front of the class, eight words. Every mistake meant a lower grade … and we were also tested without previous notice, which, I think, was the worst thing"* (16:20). Though she did not approve of this way of testing, she worked hard to get the best grades. Similarly to Lara's story, the situation depicted by Rose is also an example of a negative backwash effect – the testing of lexis seems to have been a priority. Furthermore, the tests seem to have been based on the translation of isolated words, which is not recommended, especially in English. Not only may a Czech word be translated in several ways, if the context is not provided, but words in English may also have multiple meanings. On top of that, testing learners in front of the class disadvantages those learners who are not that self-confident or those with specific learning difficulties.

As already discussed in Section 3.3.1.3, Olivia perceived a discrepancy between her ability to function effectively outside school and her school results. She considered herself an unsuccessful learner because her grades at secondary school were average. She attributed it to the stereotyped views of the learners the teacher had as a result of her evaluation methods: *"I invested efforts in learning English, but the result was the same … The reason may be that at the beginning the teacher sorted out the students according to grades, which mostly remained the same all the time"* (14:16). Furthermore, she criticised the teacher's tests, which were focused mainly on grammar; in her opinion they contained catch questions only. Obviously, at school Olivia did not have an opportunity to show what she was able to

do in English, which often made her feel upset and demotivated. Then an interesting thing happened: *"It was strange about our English teacher that she knew English well but she wasn't able to use it while solving practical problems … it seemed to me when we were in London that I was able to make myself understood much better than she was … probably she didn't have any contact with NSs …"* (14:111). Seeing her teacher's problems communicating in English and being confident herself made her come to terms with the average evaluation: *"So, I'll have a three for English, I'll survive… After the London experience I realised that it is not about grades but about the ability to use the language"* (14:113).

Olivia's story is just another example of a negative backwash effect; this time testing English was reduced to the testing of grammar. Furthermore, Olivia suggested that the tests had not been constructed properly, since they did not include the content which was covered in the lessons; the questions were perceived as difficult and tricky. The test results made her view herself as an unsuccessful learner. Luckily, Olivia got out of a vicious circle since she managed to self-evaluate her ability to communicate in the target language environment positively, which helped her realise the relativeness of formal evaluation at school.

Later, at university, Olivia experienced a teacher whose way of testing she appreciated: *"She explained the grammar, we practised it, and then she prepared a test with what we had learnt and not with catch questions. And we felt confident: 'Yes, we've learnt it, we can build on it and use it.'"* (14:119). In contrast with the demotivating approach of the secondary school teacher, the university teacher was able to construct content-based progress tests appropriately and thus used the motivational function of evaluation effectively.

An important principle in evaluation is that teachers should not evaluate learners' personality, but their performance, or, more specifically, relevant aspects of the performance. Cindy's secondary school teacher did not follow the principle. It was before the "maturita" exam, when the teacher ridiculed Cindy in front of the class and made a critical evaluation of her appearance and non-verbal signals rather than her spoken performance: *"During the revision of the maturita topics I was asked several questions in front of the blackboard. I answered and I was quite happy with my performance and that day there were two classes joined together, so about thirty people, and suddenly she started to mimic me and told me I looked terrible, my face was terrible …"* (3:12). Furthermore, she was advised not to sit for the exam unless she changed her appearance and body language. The teacher's unprofessional behaviour had detrimental effects on her self-image, and her self-confidence before the "maturita" exam was lost. Thanks to the encouragement of her mother she passed the exam successfully but it took her years to get over the experience.

Regarding the common maturita exam, Simon was critical of the teachers' way of assessing individual students' performances: *"Nevertheless, they [differences among students] did not come out at the maturita exam because our teacher scored all the writing tasks 100 per cent and a student who had had low grades for years passed the exam with a two. So,*

the differences vanished" (17:22). Simon was surprised that the considerable heterogeneity of the class was not reflected in the maturita exam scores. A possible explanation of the level scores might be the low level of difficulty of the common maturita exam for grammar school students. Even though they were not at the same level, all of them were able to pass the B1 maturita exam with the highest scores.

(c) Differentiation

Interestingly, when responding to the question about teaching and learning English at basic school, the interviewees' memories were often vague; however, those concerning differentiation tended to come out clearly.

Individual students experienced differences in the extent to which the teaching and learning of English in the formal educational context was differentiated. First of all, internal differentiation at basic school will be analysed.

George had some prior knowledge of English before he started to learn it as a compulsory subject at school. Compared to his peers, he was more advanced, which the teacher did not reflect much: *"But in no way … she did not especially care about me, […] she distributed her attention evenly among learners, so, when I finished a task earlier, she just said: 'OK, so, do one more task.'"* (8:63). In contrast to such an ad hoc approach, Simon experienced a systematic one in grade four: *"… the worse learners, though it isn't a good label, sat in the first rows and worked with the teacher on specific things, while we were at the back of the class and worked individually or in groups and we also participated in a whole-class activity, if she wanted us to be as one group … So, I remember that there were two groups at different levels"* (17:18). Simon noticed a parallel between achievement and attitudes to English and to learning English: *"There was a group of people who were positive about English or who wanted to learn even if they were not that good … and then … there was a group who rejected English totally … because, maybe, because they were not successful."* (17:18). Simon quite appreciated the teacher's approach and missed it after the replacement of the teacher in grade five, though he was able to adjust to the new conditions easily.

Contrary to that, Jane and Olivia, while at basic school, perceived a lack of internal differentiation discontentedly: *"I was in a class that didn't care about English at all and there were a few of us who wanted to learn something and so the teachers paced the lesson according to the less able learners and we proceeded very slowly; nobody was interested, so I can't say that I was happy about it"* (10:36). *"We were not divided into groups, like a better group and a worse group, so there were people who were bored to death during the lesson, and then there were people who kept failing completely, who were completely lost"* (14:37).

The students were able to observe the heterogeneous needs of their peers; the teachers, prevalently, failed to respond to them – Simon's basic school experience seems to be unique.

More interviewees raised the issue of differentiation, both internal and external, in relation to secondary school. As regards internal differentiation, Bill's and Simon's experience, which will be commented on in more detail in the last paragraph of this section, was negative. By the same token, Cindy also missed a differentiated approach on the part of her English teacher. The grammar school which she attended integrated students with special educational needs. She disapproved of the way her English teacher approached a handicapped learner in her class: *"She told him: 'I don't know what to do with you. Just listen.' I don't think this is the solution; she could have approached him individually, she could have given him a task to do … I never saw her doing something special with him"* (5:94). Interestingly, while she was sensitive to the needs of her handicapped classmate, which were not reflected by the teacher, she did not consider her own; despite probably being dyslexic (Section 3.3.1.3), she did not think that the teacher should have noticed her symptoms of potential specific learning difficulties.

In comparison, three students experienced teachers who considered the heterogeneous needs of a class to some extent. Wendy, for example, appreciated her teacher's ability to differentiate the process and the content of the lessons: *"… she was able to involve all of us, even those who were weaker, in the lessons so that all of us liked it. […] she wanted us, those who were better, to learn more, she wasn't satisfied when we knew the same things as the weaker ones, so, we could improve […] we learnt more words and did different things"* (20:28). Similarly, David experienced differentiated lessons, especially when preparing for the maturita exam: *"… he divided us into groups, in which […] we practised, we had conversations, we wrote essays, gave them to the teacher for correction, then we discussed various problems and so on"* (6:52).

Harry's experience of internal differentiation is more than rich. Moreover, he is well aware of its value: *"I have to acknowledge that he approached people individually. This is something you can't see very often and if I go through my student life retrospectively, I can't remember if I observed any lessons of other teachers with such a high level of differentiation … The individual approach may have disadvantages as well … those who were better were asked to do more ambitious tasks, to discuss more ambitious topics … The negative thing was that some people were irritated by the fact that they had more difficult tasks and topics to discuss … it was also reflected in assessment"* (3:43). While some of his classmates did not agree with the teacher's philosophy, especially with the implementation of the individual progress norm in evaluation, Harry was content with it: *"I was ambitious, of course, I wanted to be better than the others, but regarding the marking of the weaker ones, I didn't mind it. I took into account that they were worse in this and in other subjects it was different"* (3:44). Furthermore, Harry aptly described the benefits of individualised instruction: *"Such an approach by a teacher benefits everyone because the better ones used to get more ambitious tasks to improve and the weaker ones*

used to get easier tasks so as not to be discouraged, and I think it was beneficial for all of us" (3:44).

Several respondents also raised the issue of external differentiation. While Lara was positive about the experience, other people expressed some reservations.

Lara obtained high scores on a placement test on entry to secondary school, which she attributed to good luck rather than to her ability: *"I was lucky because I was in the best English group […] and I think, really, we had the best teacher, whose English was the best of all"* (12:46). In a way, she was highly fortunate that the teacher of the best group and her teaching style suited her needs so well.

Alice, Paul, and Bill also sat for a placement test after entering upper-secondary education. Unlike Lara, they did not score high enough to be placed in group A but all of them were put in group B. From Alice's point of view it was unfortunate that the students stayed in the same groups for four years, which she did not like: *"… we came with what we learnt at basic school and we couldn't influence it; we got into the bad, average group, where we stayed and there was no chance to change groups or to progress … where we started, there we finished … and we, the students, couldn't influence it"* (1:36). She regretted not having a chance to get into the best group because of the teacher. She would have preferred to have the one teaching the A group of students, who were enthusiastic about his lessons, though he was demanding.

Paul's story is very similar. Being in group B, he was taught by an older female teacher who, in his perception, was not strict enough. On top of that he considered her teaching style old-fashioned: *"The people in group A had a young teacher, who was stricter. She also viewed things in a modern way, grammar, everything. She had various other types of activities than our teacher had. While we were doing boring things, we kept asking: 'Why can't we do what they do in the A group?' They watched videos or listened to, for example, the US President's speech"* (15:82). When talking about his learning of English after starting secondary school, he made an interesting comment: *"I was in group B. I don't know why, but I stopped doing anything, I don't know, I gave up studying new things in English. I thought I knew everything I needed to make myself understood, so it was a kind of stagnation"* (15:82). The cause of the stagnation might be related to the effects of external differentiation, i.e. to his dissatisfaction with his English lessons. Probably, he needed to be pushed to learn in this phase of his learning or motivated to learn by challenging and interesting lessons. Nevertheless, Paul is doubtful whether being in a better group would have helped: *"I think I would be at the same level. Those who were better than me in the first year were also better than me at the end. The same was true about those who were worse than me. Simply, everything was the same. There wasn't much progress"* (15:84).

Bill was also placed in group B after passing a placement test, which was surprising because he used English outside school quite extensively. It might be assumed that thanks

to the activities he was regularly involved in, both reading and listening comprehension would be his strengths. Nevertheless, the test, which he described as rather grammar-based with the emphasis on tenses, probably did not enable him to show them. His experience also illustrated the limits of external differentiation: in spite of streaming, the group was still heterogeneous: *"I always wanted to improve. They [the less advanced students] slowed me down because we kept repeating one thing over and over again, which took us a great deal of time"* (4:63). Likewise, Simon's experience did not involve differentiated instruction either, though the class was rather heterogeneous: *"… the teachers approached all the people in the same way, which I thought was a mistake. Because when the teachers adjusted the level to the worst, the others were bored because they had to drill something they already knew. When they respected the best, the worst students were in trouble"* (17:22). It is important to emphasise that he studied at an eight-year grammar school after a strict selection procedure. Thus, he may be considered as a student in the best group. Obviously, without regular re-streaming, external differentiation is not effective.

(d) Summary of the section

Generally, "the role of the coursebook is to be at the service of teachers and learners but not to be their master" (Cunningsworth, 1995, p.7). This applies to textbooks of English as well. On the one hand, they may be a priceless source of motivation and of structured and graded content; on the other hand, they may become a source of negative attitudes to learning English, if followed slavishly and without imagination for a long time. This study confirmed the students' negative perceptions of boring textbook-based lessons and their unfavourable influence on the students' motivation to learn.

Together with lessons of English being labelled as textbook-based and thus boring, at the same time they are reported as being mainly grammar-oriented. Furthermore, students perceive learning English as filling in a textbook. The finding may be interpreted in several ways. First, teachers put great emphasis on grammar and, consequently, learners generalise that attention is prevailingly paid to grammar. This might mean that teachers ignore or marginalise the tasks focusing on other aspects of English, which textbooks nowadays certainly contain. Second, teachers use the full potential of textbooks; however, the types of tasks are very similar, e.g. filling in gaps and completing sentences, which creates an overall routinised image of textbook-based lessons. Contrary to that, lessons taught by NS teachers are valued for their variety in terms of focus, teaching techniques, and teaching aids.

Evaluating learners' progress is an essential area of the teacher's professional competence. A lack of competence may impact on learners seriously, as demonstrated by several interviewees' stories.

When talking about testing, the respondents, and not only those quoted in the text, mentioned almost exclusively either vocabulary or grammar tests. There are several possible

explanations. The question is whether the information can be considered reliable; the respondents may not remember tests focusing on skills or they do not differentiate types of tests and use "test of grammar" as a cover term. If the information is reliable, then the "test-what-you-teach principle" is not followed: teachers focus on more aspects of English in their lessons but they prioritise testing vocabulary and grammar only. This may have several reasons; for example, vocabulary and grammar tests are relatively easy to construct compared to testing skills. Unfortunately, this approach results in a negative backwash effect, as described in Section 3.3.2.2 (b); those aspects which are not tested tend to be considered marginal and unimportant.

As regards differentiation, it may be concluded that the implementation of internal differentiation in teaching and learning English at basic and secondary schools is sparse. All the students who encountered differentiated instruction perceived the experience positively. Conversely, the lack of such experience was linked with the respondents' negative perceptions.

Regarding external differentiation, the biographies that were analysed reveal that its implementation does not result in the creation of homogeneous groups. So, in fact, it does not solve the problem. If not combined with internal differentiation, teaching does not target all the learners but only a proportion of them. Furthermore, having fixed groups for the whole period of the attendance at basic or secondary school may have detrimental effects on the motivation to learn of some learners. Thus regular re-streaming combined with differentiated lessons seems to be the most effective strategy.

Another problem related to external differentiation concerns the placement tests which are used to divide the students into groups. They are often based on grammar, as several respondents suggested. From the point of view of practicality it is understandable, since such tests are relatively easy to construct. However, they lack validity, since they do not target the other aspects of English (e.g. skills). Consequently, students do not have a chance to show all their abilities. This might result in students being placed in an inappropriate group, which may negatively influence their attitudes to learning English at school.

3.3.3 Other significant influences

This section discusses two major influences: informal learning and opportunities to interact in English.

3.3.3.1 Informal learning

Using English in an informal context was found to be a rich source of students' motivation, which was energised by largely instrumental incentives; the knowledge of English was actually a means to achieve some other goals: to be able to play PC games in international

groups, to understand TV series, films, or songs in English, to read about topics of interest, etc. Furthermore, the sources of motivation coming from outside formal education were so powerful that they contributed to the change of several students' negative attitudes.

(a) Playing PC games

The stories of "the players" were already discussed in Section 3.3.1.2. Harry, David, and Victor were members of the generation which experienced an unprecedented development of ICT.

Victor's driving forces to learn English were the following: "*… playing PC games was my favourite hobby and … Czech versions of the games were not available, so most of them were in English and before I started to learn English, I understood a little, so it was a motivation to learn something to actually know what to do*" (19:52). Later, with the development of ICT, he needed more than just to understand: "*… with the spread of the internet, we started to play online … those multiplayer online games, in which many people are involved and you are expected to actively … to communicate actively in English*" (19:80).

Equally, David confessed: "*… it was important for me to know English so that I could play PC games, which used to be my big hobby. […] I couldn't have done it without English; only a few games were translated into Czech*" (6:34). With the arrival of online games he was pushed to interact in English with other players: "*It was important … cooperation and communication were very important, like making a decision what to do and so on. Each player had a specific role, so it was important to understand each other well*" (6:18).

Furthermore, Harry explained the multiplier effects of playing PC games: "*You are pushed inconspicuously to join the environment, to meet new people through the internet, and from time to time you feel like contacting the people who you meet more often via Skype or similar programs*" (3:28).

The quotes nicely illustrate how the development of technology necessitated a different mode of communication, i.e. a move from reception to production. They also clarify why playing PC games correlates with Skype conversations in English (Chapter 2).

(b) The world of entertainment

Simon's story is interesting because it uncovers the wide range of activities he was involved in regularly after the age of fifteen, although he did not participate in PC games. Apart from listening to music and watching films and series, the most common ones, he started to write reports for sports entertainment websites. He watched a wrestling show every week and then he wrote a summary for the websites: "*I watched those shows […] and I practised a lot. I watched the show and tried to understand, I tried to get their accents, slang expressions and so on […] so, it helped me a lot, because the show lasted an hour and a half. And I watched it every, every Friday, so it pushed me forward a little*" (17:14). Gradually,

he became involved in the community that revolved around sports entertainment: *"Later I started to communicate in English when I joined discussion forums about wrestling or about some series and so on. The biggest forums were, of course, in English on American websites. So I needed to communicate with them somehow"* (17:142). Furthermore, because of his interest in music, he also started to write lyrics in English for his friends' bands.

Considering Simon's use of English outside school, not only was it quite massive, but also, similarly to the "players", it involved both comprehension and production – apart from producing written texts, he interacted with other users of English using computer-mediated communication.

Informal learning was also significant in Kate's and Nicole's biographies. Kate belongs to the group of students with negative attitudes to learning English at school. Her reasons were the following: *"I didn't like English, I didn't need it in my life, I liked different subjects, and it was like: 'What is English good for, when I live in the Czech Republic?' I like spending time at home, I don't like to travel […] It was not important for me"* (11:24). Obviously, at that time she did not have a driving force to learn English, which she eventually found outside the formal context. It was her interest in Asian music, thanks to which she discovered the world of Korean and Japanese films and TV series. In order to understand, she needed to comprehend English subtitles. *"Till the middle of secondary school I couldn't see the importance of learning English for me, and, then … I started to watch the series and, suddenly, I realised: 'Yes, it's useful for me, if I want to understand it.' So, I learnt English in my free time, not at school, I'd say"* (11:12). Having a personally relevant reason for learning English initiated a considerable change: *"I know that it was a dramatic shift … The way I struggled with English [and needed her mother's help] and then … and it's true that it was really intensive, watching the series, I didn't do anything else, I lived for it"* (11:148). Clearly, Kate's contact with English was merely about exposure, though extensive. She was not involved in any kind of production or interaction.

Similarly to Kate, Nicole also experienced such a shift, though it was not so dramatic. While she liked the English language, her attitudes to learning English were negative because of the turnover of the teachers (Section 3.3.2.1). At about the age of twelve, she started to watch YouTube videos, films, and TV series in English: *"At the beginning I didn't like it because I didn't understand at all […] but later I was eager to see all the films with my favourite actors and then I realised that I was starting to catch words and to understand"* (13:34). Nicole managed to overcome her initial problems and gradually became a daily follower of beauty bloggers: *"As I've said, I've watched various funny videos, in which they talk, I like it […] For example, there is a group of beauty bloggers who make videos about, for example, how to do your make-up, and I love watching it; every day when I get up, there are new videos to watch"* (13:38). Obviously, Nicole's involvement in informal learning helped

her compensate for her negative experience of learning English at school. Like Kate, she used English receptively.

(c) Autonomous learning

One more significant event, an example of autonomous learning, is included in this section for the reasons explained in Chapter 2. It illustrates the power of learner autonomy.

When he was fourteen, George discovered a method for learning languages which advertised promising outcomes, conditional only on a proper implementation of the method. He made a decision to apply it in his own learning, since he found the goal personally relevant and achievable: *"I could see that I would at least learn this [English] since I'm not good at anything else"* (7:16). *This [applying the method] was something that … that one could find the time for … that I believed I could manage … I could succeed"* (7:19). He managed to organise his everyday study time according to the guidelines and recommendations. When implementing the method he noticed the progress he had made, which energised his motivation to continue: *"… you can compare yourself with your classmates … and I could see that I started to make progress"* (7:13). George was self-disciplined enough to sustain his efforts for about a year. He believed in success, which he achieved. In retrospect he realised the benefits of the learning outcomes, which he attributed to the effort he had invested.

The method suited him well since he had more autonomy in learning, which he lacked in the classes at school: *[When learning] I need my own pace. This [applying the method] was something I could control myself. Not just 'do this, do this, do this, and if you don't do it, there will be sanctions'"* (7:56).

3.3.3.2 Opportunities for interaction in English

While the stories quoted in the previous section document the interviewees' autonomous actions, this section presents the influences which originated in formal, non-formal, or target culture contexts (Chapter 2), but resulted in opportunities to interact with either NSs or other speakers of English.

(a) English camps

English camps represent a domestic immersion context of learning an FL (Chapter 2) which is balanced in terms of communicative and learning contexts: learners study the target language intensively in their L1 environment, and, at the same time, the target language is used in interaction outside the class. The role of English camps in Cindy's and Olivia's lives was mentioned in Section 3.3.1.3. For both students their participation in the camps was significant for two reasons: their ability to speak English developed thanks to the interaction with NSs and they also became more self-confident. Olivia was more specific regarding the benefits of the camps: *"… the English camps have been so important*

for me in my learning of English because the contact with NSs is priceless, and … […] their impact on me was immense, I learnt to use English … not to be afraid to make a mistake, not to be afraid to say something incorrectly … I learnt just to say it, explain it, use another word, explain it somehow…" (14:08). She viewed them primarily from the perspective of the communication strategies she obviously developed in interaction with NSs.

(b) International projects

Victor had a chance to participate in an international project. Though none of the partner schools was in an ESC, he appreciated the opportunity to communicate with other NNSs of English: *"It was surely an interesting experience… at the secondary school there wasn't any emphasis on phonology as I noticed … the people's accents differed … the way of pronouncing words differed considerably, so, sometimes, sometimes it was a problem to understand what was going on, it was certainly a valuable experience to try to communicate with people whose mother tongues differed"* (19:88). Victor viewed the experience as being beneficial in terms of pronunciation; interestingly, he did not mention the issue of various accents in relation to the interaction with other players in the context of online games. It is possible that the community of players was not that heterogeneous regarding the mother tongue and NSs of English prevailed. Another reason may be that in the online environment he was able to anticipate what topic attention would be focused on, which would have made comprehension easier.

Wendy's school was involved in a European networking project. She also viewed a chance to communicate with international project participants, mainly from Portugal and Italy, positively, though the interaction was computer-mediated. *"The most difficult thing was to get up the courage to write an email to somebody […] later it was OK, we didn't mind mistakes and it was fine, we communicated with each other as if we met in person"* (20:86).

(c) Stays in English-speaking countries

The effects of stays in ESCs were discussed earlier in the chapter from different perspectives (Section 3.3.1.1, Section 3.3.1.2). This section focuses on opportunities to interact in English. From this perspective, it was especially Eve, who interacted with NSs extensively during her long residence in the UK. Contrary to that, Jane also spent a relatively long time in Scotland; however, she mainly interacted with the Poles whom she worked with. Compared to Eve and Jane, the amount of interaction in which the rest of the students were able to be involved during their short-term visits appears to be minimal.

3.3.3.3 Summary of the section

The stories of those who learnt English extensively in an informal context confirm the need to have personally relevant aims to pursue. The students mentioned in this section were

driven by instrumental motives – communicative competence in English served them as a tool to achieve their autonomous goals. Acquisition of English was a by-product of the process. Informal learning provided motivational incentives to those students who lacked them at school.

The above-mentioned opportunities to interact with NSs and NNSs of English turned out to be significant influences in the students' lives. The stories confirm the value of interaction with NSs, but also with NNSs of English. Moreover, the selected examples illustrate how ICT facilitates interaction in English and makes it accessible to any user, even in an FL environment.

3.4 Critical incidents – summary

The study has detected an array of events in individual biographies which the interviewees considered significant. In some students' biographies it is easy to identify the critical incidents which impacted most on their learning of English. In some other biographies, such events are much less visible. This section offers an overview of the most significant events in the students' lives.

As concerns the first group, the interviewees' critical incidents will be arranged according to the life periods in which they happened.

In the pre-primary period, it was George's parents' decision to enrol him into a course of English. Though it was one of many activities he was involved in, English was a favourite one. Since then he had always attended free-time courses of English, which made him confident at school. Furthermore, another critical incident in his life was the implementation of a special method for learning languages. He did it autonomously and the perceived effect was a huge leap in his proficiency. Regarding the temporal dimension, it is possible to find a parallel in Bill's story; he was strongly influenced by his brother and the long story started in his pre-school years.

David, Harry, and Victor encountered PC games as primary school learners and the encounter was critical. Their desire to play PC games facilitated their acquisition of English. Furthermore, in David's life, there was one more significant event which influenced his learning considerably, though negatively – his parents' recommendation not to apply for an eight-year grammar school. Contrary to that, Simon benefited from his parents' decision to apply for the same type of grammar school, though some of the benefits were manifested much later in the form of opportunities to travel abroad, e.g. to Australia, which he especially liked. Moreover, in his teenage years his interest in sports entertainment initiated a substantial involvement in informal learning. As regards Olivia, her parents' decision to involve her in summer English camps was the critical incident – becoming an organiser herself after several years as a participant provided her with opportunities to

interact with NSs. Her ability to communicate effectively later helped her come to terms with the harmful effects of the negative grammar-based evaluation at secondary school. Cindy's first critical incident happened in grade five, when the teacher that she liked was replaced. She had problems coping with the teaching style of the new teacher. Thanks to her mother a solution to the problems was found. She experienced the second critical incident while at secondary school; it was also related to the teaching style and the personality of the teacher. The detrimental effects of the teacher's behaviour were compensated for by Cindy's participation in English camps and by her mother's support.

Quite a big group of students experienced a critical incident while at secondary school. In the cases of Lara and Wendy, it was an encounter with a new teacher whose teaching style they liked. Alice, on the other hand, was dissatisfied with the differentiation of students into groups at the beginning of secondary school. Towards the end of secondary school she started to be successful, which was the critical incident that energised her learning. For Kate the critical incident is obvious – it was the moment when she found English useful thanks to her discovering the world of Korean and Japanese films and TV series in the middle of secondary school. She labelled the event as a "dramatic shift" in her attitudes. Likewise, Nicole's critical incident is also linked to informal learning, more specifically to watching films and beauty bloggers' videos in her early teenage years. Regarding Tess, there seem to be two critical incidents of the utmost significance – experiencing a teacher who was willing and able to make the curriculum more relevant to students' needs and her enormous involvement in informal learning triggered by her first encounter with authentic NS English. For Jane seeing Scotland appeared to be critical in her life; she said that she found the country absolutely amazing and started to travel there every year. In Eve's life the influence of her sister turned out to be the most significant – it was towards the end of secondary school, when, following her sister's example, she left for England as an au pair and stayed there for years.

Irene was probably the only interviewee who experienced a significant event relatively late in her life, more precisely in the post-maturita period. Her encounter with NS teachers in the intensive course was critical – she eventually found her motivation to learn.

Regarding the second group of students, the critical incidents in their lives do not have such clear-cut contours. It applies to the stories of Frances, Rose, and Paul.

Frances and Rose seem to have been born to like school and English. Both of them have always liked English and as children they often played a pretend game – their role was always that of the teacher. Frances's attitudes were reinforced by her father and by her positive experience of learning English at school. Likewise Rose, whose attitudes seem to have been firmly established since they resisted the negative backwash of her teacher's way of testing and her boring lessons, which she mentioned in the interview. While reflecting on their experience as learners, they were not able to go beyond the limits of a description.

They kept repeating that they just liked English. In Paul's life several influences converged while he was at secondary school: his passing an international exam, the impact of NS teachers, or his interest in motorbikes, which led him to watch videos in English regularly. Nevertheless, it is problematic to determine the most significant one.

In conclusion, the critical incidents in the respondents' lives are distributed from their early childhood to the post-maturita period, though the majority of them happened during their basic or secondary school attendance. Moreover, the critical incidents are not bound to a certain context but they occurred in all of them. Furthermore, their nature is rather unpredictable; they result from the interaction with significant individuals, including parents, siblings, teachers, and NSs, or from autonomous goals.

3.5 Conclusions

The analysis of the twenty students' stories uncovered critical incidents in their learning English which are linked to their attitudes toward English and learning English. Significant events in the interviewees' lives contributed to a change in either the intensity or quality of their attitudes.

Regarding the influential factors, the family will be mentioned first. The respondents' parents were well aware of the importance of English in contemporary society; they valued the ability to communicate in English and also provided material support for their children's learning of English – apart from the provision of books and modern technology, especially access to the internet, some of them also financed free-time courses, private lessons, or trips to ESCs.

Apart from such indirect support, the parents with a higher educational status tended to be directly involved in their children's learning of English, either short-term or long-term – some of the parents supported their children when they were fighting adverse conditions for learning at school.

Moreover, the parents with a higher educational status initiated the English-related free-time activities of their children more actively than the other parents.

A lack of parental initiative, coupled with a limited opportunity for social interaction with peers or siblings, provided space for autonomous action. It was the case of three introverted male students, who devoted their free time to playing PC games. From the point of view of learning English, they went through a long period of informal learning whose outcomes all of them considered more substantial than those of learning at school. They experienced massive exposure to the target language, which was later complemented by interaction with NS or NNS speakers of English. The move from comprehension to production was linked to the arrival of multiplayer online games, participation in which was conditioned by access to a quality internet connection. Providing up-to-date technology

was the parents' contribution to the activity. There were two more students among the respondents whose parents did not encourage their children's involvement in any free-time activities, not excluding ones related to English, but provided general support. In those families siblings appeared to be an influential factor; they inspired their brothers and sisters by showing them paths to follow.

Parent's decisions linked to English also impacted on their children's learning histories. Nevertheless, some of their decisions might have been critical, especially involvement in pre-school courses. In the FL environment it is not likely to affect children's ultimate attainment in the target language. Regarding the attitudes to English and to learning English, a positive influence is not guaranteed either if, for example, an inappropriate methodology is implemented. Parents, however, seem to have been influenced by the "the sooner the better" opinion shared by the general public.

Another potentially critical decision affecting the learning of English appeared to be whether to enrol a child into an eight-year grammar school or not. The stories confirmed the complexity of such a resolution. The parents who consulted their opinion with a teacher and an independent expert and also considered the child's needs made the right decision.

The influence of the teacher on the teaching/learning process is enormous. Regarding the teacher, the interviewees perceived the turnover of teachers as being significant. Negative perceptions of this phenomenon were mainly linked to discontinuity in teachers' requirements and teaching styles – the low level of demands and the lack of progress were perceived as the most harmful. Moreover, different teachers' accents also represented a challenge for the students to cope with. Additionally, the stories suggested that the frequent turnover of teachers did not necessarily influence the students' attitudes negatively, if they could rely on motivation coming from other educational contexts (e.g. informal ones), and if their attitudes were thus firmly established. Learners with a higher level of autonomy were more likely to resist the possible negative influences of constantly changing conditions, since they were less teacher-dependent.

The findings confirmed the central role of the teacher in teaching and learning English in a formal context. Most importantly, teachers' pedagogical content knowledge made the difference between "good" and "bad" teachers in the perceptions of the interviewees. Those who were able to teach, i.e. to analyse, transform, and mediate the subject matter, especially grammar, appropriately to the given group of learners were very highly valued compared to those who failed to do that, even though they were considered experts in the field. Knowing about the learners' interests and preferences may help teachers plan lessons accordingly; however, the interviews suggested that this hardly ever happened. Furthermore, having the necessary content knowledge was also considered a necessary quality attributed to the teacher.

The analysis has revealed that lessons of English tend to be predominantly textbook-based and grammar-oriented, and only a minority of the interviewees depicted varied lessons of English. Those who did appreciated the experience very much. An aspect which is rarely at the centre of teachers' attention is pronunciation, followed by speaking. Planning varied lessons of English seems to be the domain of NS teachers.

Furthermore, two more significant issues have emerged from the analysis of the interviews: differentiation and evaluation. As concerns internal differentiation, it seems to be implemented only sparsely, even though it is extremely highly appreciated by the learners. On the other hand, external differentiation is deployed quite often, especially in relation to the onset of secondary education – students are usually divided into groups on the basis of placement tests. There are two problems which were highlighted during the interviews. The first one concerns the tests which are used to place the students in different groups. They are usually grammar-based, which does not allow the students to show the full range of their abilities in English. The second problem concerns the permanence of the groups – once placed in a particular group, students cannot hope to be moved to another, which inevitably has a negative effect on their motivation to learn. Furthermore, streaming students does not solve the problem of the heterogeneity of classes.

Regarding evaluation, the findings are rather negative, since the interviewees identified serious mistakes in evaluation, which they considered significant in their learning English. Apart from similarity and contrast errors in teachers' evaluation, the negative backwash effect of the tests was especially commented on in the interviews. The main problem of tests appears to be a focus on one aspect of English only, for example, on grammar or vocabulary, instead of covering all the aspects which were developed in the lessons. Another problem is a mistaken focus of evaluation – rather than assessing a student's performance, the teacher assesses the student's appearance, which should not happen under any circumstances.

Another significant factor in the learning histories of the interviewees appears to be opportunities to interact in English either with NSs or NNSs.

As concerns interaction with NSs, it occurs in all learning contexts. In the formal context, NS teachers bring variety to lessons, as well as a focus on speaking, which students often miss in the lessons of NNS teachers. On top of that, NSs represent the culture of their country, which creates opportunities for intercultural communication. At the same time, however, coping with NS input represents a challenge that not everybody is able or willing to face.

Students may also encounter NSs of English in non-formal, informal, and target culture contexts. They perceive the effects of such communication in various ways, but they mostly appreciate a chance to experience NS English. Being able to negotiate meaning is a powerful driving force in their subsequent learning. Similarly, using English

in communication with NNSs was also considered very beneficial, for example, in the context of international projects.

Furthermore, using English for a particular purpose is a common denominator of autonomous real-life activities. The students involved in informal learning had their personal interests, e.g. in sports entertainment, Asian culture, or PC games, which turned out to energise their motivation to improve their English.

To conclude, this chapter has revealed the routes which the students followed to their entry to their university study of English. Some of them were straightforward, some of them rather crooked. In terms of motivation, some routes were lineal and some sinusoidal. The most important thing is, however, that all the respondents in the study eventually managed to overcome obstacles of various kinds. It means that sooner or later they succeeded in finding a relevant source of motivation to learn English, no matter in which educational context.

Chapter 6 attempts to relate the routes which the students followed to the destinations they reached till starting university education.

3.6 Individual learning histories – overall conclusions

Chapter 2 introduced the outcomes of the quantitative study and also presented individual learning histories from the point of view of common tendencies and trends. Subsequently, the qualitative study in this chapter dealt with detailed voices offering participants' perspectives on their individual learning paths. In this section conclusions will be drawn that interrelate the outcomes of both studies.

3.6.1 The role of parents

First of all, the role of the parents will be discussed. The quantitative study revealed that 35.1 per cent of the respondents' parents decided to expose their children to English in early childhood. The pre-school exposure appeared to be related to the parents' educational status and communicative competence in FLs. More highly-educated parents and those who are able to use more FLs tended to mediate their children's contacts with English in their early childhood. The qualitative study showed that the reasons behind the parents' decisions were mainly linked to the perceived instrumental value of English, i.e. to its importance and usefulness in contemporary society. The parents manifested their attitudes toward English and learning English through their behaviour, i.e. by being language learners or users themselves, by providing material support, and by their direct or indirect involvement in their children's learning.

The relationship between basic school learners' engagement in non-formal learning and their parents' level of education was identified – the fathers' level of education is, in general, higher; however, the mothers seem to be more inclined to learn FLs and to communicate in them. This finding was confirmed by the qualitative study; more highly-educated parents initiated English-related free-time activities of their children more actively than the other parents. The qualitative analysis also showed that the parents with a higher educational status tended to be directly involved in their children's learning of English; they assisted their children with home preparation or even tutored them themselves. Apart from short-term involvement, some of the parents supported their children for a long time, helping them overcome phases of failure or declines in their motivation.

3.6.2 Attitudes to English and to learning English

Both studies converge in that attitudes represent a central issue. The quantitative study disclosed the idiosyncratic nature of the foundations of individuals' attitudes toward English and learning English and also the relationships between attitudes and selected variables. The qualitative study offered significant insights into what caused alterations in the students' attitudes.

3.6.2.1 Sources of attitudes to English and to learning English

The quantitative study identified potential sources of positive attitudes of basic school learners. Among others, they appreciated the usefulness of English for their interests and for the future (12.8%), they were fascinated by the new language (8.3%), and many of them admired the sound of English (25.9%). The qualitative study confirmed that having a personally relevant reason for learning English had been an immense driving force; this appeared clearly in the stories of those who needed English as an instrument to succeed in playing PC games. Otherwise the motivational potential stemming from the features of English was not used much: pronunciation was reported to have been a neglected aspect in English classes.

For secondary school learners the usefulness of English for communication and for the future became the most influential factor (26.3%). Though nowadays this reason for learning English seems to be indisputable, it does not obviously apply to all learners. Consistently, the qualitative study portrayed several students for whom the future usefulness of English was extraneous; only finding personally relevant reasons for learning English at the end of secondary school energised their learning substantially.

Regarding attitudes toward learning English, the influence of the teacher and teaching methods and techniques is clearly enormous. The quantitative study revealed that the foundations of positive attitudes were varied and they were linked to the learners' satisfaction

with learning English initiated by manifold stimuli: the teacher's personality or professional competence, various aspects of teaching techniques, and the features of the English language. Contrary to that, negative attitudes were predominantly related to the teacher (93.6%), especially to frequent changes of teachers and their consequences. Furthermore, the following teacher-related factors were found influential: teachers' ability to explain the subject matter well, to manage the class effectively, to plan varied and interesting lessons, to design adequately challenging tasks, and to motivate learners.

3.6.2.2 Statistically significant relationships between attitudes and selected variables

The quantitative study also revealed the correlation between the number of NNS teachers of English and attitudes to learning English while at basic school. The finding offers a more positive perspective on the issue; a frequent turnover of teachers does not necessarily affect learners' attitudes negatively. Nevertheless, the finding should not be overestimated since it was confirmed only by using a particular method. The qualitative study uncovered inter-individual differences among the respondents in terms of the impact which a frequent turnover of teachers had on their attitudes. The learners with a higher level of autonomy in learning English and those who were intrinsically motivated seemed to be less affected by frequent changes of teachers. Those who perceived a negative influence of the changing of teachers on their attitudes either found sources of positive attitudes in non-formal and informal contexts or eventually benefited from the changing of teachers; one of the teachers in the series was the one who suited their needs, which contributed to a change in their attitudes.

Additionally, the quantitative study also uncovered statistically significant relationships between attitudes toward the English language and attitudes toward learning English while at basic, as well as secondary school. From this perspective the learners with positive attitudes to English are also positive about learning English at school, while the learners with negative attitudes to the language also feel negatively about learning it at school. The qualitative study, however, shed light on the learning biographies of several individuals whose attitudes to English and to learning English were not in accord; they liked the language but they did not enjoy learning it at school. The reasons were diverse: the changing of teachers as discussed above, the discrepancy between personal and curricular objectives, teachers' inability to explain the subject matter clearly, boring textbook-based lessons without variety, a perceived low level of challenge, no internal differentiation, and the negative backwash effect of testing.

Furthermore, attitudes toward the English language/learning English while at basic school and attitudes toward the English language/learning English while at secondary school were identified as statistically significant. This finding of the quantitative study highlights the continuity in the quality of attitudes: once positive or negative attitudes are

established at basic school, they persist into later phases. Though this was an observed tendency, the qualitative study confirmed the possibility of altering the students' negative attitudes, especially those toward learning English at school, as discussed in the preceding paragraph. Critical incidents in the students' lives brought about a qualitative change in their attitudes. For some students, the modification was initiated by altered conditions, especially by the coming of a new teacher. For some other students, the conditions at school were identical but they eventually found personally valued reasons for learning English outside the formal context.

The last statistically significant relationship to be presented is the relationship between attitudes toward the English language and involvement in autonomous English-related activities while at basic school and while at secondary school. At this point both studies converge; the qualitative study revealed the surprisingly extensive involvement of some learners in real-life use of English in terms of time and/or the scope of their activities. Several stories provided evidence that using English outside school for personally relevant purposes has a positive impact on attitudes to English.

3.6.2.3 Non-existent statistically significant relationships between attitudes and selected variables

The quantitative study did not prove a relationship between pre-school exposure to English and the learners' attitudes to English while at basic school; however, the qualitative study implied possible effects of such exposure. It was often mediated by the family, including older siblings who functioned as a source of inspiration and a model to follow. Another environment in which the respondents came into contact with English was a pre-school course. The joyful atmosphere of the course was something which some of the students especially recalled and appreciated. Thus they might have been positively influenced by the pre-school instruction. Having learnt the basics of English prior to the beginning of compulsory tuition, some of the students felt empowered in their subsequent school lessons of English. This feeling was coupled with a sense of achievement, which then became a substantial driving force in learning.

The number of teachers the students experienced while at basic and secondary school appeared to correlate neither positively nor negatively with attitudes to English. The qualitative study uncovered a variety of opinions regarding the frequent turnover of teachers, which concerned learning English rather than the language itself. The relationship between attitudes to learning English while at basic school and the number of teachers was discussed in Section 3.6.2.2. No such relationship was identified for the secondary school period.

No statistically significant relationship was identified between attitudes to learning English while at basic and secondary school and the type of textbook used. It is not the type of textbook which affects the learners' attitudes, but rather the way teachers use it in their lessons. Consistently, the findings of the qualitative study indicate that it is not

important whether the textbook is monolingual or bilingual. None of the interviewees ever complained about the type of textbook. On the other hand, it was apparently important how the textbook was used in lessons – predictable, textbook-based lessons were a source of negative attitudes to learning English on the part of some students. Conversely, variety in lessons, including material teaching aids, was a feature of English lessons that those who had a chance to experience it appreciated greatly. Thus it is not guaranteed that even the "best" textbooks promoted by publishing houses will automatically generate learners' interest and motivation to learn without reflecting learner needs and without variety in their lessons.

The quantitative study did not identify relationships between attitudes to English/ learning English and stays abroad. The impact of stays in ESCs on attitudes to English and learning English is impossible to predict. Moreover, not all learners who have positive attitudes to the language and are learning it at school have a chance to experience the target culture environment. Likewise the qualitative study illustrated different perceptions of the significance of stays in ESCs in individuals' lives, as well as diverse motives for travelling there. Regarding the benefits, though they varied among the students, they were mainly linked to the motivational potential that the visits to ESCs generated and, in the case of a long-term stay, also to make progress in English. The opportunity to interact with NSs was perceived as a valued asset. The study of learning biographies nicely shows that in order to benefit from interaction with NSs one must be proactive in communication and, moreover, must be willing to overcome initial obstacles which may occur.

Lastly, no relationship was identified between attitudes to English/learning English and participation in free-time activities. Participation in free-time activities is not just a matter of attitudes but the decision to take part in language courses or private lessons is also motivated by instrumental incentives or by the decision of others – the statistically significant relationship between involvement in free-time activities and parents' education was discussed in Section 3.6.2.2. Consistently, the qualitative study confirmed the above-mentioned motives for the students' involvement in non-formal learning. The participants were students with both positive and negative attitudes toward English and learning English. Those who liked the language and studying it attended extra lessons as they were intrinsically motivated to learn. Those with negative attitudes were encouraged by their parents to do so. For some of them learning in the non-formal context compensated for what formal education failed to provide and thus contributed to a change in their attitudes.

3.6.3 The relationship between non-formal and informal learning

The quantitative study proved no relationship between participation in free-time activities (e.g. language courses) and involvement in autonomous English-related activities (i.e. use

of English outside school) either while at basic or secondary school. This is consistent with the findings discussed in the previous sections. Participation in non-formal learning is not dependent on attitudes to English and learning English, but is related to the education of parents in a statistically significant way. Regarding involvement in informal learning, it is significantly influenced by attitudes to English and learning English. The qualitative study confirmed the distinct nature of learning in both contexts. The learning experience in non-formal contexts, with the exception of English camps, was in fact very similar to formal education, which means that learning contexts (Section 2.1.5) prevailed. Nevertheless, because of the more frequent involvement of NS teachers, communicative contexts were also established. English camps were usually tutored by both NNS and NS teachers; thus they represented an environment in which the learning and communicative contexts were balanced. Contrary to that, in informal learning English was a tool for exchanging information and participating in important social and interpersonal functions – obviously, communicative contexts dominated.

Consequently, the students who were extensively involved in informal learning experienced huge periods of implicit learning. They might be labelled as users of English, compared to classroom learners who attended language courses or private lessons. Those who participated in English camps share both characteristics, similarly to the students who were involved in both types of learning.

3.6.4 Path to university studies

The quantitative study presented the following figure: 44.7 per cent of the respondents graduated from a secondary vocational school. The professional interests of those people apparently changed in the course of their secondary education, since they preferred to study English when choosing a university study programme. The qualitative study implied certain answers. Some of the students admitted making a wrong choice when selecting a secondary school. For some other students English became the priority during their secondary school studies for a variety of reasons: usually, they were high-achievers in English but not in other subjects. Thus achievement triggered enjoyment of learning English. Several students did continue in their original career after the maturita exam; however, during their university studies they perceived a lack of satisfaction and realised that they were following an erroneous direction.

Those students are included in the cohort of the 47.8 per cent of the respondents who experienced a gap between the maturita exam and entry to university lasting from one to seven years. It may be called the period of seeking a future direction. They started some other university programme, travelled abroad, or attended various courses of English (31.6%). 22.4 per cent of the students attended a one-year intensive course. The qualitative

analysis suggested that they were not admitted to university studies of English and needed to improve. Alternatively, they failed the entrance exams to any other study programme and English was their second choice. Attending an intensive course in English or in English and German was thus an obvious choice. All the interviewees who experienced such a course later considered it a significant event in their lives for several reasons: they especially appreciated the quality of their NNS teachers, as well as the opportunity to interact with NSs. Being successful in interaction with NS teachers generated intrinsic motivation to learn. Participation in the intensive course also directed their paths to studying English at university.

3.7 Concluding remarks

The explanatory study into the individual learning histories showed some benefits of mixed-methods research. The quantitative study uncovered relationships which were found statistically significant, as well as others which were not. Additionally, the qualitative study contributed by providing possible explanations for the observed trends and also formulated potential reasons why some of the relationships were not confirmed.

Chapter 4

Learner corpus analyses

(grammar and discourse)

This chapter includes several analyses focused on various aspects of grammar and discourse management in learners' performances. It must necessarily be selective. As mentioned by Biber et al. (1999) in the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (LGSWE), which is a far more comprehensive work based on a huge corpus – the Longman Spoken and Written English Corpus, "Another reason is simply the immense scope of the subject of conversational grammar, which could not by any means be described exhaustively in a single chapter" (p. 1039).

4.1 Introduction

The following sections of Chapter 4 focus on the structure and functions of the English finite and non-finite verb forms in the Corpus of Czech Students' Spoken English (CCSSE) (Ježková, 2015b). There are several reasons for the decision to collect and assess samples of the students' performances manifesting their communicative language competences defined in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 108). One of them is the proper usage of a variety of verb forms.

First, the language in this corpus consists mainly of conversation; only a small part is formed of monologues (see Section 1.3.3, Appendices 1–3). In general, the partners in the conversation talk about events or discuss problems, and thus their sentences tend to be short and uncomplicated (Biber et al., 1999), which is reflected in a greater number of finite verb phrases (VPs) (Carter, 2004). These may be quite simple, with lexical verbs only, or more complex ones, including primary and modal auxiliaries. In spoken language (including conversation) the primary auxiliaries (*be, have*) are used for expressing perfect and progressive aspect, while in written form the auxiliary verb *be* can be found more commonly in passive structures.

The second reason for focusing on the verb phrase (VP) in its finite and non-finite forms is our previous probe (Hornová, 2015a) into a smaller version of this corpus in which attention was paid to the syntactic functions of non-finite verb forms.

Finally, the results of this survey might help teachers improve their students' ability to manage finite verbs well as dynamic parts of clauses, as well as all the non-finite verb form varieties, which are a very important part of the students' linguistic competences in both spoken and written English. This defined analysis of the corpus plans to contribute to further successful acquisition of English by the students on an advanced level in the field of the verb phrase.

Another line of the research is focused on linguistic devices occurring in conversation as a specific variety of a language. Over several decades we have noticed more and more studies interested in this particular area. Although we are not able to identify any sharp border between written and spoken discourse (McCarthy & Carter, 1994, p. 9), there are many areas where we can observe extraordinary differences. They are mainly generated by the determinants influencing the process of communication in speech, such as a shared physical context (i.e. time and place), interactivity (when the dialogue is co-constructed by two or more participants who constantly exchange their roles of a speaker and listener), and spontaneity (as conversation takes place in real time) (Biber et al., 1999). This results in the occurrence of a spectrum of specific language devices which are not present in written texts.

As mentioned above, because of the limited extent of the book, selected devices used in discourse management are chosen for the analysis in this chapter; some more will be discussed in Chapter 6. Here the attention is focused on the distribution of some discourse markers, certain means of dysfluency, and the use of stance and linking adverbials and some ways of expressing imprecision. The selection was affected by the results presented in studies of English native speakers' conversation (e.g. Biber et al., 1999; Müller, 2005; Biber, 2006; Fung & Carter, 2007) and motivated by our attempt to find out if learners of English as a foreign language master the same strategies.

4.2 Corpus characteristics

As a basis for the language material, a diagnostic speaking test was designed and piloted (for more details see Section 1.2.1). In the process of creating the learner corpus of spoken language the primary principles recommended by O'Keeffe and McCarthy (2012) were taken into consideration and followed. The Corpus of Czech Students' Spoken English was published in the format of a CD-ROM release (Ježková, 2015b) and it is accompanied by a concise book offering information about the process of building the corpus (i.e. background information and a description of the pilot stage, corpus design criteria, the project team

members, and the process of recording and transcription) and describing the structure of the corpus, learners' individual learning histories, and the strategies used for transcription and mark-up. It contains 153,295 words from transcribed monologues and dialogues by 228 first-year Czech students at three Czech universities.

The construction of both oral production elicitation tools (Section 1.2.1) was highly influenced by the previous research experience of the members of the project team with a corpus of a smaller size (13,984 words, 36 interviews of students studying in an English language teacher education programme). The format of these interviews was rather similar to that used while testing speaking skills in internationally acknowledged exams. They consisted of three parts: (a) a structured short introduction where the students spoke about themselves and their families, friends, and hobbies, (b) structured discussion of their English language learning experience, and (c) a semi-structured description of a picture. Partial studies (e.g. Ježková, 2012; Ježková & Urbanová, 2012) based on this corpus revealed several dissimilarities between the spoken performance of the learners and native speakers and led us to the conclusion that learners' spoken language deserves much more detailed research.

The design of the diagnostic speaking test was influenced by the intention of obtaining pieces of conversation that were as natural as possible, and thus the interviews were not student-teacher any more, but were changed to student-student. The introduction, in the form of a warm-up with the aim of making the students feel relaxed and natural, was not included in the corpus. The individual tasks are summarised in Table 1.1. In an introductory monologue all the students introduced themselves and said a few words about their families and, primarily, their experience of learning English (see Appendix 1); and the teacher recording the whole performance tried to interfere as little as possible. The second part was designed as an information transfer task in which one student was given specific topic-related information and the other was supposed to elicit the required information (see Appendix 2). Before they started, they had a minute for preparation and then they performed a dialogue about four minutes long. After that they changed roles and were given information on a different topic. Thus Task 2 and Task 3 in Table 1.1 have the same character but with swapped roles. The last part was a discussion on a given topic (see Appendix 3), where the students were expected to express their opinions and support them with particular arguments. All the topics were selected with the aim of offering the students situations closely related to their own lives.

The criteria for the design of CCSSE are defined in Section 1.3.1 and in Chapter 3 of the book accompanying the CD-ROM (Ježková, 2015b). The corpus was compiled at three Czech universities. The participants were Czech first-year students in their English language teacher education study programmes. The recordings were made in two rounds – autumn 2013 and autumn 2014. In both periods the students received their recordings

and were asked to transcribe the interviews according to the instructions of the research team. Then the transcribed texts were corrected, anonymised, and divided into five separate files: two monologues, two information exchange task dialogues, and a discussion of a selected topic.

The basic data about the students' individual learning histories from the questionnaires was recorded in a database. The student variables include: age, gender, total number of years studying English, number of weeks spent in an English-speaking country, level of the student's foreign languages, self-assessed according to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) (English, German, French, Spanish, and Russian), the level of their mother's foreign languages assessed according to the CEFR, the level of their father's foreign languages assessed according to the CEFR, number of years of pre-school English, number of years of English in school till the age of 15, extra lessons of English till the age of 15, and extra lessons of English after the age of 15. And only the chosen variables (gender, age, total number of years studying English, and number of weeks spent in an English-speaking country) were also added as the headings of individual texts.

As mentioned in Section 1.3.3, CCSSE contains 153,295 words, which represents 228 transcribed interviews and 570 individual texts: 228 monologues, 228 dialogues based on the information transfer tasks (Appendix 2), and 114 discussions on selected topics (Appendix 3). It means that every numbered subfolder (labelling the ID number of a recording) comprises five individual .txt files marked with the text ID (e.g. monologues: M1301A, M1301B; information transfer tasks: T1301A, T1301B; discussion: D1301), while every student is referred to in four text files: one monologue, two information transfer tasks – in one s/he is asking, in the other s/he is answering, and one topic discussion.

As for the system of transcription and additional tagging, there has been a complex discussion since the beginning of the history of spoken corpora. The way and extent of the annotation and mark-up are determined mainly by the research question (McEnery, Xiao, & Tono, 2007, pp. 74–75). This factor results in a wide variety of approaches to the whole process. Edwards (2001) notes that transcriptions differ across many dimensions (e.g. words, units of analysis, pauses, prosody, or turn-taking), mostly influenced by content-based decisions (p. 330). In the light of these facts, the researchers building the CCSSE decided on an approach similar to that used with many other spoken corpora (e.g. the Longman Spoken and Written English Corpus and the Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage), i.e. using an orthographic transcription system, without characteristics concerning prosodic and phonetic values, where the latter was the primary inspiration. Thus the concept of the transcription is mostly based on written text conventions: the beginning of a sentence is marked by a capital letter and the end by an appropriate punctuation mark; contracted forms, non-standard forms, and abbreviations are in common spelling; dates and numbers are written in words. Unified symbols are

used for the following elements: unfilled pauses without their length being distinguished – […]; filled pauses – (er); unclear passages – (xy); non-English words – (… ???); laughter – [laugh]; incomplete words – word=. The symbol (+) is used as a signal for the speaker's subjective perception of the boundary of a communicative unit. Using recommendations from Adolphs and Knight (2012, p. 43), the following strategies are adopted in order to anonymise the texts: first name and surname – abbreviated to first capital letters; only first names – retained unchanged; place names related to students' home towns or university towns – abbreviated to first capital letters; international place names and famous people – retained unchanged.

When compiling a corpus, authors have to cope with the demand to balance the effort invested in tagging with its potential usefulness in future research, especially in the case of a spoken corpus, because most of the annotation cannot be done automatically (Adolphs & Knight, 2012). After considering all the pros and cons, the decision was made to opt for minimal tagging of the texts because the learners' performance analyses are primarily focused on grammatical structures and discourse management. Thus only the beginnings and ends of individual turns are marked. However, the corpus can be annotated at any later time in relation to further research interests (e.g. POS, classification of errors and mistakes).

4.3 Aims and methods of the analyses

As mentioned before, the CCSSE is a collection of spoken English, mainly conversation. If the sample is to be analysed correctly, the findings of linguists dealing with typical features of this variety of English should be briefly summarised. Their views vary to a certain degree. Some authors claim that the differences between written and spoken language are not significant, e.g. "I present arguments for the view that spoken and written language utilize the same basic grammatical repertoire, however different their implementation of it may be" (Leech, 2000, p. 675). On the other hand, a majority of linguists have specified typical features of the two basic language varieties (Biber et al., 1999; Halliday, 1996; McCarthy, 1996), which should be considered when evaluating a language corpus.

The major differences between the two forms are situational and they influence the choice of grammatical devices. This is particularly significant with regard to conversation, which implies individual relations between its participants and therefore is influenced by their attitudes and feelings about the given topics (Biber et al., 1999; Widdowson, 2007). Other factors indirectly connected with the language of conversation also include its location and – possibly – the shared background knowledge of the people involved in the conversation. Moreover, conversation is highly interactive and responses are rather quick and thus do not provide enough time to choose from more alternatives available in the language for expressing a certain idea. The people involved in a conversation must

also remember the details of their partner's reaction and might feel it necessary to make sure that they understood the subject matter well. All this creates a situation entirely different from the position of a person writing a text of any kind, especially when s/he is not significantly limited in terms of time. "… there is blurring of the boundaries between what we traditionally understand as being characteristic of spoken and written discourse through the reduction of the temporal and social distance between the sender and receiver" (Knight, 2015, p. 8).

The commonly agreed result is that the grammar of any spoken language product will show differences in general and in conversation in particular (Granger, 2009). Some authors even recommend that the specific features of individual conversation may be applicable to each occasion only (Gass & Selinker, 2001). It is possible that the context and topic of conversation are so specific that they can influence the grammatical structures of the language differently on individual occasions, but major features of spoken language/ conversation should be identifiable in any example of this language variety. "Speech abounds in verbless clauses, ellipses that would be frowned upon in 'good' writing, lack of concord and omitted relative particles … false starts, slips of the tongue, and changes of direction midstream in a grammatical structure" (McCarthy &Carter, 1994, p. 143).

When the grammatical structure of English conversation is analysed, there are at least some factors that can be taken for granted: the sentences are less complex and shorter; sentence subjects are very often in the first and the second person, referring to the participants in the dialogue. The language is rather vague, modal expressions are common, and there are heads, tails, and hedges (Knight, 2015). VPs are more common, usually in the active voice, and there are more pronouns and also more lexical repetition (Halliday, 1996).

The reasons for the research focus were defined in Section 4.1 and here we would like to delimit several aims of this analysis.

The first is to perform a classification of the finite VPs used in the corpus, with a major focus on the verbs *have* and *be* functioning as primary (or modal) auxiliaries or lexical verbs. Collecting and assessing all the roles of the two verbs will help us to supply some information about the ability of the speakers to express the categories of progressive and perfect aspects and the passive voice.

Second, lexical verbs in their simple forms (simple present and past) that are frequently used in the corpus will be assessed mainly as items of the students' vocabulary. The occurrence of some of them will be compared with their frequency in the LGSWE (Biber et al., 1999).

The syntactic functions of non-finite clauses in the corpus will be summarised and commented on as a final consideration patterned on the previous research. The results of the corpus analysis are meant as a contribution to the students' further language acquisition in the field of the structure of the English VP, because it has already been confirmed by many

researchers that in spoken language learners try to avoid structures that were explained and practised, but seem to be a little complicated (Granger, 2009; Knittlová, 2010; Sinclair, 2004).

To get the correct statistical figures concerning the above-mentioned aims of this section of Chapter 4, the WordSmith Tools programme (Scott, 2012) was employed. Within the results that were acquired, however, different roles of the verbs *have* and *be* were specified. Therefore, a lot of manual counting had to be done to divide the overall usage into individual lexico-grammatical functions. Moreover, the evaluation of the specific research findings required a wider context of the students' production to be obtained. For that reason, full texts had to be carefully read and the features that were analysed evaluated according to the situation and topics of the dialogues.

One of the reasons why spoken discourse is under consideration in this book is the fact that most of the grammar reference books and other English language textbooks and workbooks are mainly based on studies of written texts, which means that students using these sources have limited access to descriptions of spoken language and it might be difficult for them to realise that a sentence structure in real conversation can differ significantly from that described in their study materials. When Widdowson (2007) distinguishes various differences between speech and writing, he primarily mentions the processes of mediating a message and interpreting meaning. However, there is no unequivocal distinction between speech and writing since "the relations are complex and associated with a variety of different situational, functional, and processing considerations" (Biber, 1988, p. 24). On the other hand, Biber et al. (1999) declare that for the purposes of focusing on "how the grammar of conversational English is constructed, it may be useful to see the grammar of conversation as to some extent a different system with different rules from the grammar of written English" (p. 1066). The most noticeable differences between these two systems are caused by the key principles of real time production of language and thus the grammar of speech is considered to be dynamic.

The fundamental factors influencing the nature of spoken discourse are formulated in the LGSWE as a set of three interrelated principles. First, the principle of *keep talking* means that all the participants in a dialogue are aware of the need to keep the talk moving forward without unjustified or unnatural pauses. The second principle, of *limited planning ahead*, is conditioned by the fact that there are certain limitations on human working memory, which is claimed to be about seven words, and that the participants must pay attention to the contributions of the others in a group. Finally, the principle of the *qualification of what has been said* implies that the participants permanently struggle to determine what they have heard and try to modify or reformulate their own utterances accordingly (Biber et al., 1999). Leech (1998) lists seven conditions which significantly influence the shape of conversational grammar: shared context, lack of elaboration, interactiveness, personal expressiveness, real-time constraints, restricted repertoire, and vernacular range. The

overall structure is also influenced by the distribution of the communicative roles of the participants (communicator vs. receiver) and swapping them during the process of interaction (Schiffrin, 1994). Moreover, the participants are under even greater pressure because "in addition to deciding what to say, they must decide how to say it" (Ward & Birner, 2008, p. 119).

All the above-mentioned factors make the grammar of speech quite dynamic (in contrast to the static character of the grammar of writing) and influence the performance of all the participants. One of the typical features is that an authentic conversation is naturally dysfluent since speakers use various strategies to gain time. Hesitation is most often reflected in various types of *fillers*: they can have the form of *unfilled – silent – pauses* (the speaker just keeps silent for a while), *filled non-word pauses* (which are transcribed in the CCSSE as (*er*)), and repetitions, which can have the form of *repeats* (exact repetition of one or more words, once or more times, or even multiple consecutive repeats) or *repairs* (when speakers reformulate what they started to say before). In dialogues it is quite common for the participants to combine various hesitators or even create chains where they use two or more hesitators one after another. As such communication is spontaneous and speakers perform under the pressure of real time, the hesitators can be accompanied by some other dysfluent structures such as grammatically incomplete utterances or syntactic blends. Another consequence of the nature of conversation is the restricted and repetitive repertoire of both syntactic patterns and lexical units. The *add-on strategy* also has a significant impact on the syntactic structures, which results in the high frequency of embedding and coordination (Biber et al., 1999, p. 1068).

The interactive character of conversation requires the use of special instruments which signal clearly who is/is not taking a turn. For this purpose – and creating obvious adjacency pairs – discourse markers (DMs) in particular are highly important because they can make the ongoing exchange smooth. They are mostly utterance introducers combining two roles: signalling transition and signalling an interactive relationship, though they are often ambiguous (Biber et al. 1999, p. 1086). Moreover, they can also be used in the middle of an utterance, signalling self-correction or to gain time.

As mentioned in Section 4.1, a set of the most typical devices was selected with the aim of demonstrating if the use of the structures most frequently observable in native speakers' performances is also present in the corpus of language produced by learners of English.

The reason for that is that the devices that are listed help speakers to create messages that demonstrate the level of all three components of their pragmatic competences (discourse, functional, and design) (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 123–130). Among the one-word DMs the following (which were identified as most typical of native speakers' discourse) are included: *well*, *right*, *now*, *OK/okay*, *oh*. The multiple-word DMs in focus are *you know*, *I mean*, and *you see*, which are identified as those that are most frequent

in native speakers' discourse; *I think* was added to the analysis, although it is not referred to as a typical DM, but it occurred extremely frequently in the corpus that was analysed. For other chosen elements the primary criterion for selection is the significance of their frequency of occurrence in native speakers' conversation. They are stance adverbials expressing actuality (*actually*, *really*), stance adverbials expressing doubt (*probably*, *maybe*), and linking adverbials (*so*, *then*, *though*, *anyway*). Something that is rather specific is the use of expressions of imprecision (*sort of*, *kind of*, *like*). To complete the picture of the strategies the learners used to maintain the flow of conversation, the occurrence of unfilled […] and non-wordfilled pauses (*er*) is included in the analysis as well.

For the analysis of discourse management elements a combination of two methods was employed. In order to conduct a survey of the occurrence of individual devices used as DMs and other means used for navigating discourse, an instrument that is frequently employed in corpus linguistics was used, the KWIC format of processing the CCSSE, in some cases accompanied by the identification of collocations, using WordSmith Tools version 6. As explained in Section 4.2, the corpus is not tagged and that is why this approach required further manual analysis of certain structures, which will be described in detail when the individual devices are discussed. Thus the results presented in Section 4.5 are the outcomes of the procedures that were opted for.

In Sections 4.4 and 4.5 we refer to authentic utterances from the CCSSE; there are generally two ways of doing that. In the first manner we cite only a chunk of language which is inspected, but usually more variations are clustered into a summary of a pattern without a direct link to a particular text. In the other, we quote either a full sentence or a significant part thereof, and then we offer the ID of the text described in Section 4.2. Alee the sentences are in their authentic form, i.e. including incorrect structures and errors.

4.4 Selected grammatical features

4.4.1 Finite verb forms

According to the aims that were determined, the first task was to collect, classify, and assess all the functions of the verb *be* to find information about progressive aspect and passive forms of the lexical verbs used in the corpus and about its functions as a linking verb (or copula), which was compared with the statistical data found in the LGSWE (Biber et al., 1999) that are valid for conversation.

Apart from the frequency of the given verb, other structural features of sentences with this verb will be considered, e.g. the variety of subjects used in the sentences analysed, lexical verbs found frequently in the aspectual and/or passive forms of the verbs and a brief comment on the complexity of the sentences analysed.

The decision to start with the analysis of sentences with the verb *be* (and further also *have*) rather than other lexical verbs in their finite forms was underpinned by the preliminary search for the occurrence of the verb *be*, which showed that the number would most probably be very high. The two tables below summarise the statistics concerning the frequency and various functions of the verb *be*, which will be commented on below.

Table 4.1

To be – total occurrence

	Present (*am, are, is*)	Past (*was, were*)	Total
Auxiliary	472	113	585
Linking/copula	5,810	552	6,370
Total	6,290	665	6,955

Table 4.2

To be – as an auxiliary

	Present forms	Past forms	Total
Progressive aspect	295	79	374
Passive voice	177	34	211
Total	472	113	585

The total number of occurrences of the verb *be* is extremely high, especially in its function as a linking verb/copula (the numbers presented in the tables include also the contracted forms of the verb *be* – *I'm*, *you're*, *it's*, etc.). The assessment of its frequency in the LGSWE is as follows: "The copula *be* occurs most frequently in academic prose and least frequently in conversation" (Biber et al., 1999, p. 359). At the same time, they do not deny that it is a verb with a relatively high frequency in all registers.

To explain this high frequency of occurrence in the corpus, several factors should be considered, namely: the limited time for formulating the so-called adjacency pairs (McCarthy, 1996, p. 112) in these dialogues/discussions; the fact that the students are foreign speakers and therefore they prefer choosing structurally simple sentences, and the wide range of possible complementation of this verb – adjectives, nouns, prepositional phrases, and clauses. A combination of the simple and well-known copula with its complement puts the focus of the sentence mainly on the nouns or adjectives, whose range in the students' vocabulary may be wider than that of lexical verbs and, moreover, provides the speaker with a second or two for choosing the necessary complementation, which can also easily be changed when correcting or specifying the concrete reaction.

The frequency of sentences with the copula *be* can hardly be much influenced by the students' L1. Such sentences are certainly numerous in Czech, too, especially when evaluating something, but the Czech language is typologically verbal, while English has

a tendency to nominalised structures, which also concerns the complementation of linking verbs (Dušková, 1994).

The topics of the dialogues require a lot of classifying and qualifying complementation, the location of events, and other information according to the problems being discussed and to the subject of the sentence, e.g.:

> *She is twenty* (*a student, a good teacher, happy, rude, at school,* etc.)
> *My name is …* (occurrence – 245)
> *They are really important* (*friends, students, all over USA,* etc.)

Thus, the most probable reason for this frequent occurrence of the copula *be* is the combination of choosing an uncomplicated sentence structure and of the character of the given conversation topics.

A number of subjects of sentences with the verb *be* correspond with what is considered typical of conversation, e.g. personal pronouns, *it*, and noun phrases (NPs), but others are rather exceptional. The subjects *I* and *you* in dialogues (or a monologue about the students' life and study experience) are expected to be the most frequent. It is true of *I* (863 occurrences), but the subject *you* occurs only in 279 sentences and is less frequent than some other subjects which were not expected to be used with such a high frequency.

The occurrence of *I* and *you* – most typical of conversation – in Table 4.3 is relevant only for the subjects of the verb *be*. If we look for them in the whole corpus, the total number is several thousand. Other personal subjects – *he*, *she*, *we*, *they* – are even less common and they all function as the subjects of either the copula *be,* in which case the complement is very often an adjective or a NP:

> *… I am glad* (*sure, sorry, from Olomouc, proud of …*)
> *… I* (*she, you, they*) *am a student* (*a teacher, a driver …*)

or of a lexical verb with progressive aspect or in the passive voice (see below).

Table 4.3
To be – frequency of subjects

	it	*I*	*there*	*you*	*my name*	*what*	*they*	*she*	*we*
Number	3,045	863	501	279	245	111	91	64	49

Absolutely the most frequent subject in the corpus that was analysed is *it*, the occurrence of which substantially exceeds its level in the LGSWE. It is used in several patterns of phrases. Commonly, the role of *it* is referential and it is followed by adjectives (*available*, *possible, easier, suitable, great, comfortable*, etc.) and noun or prepositional phrases (*It is a flat, a problem, a card, advantage, at school, in the camp*, etc.). There is a very high

occurrence of the adjectives *good*, *bad*, *possible*, *close*, *expensive*, and also *interesting* and *interested* (used with human subjects). Even if the two may formally be taken as present and past participles, they function and behave grammatically as adjectives and thus are mentioned here as adjectival complementation of the copula *be.*

The conspicuous frequency of the above-mentioned adjectives contributes to a negative assessment of the numerous sentences with the copula *be* and the subject *it,* because they are used as the students' quick choice when synonyms or words with a more specific meaning do not come into their minds. These adjectives are not exactly typical vague language expressions like *kind of*, *at about*, *things like that*, etc. (McCarthy, 1996), but certainly do not express a many-faceted evaluation and give evidence of a limited vocabulary.

The information given in the complementation by adjectives and nominal (prepositional) phrases concerns very simple evaluation, time frequencies, and the location of events. Formally, the subject *it* is mostly used with the contracted form of the verb *be* – *It's possible*, *far away*, *a good experience,* etc.

There are only two structures with the subject *it* which might be mentioned as important for further language practice. The comment on the first one could be positive – the students are able to use the subject *it* in sentences with extraposed subjects and, occasionally, in cleft sentences:

> *… it is good to know …* (*very common*)
> *… it is hard* (*difficult necessary, possible …*) *to take* (*manage, find, study …*)
> *… that's (er) all, all what I need to know …* (T1301B)

Unfortunately, such sentences are most probably not a result of their active skill in using extraposed subjects, but simply the transfer of the same structures from their L1–*je těžké* (*snadné, možné,* etc.) *naučit se angličtinu.* We must count on a certain amount of L1 influence in non-native speakers' language production, even if it may be applied unconsciously. It is not a drawback in skilled communication, but as future teachers, the students should also acquire the appropriate knowledge of L2 structural rules.

The other remark concerns a mistake where *it* should be used as the subject of an object clause, usually with the verb *think* in the main clause:

> *Do you think that (it) is really important …* (D1446)
> *I think that (it) is matter of luck, because …* (D1426)
> *I think that (it) is experience for us …* (D1356)

Such sentences are not exceptional and there are two possible interpretations: (a) the students replace the correct (and missing) subject *it* with the demonstrative pronoun *that* and use ellipsis of the subordinator *that*; (b) they keep the subordinator and fail to use the subject (*it*) of the object clause. There are several examples which suggest that the students sometimes feel there is something wrong and use the structure:

I think that that is something … (D1445)

Whichever interpretation is applied, it is one example of the importance of a detailed corpus analysis, which helps us find structures that should be discussed and practised in the students' practical language classes (Aijmer, 2009 and others).

"In addition to studying the differences between learner and native language on the basis of the frequency of occurrence of specific lexical items or grammatical structures, an assumption underlying much corpus-based research is that non-nativeness is to be found at the level of discourse or information structure in learner texts even after the grammatical system at the level of sentence grammar has been mastered" (Rankin, 2009, p. 46)

Attention should also be drawn to the high number of instances of the grammatical subject *there* in existential sentences, which is not mentioned at all among typical subjects to be found in conversation. In the corpus the students introduce the required information, e.g.:

… (er) there are some deadlines (er) for … (T1404A)
… and there are (er) like high hills … (M1337B)
… since there is no cost … (T1443A)

The location of events or facts is not very common:

OK, and, is there some tram stop near there? (T1345B)

The sentences quite often include more than one clause:

… but there is a website which I can provide … (T1407A)
… there is also a problem that students … (D1307)
… is there a possibility you can find it there? (T1419B)

This frequency of existential sentences – simple and complex – which are mostly correctly structured is a very positive feature when observing the students' linguistic competences. Such sentences are structurally different from the Czech language and students often try to avoid using them or make mistakes influenced by their L1:

*V zahradě jsou dva stromy. – * In the garden are two trees.*

Or they decide to use a different verb (commonly *have*) and translate existential sentences in a different way:

… There are foreign students in the camps … – … v táborech máme zahraniční studenty …

Bearing in mind all the factors involved in conversation – time limitations, stress, and L1 influence – existential sentences seem to be well managed by the students.

The number of sentences with the auxiliary *be* expressing progressive aspect or the passive voice is not very high, however, its occurrence in NSs' conversation is more common than in other registers (LGSWE, p. 462). The dialogues in this corpus certainly provide quite a lot of opportunities for its more frequent use. The fact that there is a great number of human subjects in the corpus is another pre-condition for its higher frequency. There is no suspicion about the students' inability to form progressive or passive verb phrases – they must have been using them since they began to study the English language. One possible reason may be that in the dialogues they more frequently present facts (about activities, hobbies, etc.) than actions in progress. Examples of sentences with progressive and passive verb forms from the corpus:

> *… I am (was) studying, speaking, living, sitting, going, watching, looking for, learning, teaching …*
> *I am (was) confused, satisfied, excited, called …*

The total number of progressive forms in the present is 295, with 79 in the past, which is a significant difference. If we compare the number of students participating (228), who are involved in several tasks (dialogues, discussions, and a monologue), with the number of progressive verb forms in the present or the total number of instances of the use of *be* as the auxiliary for both progressive and passive verb forms (585), the result is that the average usage of progressive forms in the present is 1.3 per student and 2.5 for both progressive and passive forms in the present and past. This frequency is rather unsatisfactory.

The variety of lexical verbs in progressive verb forms is quite extensive, especially verbs connected with their studies, work, hobbies, etc. (*writing*, *teaching*, *studying*, *considering*, *living*, *starting*, *watching*, *planning*, *living*, *speaking*, etc.). There is a frequent occurrence of *was hating …* (there might be some influence of the recently popular McDonalds' *I'm lovin' it*) and some examples where the progressive form is incorrect.

Passive forms are infrequent both in the present (177 samples) and in the past (34 samples), which is not surprising, as the passive is only used in conversation in about two per cent of finite verb forms (LGSWE). The passive verb forms in the corpus are mainly used in the monologues (life and study experience), where such sentences as – *I (my brother/sister) was born* – are used with a very high frequency.

Other verbs included in their passive forms are: *tell*, *accept*, *call*, *frighten*, *introduce*, *confuse*, *excite*, *hold*, *locate*, etc… The frequency of the verb *scare* is surprisingly high; it is connected with talking about examinations, interviews, and other tasks. The similarity of occurrence to the LGSWE corpus applies only to the past participles *born*, *called,* and *paid*.

The verb *have* can be used as an auxiliary helping to express perfect aspect and as a lexical or a modal verb. Table 4.4 below summarises the numbers and roles of this verb (contracted forms of the verb included):

Table 4.4

To have – total occurrence

	Lexical	Modal	Auxiliary	Total
Present	951	536	383	1,870
Past	95	36	8	139
Total	1,046	572	391	2,009

The lexical verb *have* can be found in the corpus with several possible meanings. Evident physical possession is rather rare.

I have (don't, didn't have) money, (ISIC card, flat, etc.)

The relation (not possession) of a person to some abstract quality is most frequent:

I (we, you …) have (had, don't, didn't have) a lot of time (much, enough), the advantage (chance, hobby, experience, etc.)

Its occurrence is rather extensive, but it is not in contradiction of the LGSWE frequency. It is found most commonly in conversation and the figure should be close to the frequency of other regular lexical verbs. In the CCSSE, the number is between the figures applicable to the verbs *think* and *know*. The most common subjects are *I* and *you*, which appear very often in questions.

The number of instances of the modal function of this verb is high, expressing obligation of different kinds. The subject *you* prevails (344 samples) and it is connected with the expected activity of the student who is being informed in the dialogue about various tasks:

You have to (will/would have to) prepare the material (check, buy, find, learn, look after, follow rules, etc.)

With the subject *I,* the students express either their personal obligation, e.g.:

I have to learn (admit, take care, study, etc.)

or assumed obligation, e.g.:

So, well, I have to buy (choose, work, pay, spend, etc.)

The same applies to questions:

What do I have to do (say, read, study, prepare, etc.)?

The fact that the students prefer using the semi-modal verb *have* can be regarded as a positive feature within the students' linguistic competences as it is expected to be quite common in spoken language (Leech, 2004) and it is not used in their mother tongue.

The direct translation from L1 would be the modal verb *must*, which appears in very low numbers (p. 77).

The use of the verb *have* as the auxiliary expressing the category of aspect is the lowest of the three figures (391). The situation and topics of the students' conversation seem to be suitable for perfect verb forms, but *have* is not commonly found in the corpus. The lexical verbs occurring in perfect VPs are mainly *study*, *teach*, *live*, *start*, and *become:*

> *I have recently became a student …* (T1355B)
> *I have just started working on my …* (T1403A)
> *(er) I have just broken with my boyfriend …* (T1419A)

A combination of both aspect forms (perfect + progressive) is rare:

> *I had* (*have*) *been living* (*teaching, studying*) …

The explanation of these facts can most probably be provided by the structure of the students' L1 (Dušková, 1994; Knittlová, 2010), where all the varieties of aspect (perfect, imperfect, progressive) are included in the form of the lexical verb without any auxiliary and the English perfect aspect forms often have the same translation as those in the past tense:

> *I have written* (*I wrote*) *a letter – Napsal jsem dopis …*

This is a well-known fact and therefore the students must have practised the English aspectual verb forms a lot during the years of their language studies, but it is possible that when they are pressed for time in conversation, formally simpler past verb forms are preferred. As linguists correctly suggest, even if the students do not consciously compare L1 and L2 when speaking or writing, the L1 influence is always implicitly present in SLA (Granger, 2009).

4.4.2 Lexical verbs in the corpus

Quite a lot of lexical verbs have already been mentioned as parts of aspect verb phrases, many of which were closely connected with the topics of the dialogues, e.g. *write*, *teach*, *study*, *live*, *start*, *watch*, *plan*, *speak*, *become*. Passive verb forms were frequently used in the monologues: *I (my brother, sister) was born …* and other verbs included for example: *tell*, *accept*, *call*, *frighten*, *introduce*, *confuse*, *excite*, *locate*, etc.

The focus in this section of the chapter is mainly on the verbs which are listed in the LGSWE as the most common lexical verbs in conversation and occur in this corpus predominantly in their simple present and past forms. They will be assessed as items of the students' active vocabulary, with some comment on the sentence structures which include these verbs.

Lexical verbs marked for aspect appear in sentences in their NF forms which can also function in the syntactic positions of condensed subject, object, complement, relative and adverbial clauses and in the modification of the noun in complex NPs. Therefore, they are not included in the figures of Table 4.5.

Table 4.5
Frequency of lexical verbs

	think	like	know	want	get	go	study	say	take	come
Number	1,352	1,192	911	456	392	323	311	233	161	115

As Biber et al. (1999) summarise "Taken as a group, the twelve most common lexical verbs (*say*, *get*, *go*, *know*, *think*, *see*, *make*, *come*, *take*, *want*, *give*, *mean*) occur much more frequently in conversation than in any other three registers … They account for nearly 45 per cent of all lexical verbs in conversation" (p. 373). In conversation, several verbs occur with extremely high frequency: *get* occurs over 9,000 times per million words; *say*, *know* and *go* all occur around 7,000 times per million words; *see*, *come*, *want*, and *mean* are also very common (Biber et al., 1999, p. 375).

We decided to include in Table 4.5 just eight lexical verbs (out of the above-mentioned twelve) according to their frequency and added the verbs *like* and *study*. *Like* is not listed among the most common lexical verbs in the LGSWE, but its total number of occurrences in the corpus is 1,192 and thus it is the second most frequent lexical verb. The numerous VPs including the verb *like* represent the combination with the auxiliary *would* (*I would/'d like* and *would you like* – 597), which can be considered a fixed phrase (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 111) and a structural way of being polite (Válková, 2004). The rest of the samples are: *I* (*don't*) *like* (504), *I really like* (39)*, I liked* (18), *if you like*, and *do you like* (34).

Subjects other than *I/you* are just occasional. The topics of the dialogues must have influenced the frequency of the *would like* verb phrases, but an explanation for the unusually high total occurrence is difficult to find. Partly, it might be connected with the section of the monologues talking about the students' hobbies and interests, but the influence of the cultural background (and thus their L1) may have played a certain role, too. As this verb is not mentioned at all in Biber's list of the most frequent verbs in conversation, it might lead us to the assumption that Czech students/people express their *likes* and *dislikes* much more frequently in conversation than British people. This hypothesis, however, should be verified by research focused on the analysis of the spoken part of the Czech National Corpus. The frequency of this verb, however, contributes to the assumption that the students' vocabulary is not satisfactory and should be enlarged so as to become more varied during their studies in the TEFL programme at the university.

The total occurrence of all the ten verbs in Table 4.5 is 5,446 (which is less than the occurrence of the verb *be* as a copula – 6,370). The numbers of the collected individual lexical verbs in the corpus in some cases accord with the list of the most common verbs in the LGSWE, but not exactly in the order they appear in here. The number one verb in the LGSWE is *get*, the frequency of which in the CCSSE is less than one third of the verb *think* and only one half of the verb *know*. Neither does the verb *say*, which is assessed as the only communicative verb that is extremely common in more than one register, show very high frequency here. If it is used frequently, it means that the participants in a conversation do a lot of reporting, which is not often the case in these dialogues. The students who gave information in the dialogue dealing with part-time job opportunities, available sports facilities, flats, etc. had been given the necessary facts before they started their conversation, but there was no specific person or institution to refer to as their source. Very often the verb is used in combination with the modals *can* and *would*.

If reported speech is found, there is usually no backshift:

… you said you like (*studied, will travel,* etc.)
… you said you haven't enough time (*money, information,* etc.)
… she said it's impossible (*expensive, good, difficult,* etc.)

This is clearly negative transfer from the students' L1, in which this grammatical feature does not exist. Even though the rules must be known by the students, they have not got used to them if there is not enough time to apply them, which is typical of conversation.

One more mistake in the corpus is incorrectly replacing the verb *tell* with *say*. Such mistakes, however, are not significantly common:

… can you say me about salary … (T1336B)
… you say me everything … (T1416A)

High positions in Table 4.5 are occupied by the verbs *think* and *know*, which are fairly common in conversation in general, because they express the opinion or attitude of the speakers involved, as well as the concept of awareness or understanding. To express stance is typical of everyday conversation (Knight, 2015) and it can be expected even more commonly when there is some information to be transferred and ideas to be discussed.

In the examples with the verb *think* the prevailing structure is a complex sentence with an object clause:

I think that a good teacher should be friendly (*reliable, educate,* etc.)
I think it's about twenty kilometres (*it's better to live alone, it's really bad, important,* etc.)
I think that it's brilliant (*great, bad,* etc.)
I think there is accommodation (*a small flat, student's centre,* etc.)

When analysing sentences with the copula *be*, we commented on the structure of some object clauses after the verb *think* where there was a problem with their subject *it*. In the long list of all the object clauses after this verb, however, the mistake seems to be less important. The majority of sentences are correctly structured and the use or ellipsis of the subordinator *that* is well-balanced.

The second most common subject (after *I*) is *you*, which is found mainly in questions:

What do you think about that (*the university, studying, the teachers,* etc.)?
Do you think it will be easy (*difficult, bad; there are benefits, exams,* etc.)?

There are also occasional structures with substitution, especially *I think so.*

Another common lexical verb, *know*, can be found in similar sentence structures, that is, a main clause followed by an object clause, which is very often condensed by the infinitive. There is a greater variety of subordinators in the clauses that are analysed:

I know how to communicate (*work, teach*, etc.)
I know that it's a very good idea (*helpful, necessary, a great surprise*, etc.)
Well, (er), she knows I was there (*I asked her for help, I am a student*, etc.)
I don't know what to say (*to do, to bring, what you mean*, etc.)

The subjects *I* and *you* understandably prevail and there are also a lot of simple sentences:

You know some events (*information, something,* etc.)

Other mental verbs in the LGSWE include *see* and *want*, which are connected with perception and desire. The occurrence of *want* in the corpus is 456 and *see* is not mentioned at all in Table 4.5, because its number is below 200, mostly combined with the modal verb *can*. Surprisingly, there are just rare examples of the common way of expressing comprehension of or interest in what they hear from their partners (*Oh, I see*) (Tárnyiková, 2007). Similarly, there are not many comment clauses such as *you see* or *you know* (see Section 4.5.1.2).

The verb *want* appears quite frequently in conditional clauses such as *If you want to study (go, buy*, etc.), but in an absolute majority of sentences it is the verb of the main clause followed by condensed object clauses:

I always wanted to go to school (*to live alone, to study, to do it,* etc.)

These structures are the same as their equivalents in L1 and are apparently easy for the students. In some cases *I want to* could have been replaced by *I would like to* as an unassuming wish, but when the corpus was checked for the phrases *I would like, I'd like,* and *would you like,* the resulting number was quite high (584) – compared with 456 samples of the verb *want* and, therefore, we cannot accuse the students of formulating their wishes and requests in an impolite way (Válková, 2004).

The frequency of the verb *get* in the corpus is also far below that of its occurrence in the LGSWE, where all its various meanings are listed. The possible usages include obtaining something, moving to or away, causing something, changing from one state to another, and understanding, replacing both the lexical and modal verb *have* (*have got*) and also sometimes the verb *be* in the passive voice (*Did it really get blown off?*) (Biber et al., 1999, p. 376). The verb *get* almost invariably appears with its "obtaining" meaning in the CCSSE analysed here. Strangely, even *have got* occurred only exceptionally (46 examples), which the LGSWE describes as the very common replacement of lexical *have*.

You have got a boyfriend (*one brother, a lot of time, various programmes,* etc.)

The low occurrence of the verb *take* in CCSSE is caused by two factors: it is used quite frequently in the NF forms in the nominal syntactic positions and it often appears in phrasal verbs as *take care*, *take place* or *take time*, which were not included in the total number of this verb.

The common activity verbs *go* and *come* have different distributions, more or less corresponding with their occurrence mentioned in the LGSWE, with a much lower number of examples including the verb *come.* The verb phrases with the verb *go* very often include modal verbs:

You can (*could, can't*) *go to the theatre* (*home, for a walk,* etc.)
Where can (*must, should*) *I go?*
I will (*would*) *go in the morning* (*to camp, to university,* etc.)

The verbs closely connected with the topics of conversation are as follows: *work*, *study*, *learn*, *teach*, *play*, *look for*, *pay*, and similar ones. Only one of them – *study* – is included in Table 4.5 (and it is the only one not listed among the frequent lexical verbs in the LGSWE), with 311 instances (and there are other 88 examples in progressive forms). None of the other verbs exceed 200 examples, including progressive and perfect forms. Even the verbs *teach* and *learn*, which seem to be activities directly connected with the topics that were given, have a surprisingly low frequency of occurrence. They appear in their infinitive and gerund forms as objects or extraposed subjects and commonly in the pre-modification of nouns, but not very often as finite verb forms, including aspect forms:

I started to learn (*to teach*) *I finished learning* (*teaching,* etc.)
It is difficult (*important, easy*) *to learn* (*teach,* etc.)
… learning agreement (*experience*) *teaching practice* (*hours, assistant,* etc.)

These results are opposed to the opinion of some linguists who suggest that conversation is such a unique experience that the same rules and approaches cannot be used for the analysis of all its realisations (Gass & Selinker, 2001). The language material analysed here is not just everyday conversation or social talk, but specialises in giving, getting, and

discussing information on certain topics. In spite of that, the statistical results concerning lexical verbs in their finite forms largely agree with the most frequent verbs in the LGSWE, which provides data based on their occurrence per million words.

4.4.3 Summary of the section

There are several results of the corpus analysis dealing with the frequency of the verbs *be* and *have* and some other lexical verbs that might be helpful in the further language study of the students involved. The major outcomes connected with the functions of the verb *be* comprise:

(a) its rather low frequency as an auxiliary expressing progressive aspect;

(b) the surprisingly great number of instances of this verb used as a copula, which does not correspond with the LGSWE findings;

(c) some adjectival complementation of the verb shows a lack of lexical variety (*interesting*, *good*, *great*, *bad*, etc.);

(d) a great number of correctly formed existential sentences and those with extraposed subjects, which should be assessed positively.

Outcomes concerning the verb *have:*

(a) the number of instances showing its frequency as an auxiliary indicating perfect aspect is lower than that of the verb *be* in progressive verb forms, and thus unsatisfactory;

(b) a positive assessment concerns the use of the verb *have* as a modal verb expressing obligation.

Lexical verbs in the corpus:

(a) the frequency of usage of the individual frequent lexical verbs in the corpus mostly accords with the figures found in the LGSWE for conversation, apart from the verb *like*;

(b) the total number of occurrences of the ten lexical verbs in the corpus (5,446) is not satisfactory, because it is even lower than the total number of just the copula *be* (6,370); if the *be* samples are put together with the instances of the occurrence of the lexical verb *have* (1,046), the number (7,416) significantly exceeds the frequency of the occurrence of the given lexical verbs in the conversations analysed; that means that the range of lexical verbs should be substantially enlarged;

(c) the occurrence of the verb *think* (1,352) should be mentioned among the positive features of the students' performance, because it is a piece of evidence of their way of expressing opinion or tentative statements, which is not so common in their L1 (and is typical of the English language);

(d) the very common verb *get* is not used in the whole variety of its possible meanings and should receive attention in the future;

(e) backshift does not seem to be managed well;

(f) there is a lack of comment clauses;

(g) the complexity of the sentences in the corpus is acceptable.

4.4.4 Syntactic roles of non-finite verb forms

The previous analysis of non-finite verb forms was carried out with a shorter version of this corpus consisting of approximately 75,000 words. The compiled statistical data brought information about the infinitive, gerund, and -ing and -ed participles in the following syntactic positions: subject, notional subject, subject predicative (subject complement), object, adverbial, and modification of nouns or adjectives (Hornová, 2015a).

When some of this data was compared with the occurrence of non-finite verb forms in the same syntactic positions in this corpus, which is twice the size, we found that the results more or less corresponded. Some figures are even bigger than twice the combined numbers, e.g. the infinitive appears in object position over 1,000 times in this corpus, compared with 411 in the shorter one. The verbs followed by infinitive clausal objects are a little more varied. Apart from those mentioned in the previous study (Hornová, 2015a) as the most frequent ones – *would like, want* – there are verbs such as *recommend, plan, need*, and a few more. The condensed object clauses include in great numbers the verbs *know* (151), *go* (176), *study* (142), *ask* (101), etc.:

I recommend (plan, want) to go (study, make, know, etc.)

Similarly, approximately twice the numbers of gerunds and infinitives can be found in the syntactic roles of the subject, notional subject, and complement. It does not seem to be difficult for the students to use object clauses condensed by the infinitive, because the same structures exist in their L1, thus explaining such frequency. The necessary condition for structurally the same translation is that the subjects of the condensed object clauses are the same as the sentence subjects, which is very common in conversation and valid for this corpus as well:

I want to go abroad (to camp, home, etc.) – Chci jet do zahraničí (na tábor, domů, atd.)
I would like to teach children (to study in USA, to meet English people, etc.) – Chtěla bych učit děti (studovat v USA, setkávat se s Angličany, atd.)

The Czech equivalents differ significantly when the subject of the object clause is different, which is found only occasionally in the corpus:

And I would like you to tell me … (T1401A)
… I would like you to give me … (T1342B)

There is a surprisingly high number of gerunds used in the pre-modification of nouns, which was already discussed in the analysis of the shorter corpus. The reason for this frequent occurrence is the topic of the students' dialogues about work, hobbies, halls of residence, etc. Frequently used NPs with pre-modifying gerunds are: *working hours*, *dining hall*, *swimming pool*, *teaching assistant*, etc. (Hornová, 2015b). The trend is visible in this corpus, too.

The students' correct usage of gerunds in pre-modification provides information not only about the lexical items they have acquired, but also about their knowledge connected with the grammatical features of the gerund and its possible syntactic functions. In the whole corpus there were only a few examples of incorrectly used gerunds in pre-modification.

The -ing and -ed participles occur in the subject complement position, as well as in the pre-modification of head nouns. The frequency of their occurrence is not very high and the lexical diversity is not at all impressive: *entertaining*, *exciting*, and, very commonly, *interesting and interested* (which are formally included among adjectives). In the complement they follow the verb *be* in almost a hundred per cent of the examples, which supports the data about the frequency of this verb (see above). Other linking verbs are almost non-existent in the corpus.

Having briefly summarised the occurrence and certain syntactic functions of non-finite verb forms and their similarities and differences in L1 and L2, we decided to focus on other roles of non-finite verb forms in this corpus. They may not be as frequent as the above-mentioned ones, but probably reveal more advanced linguistic competences (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 108) among the students. The structure we would like to focus on is the post-modification of nouns and adjectives by non-finite clauses.

4.4.5 Post-modification of nouns and adjectives

4.4.5.1 Infinitive

All the non-finite verb forms can be found in this syntactic position, but not with the same frequency. Infinitive clauses in the post-modification of nouns or adjectives are rather common in conversation, especially after some nouns – *time*, *thing*, *way* (LGSWE).

The occurrence of the post-modifying infinitives with these nouns in the present corpus is as follows: *time* (24), *way* (11), *thing* (6):

> *I just have time to relax* (*prepare, move, spend, study,* etc.)
> *Internet is the fastest way to transfer* (*to inform, to find,* etc.)
> *It is a good way to learn* (*to practise, to ask questions,* etc.)
> *It's not easy and secure thing to do* (*to travel,* etc.)

There are also a few other nouns post-modified by the infinitive, e.g. *place* (4), *money* (6), *a lot* (4):

> *I think that's* (*it's*) *good* (*nice, better*) *place to live,* etc.
> *They don't have so much money to pay it* (*to live, to go, to rent,* etc.)
> *… we will have a lot to talk about* (*to see there*, etc.)

The approximate number of infinitives post-modifying nouns is about 60, which is not insignificant in this relatively small corpus. The infinitives are often condensers of relative clauses and do not have the same equivalents in the students' L1, where – in a majority of examples – a finite subordinate clause or a prepositional phrase would be used:

> *Nemají dost peněz, aby to zaplatili* (*aby si to pronajali,* etc.)
> *Mám čas k odpočinku/abych si odpočinul.*

Infinitive clauses post-modifying adjectives can be found a little more frequently than those post-modifying nouns (over 65 examples). Typical adjectives are *good*, *difficult*, *easy*, and *ready:*

> *… it's also good to meet people* (*to have, to know, to prepare, to be,* etc.)
> *It's difficult to say* (*spend, earn, speak, understand,* etc.)
> *… you have to be ready to explain* (*to do, to come,* etc.)

Infinitives are also used in the corpus for the condensation of adverbial clauses – mainly of purpose:

> *… you can use your card to get this ten per cent …* (T1302B)
> *… you can get some part-time job to reach any money.* (D1306)
> *… what I have to do to obtain this card.* (T1306B)

All the structures with the infinitive as a condensing element that were analysed should be assessed positively, because these structures represent the students' acquired knowledge transformed into a skill. We believe that it can be called a skill, because the phrases are used under the specific conditions of conversation and they are structurally different in the students' L1 (Tárnyiková, 2007).

4.4.5.2 Gerund

The gerund as one of the non-finite verb forms does not exist in the students' L1 and, moreover, its position in both the pre- and post-modification of nouns is considered relatively uncommon (Biber et al., 1999). Pre- and post-modifying gerunds include condensed information about the following/preceding noun/adjective; in post-modification they are a part of a prepositional phrase, informing us about what the use/aim of the noun is, e.g.:

A dancing course – a course for dancing
A swimming centre – a centre (used) for swimming

The most common preposition in the corpus is *of*:

I am afraid of going there (*studying abroad, going to camp,* etc.)
… aspects (*advantages, an idea*) *of studying* (*living, travelling, renting*)
… (er) you should have some experience in teaching … (T1336B)
… because I'm afraid of taking risks … (T1418A)
… negative aspects of studying … (D1715)

Gerundial post-modification is not very frequent (over 50 examples), but its use is a sign of advanced linguistic competences within the students' English. The closest equivalent of gerund in Czech is the verbal noun, which can often be used when translating, but is not the only counterpart. In some cases it can be the infinitive, prepositional phrases, or subordinate finite clauses:

Swimming is a pleasant activity. – Plavání je příjemná činnost.
I am afraid of going there. – Bojím se tam jít.
She has no experience of teaching. – Nemá zkušenosti s učením.
I learned it by listening to people. – Naučila jsem se to tak, že jsem všechny poslouchala.

To acquire the skill of using gerunds in the syntactic roles of the subject, object, or complement is easier for Czech students than managing the modification of nouns and adjectives (Dušková, 1994; Tárnyiková, 2007). Gerunds in post-modification can alternate with the infinitive or a subordinate clause. As mentioned above, post-modifiers of any kind are not very common in English conversation and this is valid for -ing and -ed verb forms, too. They are found more frequently in written registers (Biber et al., 1999; Knittlová, 2010). Thus, the assessment of even the infrequent use of post-modifying gerunds is positive.

Condensers of adverbial clauses have no direct counterpart in contemporary Czech either. For example, adverbial clauses of circumstance, which are very common in English and are typically condensed by -ing clauses, are preferably translated by main clauses in Czech (Mathesius, 1975; Knittlová, 2010). The two varying structures follow the different ways of expressing two activities going on at the same time. English prefers to use a finite (main) clause for the more important activity and the other activity/event is expressed by an -ing circumstantial clause:

I hurried home without stopping anywhere. – Spěchal jsem domů a nikde jsem se nezastavoval.

Such sentences are purely accidental in the corpus, while there are quite a few adverbial clauses of manner or time:

So you chat with your friends instead of preparing to school … (D1458)
… they celebrate (er) the Christmas holiday by drinking … (T1315A)
Well, I started improving it by watching English movies … (M1427B)

Summarising the occurrence of the post-modifying gerund in this corpus, it can be observed that the usage is fairly good, even if there are mistakes in the use of prepositions or hesitation between the usage of the gerund or the infinitive.

4.4.5.3 Post-modification by -ing and -ed participles

Post-modifying participles, according to the LGSWE findings (Biber et al., 1999, pp. 631–632), are most common in academic writing, with the -ed participle prevailing. The following condensed -ing clauses are listed there as being common: *containing*, *using*, *concerning*, *involving*, and the -ed clauses *based*, *given*, *used*, *caused*, *made*, etc. The examples of post-modifying participles in the corpus are few and do not include the same verbs as presented in the LGSWE. The -ed participles that are occasionally used are *planned* (7), *made* (5), *named* (4), and *called* – (34), which occurs with a relatively high frequency:

… a village (town, school, company) called XY …
… seminar (er) papers made by students … (D1445)
… events planned for November … (T1352A)
… we have a dog named Rxxx … (M1431A)

If these numbers are checked against the occurrence of passive sentences, the number of post-modifying -ed forms is surprisingly low. Moreover, such post-modification is quite common in the students' L1:

Peníze letos uspořené; studenti zapsaní do semináře; jídlo doma uvařené, apod.

The situation is similar with the -ing participle. None of the -ing participles mentioned in the LGSWE is used in the post-modification in the CCSSE. This finding is rather surprising, because there are a lot of finite relative clauses used by the students, many of which could easily have been condensed by the -ing participle, and occasionally also by the -ed participle.

When relative pronouns are investigated in the whole corpus, the result is a truly numerous occurrence. The approximate numbers and examples are as follows: *who* (118), e.g.:

… people (16) who have money (help you, live here, work/are working hard, etc.)
… students (15) who can study (attend school, have to study, like, are ready, etc.)
… teachers (13) who taught, (teached, came, are good, etc.)

Other frequent subjects to which the relativiser *who* refers are: *everybody*, *children*, *parents*, *person*, etc. The numbers concerning the use of the relativisers *which* (about 200) and *that* (about 50) are astonishingly high, too:

*… books (*courses, events, application, flat, *etc.) which are (*is*) available (*expensive, leads to CAE, are organised, *etc.)*
*… certificate which cost four thousand (*is good/available, includes, *etc.)*
*… things/something (*both subjects very common) *that I like (*I don't know, I prefer, *etc.)*
*… club (*centre, language, courses, credits, *etc.) that you know (*recommend, is/are available, similar, important, *etc.)*

It is understandable that some finite relative clauses are not condensed, e.g. those including the copula *be*, which are quite common, or those with negative finite verbs, e.g.:

*… people who are patient (*noisy, smart, busy, *etc.)*
*… students who don't like (*know, study, *etc.)*

And then there are clauses which cannot be condensed, because the relativiser does not refer to the subject of the main clause, e.g.:

*… activities which I can do … (*T1351A)
*… a lot of people who we don't know … (*D1431)
*… they are benefits (*things, courses, *etc.) that I should know about (*that you are interested in, *etc.)*

If the frequency of relative clauses is compared with the LGSWE findings, the figures show that they are not very common in conversation (Biber et al., 1999, p. 620; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). The possible explanations of such a high occurrence of finite relative clauses with the relativisers mostly being expressed and the infrequent use of their condensed forms (by participles and infinitives) are diverse. The high number of relative clauses itself might be connected with the topics of conversation – talking about courses, teachers, students, or universities – where supplying more specific information about the given noun by means of a relative clause may be considered important. Secondly, the scant usage of condensed relative clauses might be influenced by the students' L1, where they are sometimes discouraged from using Czech participles as their correct translation. The recommended structures are finite clauses. The reason for such a structural preference is that Czech participles are declined as adjectives and some case forms, especially those with participles derived from reflexive verbs, are rather awkward:

I watched the man laughing loudly. – Sledoval jsem toho muže hlasitě se smějícího.
x *… který se hlasitě smál.*

The variant with the finite clause is certainly better and also corresponds with the verbal trends in the Czech language. Even if some excuses can be found, the final evaluation of the two facts – the apparent prevalence of finite relative clauses in the post-modification of nouns and the very limited number of zero relativisers – are two structural features in

the given conversation which should be assessed negatively and reveal a weakness in the students' linguistic competence in this field.

4.5 Selected means of discourse management

This section concentrates on the analysis of the structures which were identified as the most salient in research studies of English native speakers comparing written and spoken discourses. In other words, only those means whose frequency was very significantly higher in speech than in writing were included in the discussion in this section. The decision was mainly motivated by the fact that it is generally believed that most textbooks and other study materials are based on grammar books which primarily work with written texts (McCarthy & Carter, 2001; Hellermann & Vergun, 2007; Timmis, 2005). Thus the intention of the research is to find out how far the learners are able to acquire such devices, which they probably cannot know from their English lessons.

Observing the performances of students, we included a group of the most common discourse markers and other prefatory expressions occurring at the beginning of an utterance and helping to manage turn-taking. Similarly, the linking adverbials used at the beginning of a turn enable the speaker to take the floor and at the same time express the relation of the following utterance to what has been said before. Another area of the research is represented by various groups of stance adverbials, those expressing doubt, actuality, and imprecision, because they are very important in the process of interaction in dialogues. Non-word means of dysfluency in conversation are also included in the discussion with the aim of assessing their frequency and distribution in comparison with word inserts. Discourse markers and linking adverbials are primarily analysed in their initial position since they help to manage turn-taking strategies; however, at the same time they can have further functions, so some of the other cases will also be discussed.

Unsurprisingly, in various studies DMs are approached from different perspectives. For instance, Halliday and Hasan (1976) argue that they primarily serve as ways of creating cohesion, while Fraser (1998) perceives them as being concerned with pragmatics, and Schiffrin (2001) emphasises their role in the process of the construction of discourse. Most linguists admit that DMs have multiple functions (e.g. Aijmer, 2015; Biber 2006; Carter & McCarthy, 2011; Povolná, 2010) but their exact categorisation differs or overlaps relatively often. Carter and McCarthy (2011) define three primary functions: connecting, organising, and managing what we say (p. 172), and then they add a finer categorisation. Povolná (2010) highlights the pragmatic function, with several subcategories, and considers coherence and politeness to be distinct from pragmatics. The different perspectives adopted by individual researchers are also reflected in what words/expressions they label as discourse markers. Biber (2006) introduces the cover term *discourse connector* as a device to act as

a bridge between turns, under which he classifies two separate groups – DMs and linking adverbials (pp. 66–72). On the other hand, some other authors (e.g. Aijmer, 2015; Carter & McCarthy, 2011) include adverbs such as *actually*, *so*, and *anyway* among the category of DMs. No doubt the borders among their individual functions are rather blurred; they can be combined and in some cases they can be ambiguous and understood differently by various interlocutors as a result of their subjective perception. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the objective of this particular research is not to strictly categorise individual functions, but rather observe learners' ability to use them for any purpose within their pragmatic competences (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 123–130).

In all tables below the figures represent the number of occurrences of a word/structure with the mentioned function, not its overall occurrence. As mentioned above, concordance lines subsequently had to be analysed manually because of the multiple functions of individual structures, mainly the multiple word expressions (e.g. *you know*, *I think*, *kind of*), and words such as *like*, *really*, *maybe*, *so*, *well*, and *right.* The chosen method of a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses is generally applied in a number of studies, which is caused by the limitations of corpus linguistics (e.g. McEnery, Xiao, & Tono, 2007; Timmis 2015). Hunston (2002) summarises the points, stating "They [corpora] are invaluable for doing what they do, and what they do not do must be done in another way" (p. 20). Evison (2012) even presents combining corpus techniques with other approaches as being broadly used because "Once concordance analysis has been able to establish patterns … further detailed analysis can of course be carried out on specific examples that have first been indicated" (p. 133).

4.5.1 Discourse markers and other inserts

Speakers in conversation have to follow certain rules to be able to continue the interaction naturally. According to Schiffrin (1994), for the purpose of creating adjacency pairs successfully there are several options which can be combined: (a) one interlocutor uses a response elicitor at the end of his/her turn; (b) the other interlocutor uses a prefatory expression at the beginning of his/her turn to signal that he/she is taking the floor; (c) one interlocutor uses back-channelling to express s/he is paying attention but not taking a turn (p. 236). For the purpose of the second strategy, mostly discourse markers are used. They are utterance introducers combining two roles – they signal transition and also signal interaction. They are either one-word inserts (e.g. *well*, *right*) or two-word inserts (e.g. *I mean*, *you know*). According to the findings of Biber et al. (1999), the three most frequent DMs are *well*, *you know*, and *I mean* (p. 1096).

We have to admit that there are several problems involved in identifying utterance launchers, especially their relation to the rest of an utterance and their particular grammatical

function. For the purposes of this analysis, it is not important if they form an independent unit or if they are the start of the following utterance because the end of a unit was marked by the speakers themselves according to their subjective feelings (Fung & Müller, 2005). Moreover, as mentioned above, the CCSSE is not tagged for prosodic features and that is why we cannot apply intonation as a decisive criterion. At this point, an important remark should be made – punctuation in the transcribed recordings is not the criterion, since it was, to a certain extent, an individual viewing of the degree of the level of connection.

With two-word DMs another problem arises: in certain situations it is difficult to decide if they function as a DM, a comment clause, or a main clause. There is a set of criteria that help, but not in all cases. If they occur at the end of an utterance or of a turn, they are undoubtedly comment clauses. If they occur at the beginning or in the middle, we should consider several factors: main clauses are followed by a nominal subordinate clause which starts with a subordinator (*that* conjunction or *wh-* element); however, in conversation such a clause can be juxtaposed and the conjunction can be deleted, so without a clue given by intonation it can be ambiguous (Kaltenböck, 2009). It is unambiguous if it interrupts a continuous sentence, e.g. auxiliary – lexical verb, subject – verb, verb – object, verb – complement, preposition – noun phrase. Thus, after obtaining the concordance lines electronically, we had to analyse them manually using the above-mentioned criteria. All the cases except main clauses will be discussed in Section 4.5.1.1 since discourse markers used initially and comment clauses in the middle or at the end of an utterance share the feature of expressing interaction.

4.5.1.1 One-word discourse markers

For the analysis in this section five one-word inserts were selected; the DMs *well*, *right*, and *now* (most frequently used by native speakers); the interjection *oh,* and the primary response form *OK/okay*. The reason why they are explored as one group is that *oh* and *OK/ okay* can quite frequently combine their primary function with that of expressing transition and interaction. On the other hand, the two most frequent response forms (i.e. *yes/yeah*, *no*) are not included because in most cases they just serve their primary function.

Table 4.6

Distribution of selected inserts

	No. of occurrences	At the beginning of a turn*	
OK/okay	942	686/804	72.8%/85.4%
well	546	321/418	58.8%/76.6%
oh	118	100/100	84.7%/84.7%
right (all right)	22	6/6	27.3%/27.3%
now	5	0/2	0%/40.0%

*The second number in the last two columns gives the number of occurrences of a particular insert that are not at the very beginning of a turn, but after (*er*), […], or another insert

From the figures in Table 4.6 the following findings are apparent. The distribution of the individual devices is highly unbalanced. Out of the most common one-word DMs, students seem to master only *well*, even though at least in about 24 per cent of cases they use it not as a signal of transition and interaction, but as an insert in the middle of their utterance, as a part of a strategy to gain time while continuing talking. It seems that the primary response form *OK/okay* takes over the function of a DM. We have to admit that especially at the beginning of a turn it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the two functions, so for the purposes of this analysis the following criterion is the decisive one: if the use is only as a response, it is excluded, but if it enables the combination of both interpretations (response + interaction), it is taken into consideration.

In the majority of cases *oh* (84.7%/84.7%) and *OK/okay* (72.8%/85.4%) are used as signals of transition and interaction. On the other hand, the common DMs are almost absent (except *well*) from the students' performances and if they do occur, it is mostly in the middle of a turn. It is only in conversations where students show a wider range of typical spoken linguistic tools that we can observe a combination of the structures listed in Table 4.6, as in the following examples:

> *OK, well, and the price of exam?* (T1309A)
> *Oh, well, you can google it.* (T1401A)
> *Well, OK, I am not sure if I like this so what about some sports events?* (T1338B)

This feature brings their performance closer to the natural dialogue of NSs as described by Biber et al. (1999), who also offer examples of the co-occurrence of DMs and other utterance launchers and declare that such expressions are frequently found in three or four lexical bundles.

In the CCSSE the collocations of the most frequent insert *OK/okay* are: *(er)* – 60 to the left, 64 to the right; *yes/yeah* – 39 to the left, 3 to the right; *well* – 3 to the left, 7 to the right.

> *OK, well, and the price of exam?* (T1309A)
> *Yeah, okay, so if you don't mind sharing …* (T1439A)

4.5.1.2 Two-word discourse markers

Among the two-word expressions the following most common discourse markers are in focus: *you know*, *you see*, *I mean*. Interestingly, the distribution differs significantly in British and American English: AmE: *you know* – 4,500 occurrences per million words, *I mean* – 2,000, *you see* – 500; BrE: *you see* – 4,000, *you know* – 2,000, *I mean* – 1,500 (Biber et al., 1999, p. 1096). As a result of the very low frequency of occurrence of these structures

in the CCSSE, we tried to find out if students use some alternative devices instead and that is why we also incorporated *I think* as in many cases it was used instead of the structures used by English native speakers. All these expressions can also occur in the middle of an utterance to signal self-correction or to help gain time, or at the end of a turn as a means of giving a turn. Thus the analysis includes all the cases of identified DMs and comment clauses according to the criteria explained in 4.5.1. All those cases where the sentence enables the interpretation as a main clause followed by a juxtaposed nominal clause are excluded from the analysis. Moreover, the following supporting criteria (especially the categorising *I think*) are involved: such cases are excluded if the structure is preceded by *because*, *but*, or *so*, or if it is followed by *about*, *so*, or *that*. It means that out of the 1,054 occurrences of *I think*, only 111 are classified as DMs or comment clauses, i.e. discourse management devices. As the structure *you see* did not occur in the corpus, it is not included in the tables.

Table 4.7

Distribution of two-word discourse markers

	No. of occurrences	End of a turn	End of a sentence	Beginning of a turn	Beginning of a sentence
you know	131	14	5	5	7
		10.7%	3.8%	3.8%	5.3%
I mean	33	1	0	1	10
		3.0%	0.0%	3.0%	30.3%
I think	111	38	13	3	5
		34.2%	11.7%	2.7%	4.5%

The figures in Tables 4.7 and 4.8 show that Czech learners of English prefer two comment clauses, of which the first – *you know* – is the most frequent one in AmE (according to LGSWE) and the second – *I think* – is not identified as a discourse marker among native speakers of English. It seems that the interlocutors in the CCSSE have a tendency to replace the typical native structure *I mean* with *I think* since the latter is used about three times more frequently. Their common use is illustrated in the examples given below.

In accordance with the previously mentioned criteria, all the cases where such structures are used finally (at the end of a turn or the end of an utterance) are included because they are classified as comment clauses and they apparently serve a discoursal interactive function.

> *Yeah me too, but I'm a little bit afraid of the salary, you know.* (D1324)
> *Yeah it's nice but my brother got the offer to get it for free […] you know.* (T1330B)
> *And you are independent person I think.* (D1430)
> *The price for this course is (er) three thousand five hundred and ninety crowns, so it's good I think.* (T1354A)

The middle position uses the interruption of a clause/phrase as the main criterion where the interpretation as a main clause is not acceptable.

So that's I think really uncomfortable for them and it is very busy and noisy. (D1441)
(Er) I started, (er) to learn English (er) […] (er) (er) before, (er) I think, eight years.
(M1420A)
*… so you should have (er) I think average grades from, from, from, this, this, this
subject …* (T1426A)
… and (er) I have I think big family, we live in a house … (M1311B)
Well, the idea of free education for everybody is I think already a common thing …
(D1443)
I I go there and I take test or is there any listening, you know this kind of stuff.
(T1330B)
Well because nowadays, you know, university is something like a "must have …
(M1439A)

Initial position requires the most detailed discussion – those cases which cannot be
identified as main clauses are categorised as DMs, and it seems that only the cases when
they occur together with other means of transition are justifiable – as in some of the
examples below:

*And I think, well now it's really common that agencies that require disciplinary papers
…* (D1403)
(er) I think, ok so you live in Oxxx and you study in Oxxx. (D1337)
And, you know, my problem is that I don't have a lot of money … (T1406B)

Quite striking differences can be observed in the particular positions of the individual
devices. All three structures can predominantly be found in medial position (*you know* –
76.4%, *I mean* – 63.7%, *I think* – 46.9%), but their other distributions are different. While
the structure *I mean* is usually used at the beginning (33.3%), the form *I think* is mostly
used finally (45.9%). It brings us to the conclusion that students have preferred certain
structures for individual positions.

Table 4.8
Distribution of two-word discourse markers in individual parts

	Distribution in individual parts*		
	Monologue	Task	Discussion
you know	301	875	1330
I mean	82	245	281
I think	713	540	1100

* Overall frequency recounted per one million words

Since the absolute figures concerning the occurrences in the individual parts of the
recordings in the CCSSE apparently differ, they had to be recounted so that we could
compare the distribution. Table 4.8 attempts to reveal another phenomenon of the use of
two-word DMs. It is undeniable that the use of such structures depends on the purpose
of communication; however, certain differences from the anticipated results have been

identified. As expected, the students used the structures in question most frequently in the discussion part. But if we compare the distribution of the individual devices, there are substantial differences: in the monologue *I think* is preferred and, surprisingly, it occurs even more frequently than in the task-based communication. Another finding to discuss is the distribution of *I mean* vs. *you know* and *I think* in the task and discussion parts. It is evident that the structure *I mean* has a much more balanced distribution, while the other two structures are used nearly twice as often in the discussion. We suppose that the difference may be caused by the significant difference in the overall numbers of occurrences of the individual devices. However, another potential explanation can be the different character of the dialogue in information transfer conversation and discussion, where students might feel more obliged to offer signals of interaction during speaking.

4.5.2 Linking adverbials

Indisputably, the single adverbs used most frequently in conversation are *so*, *then*, *though*, and *anyway* (Biber et al., 1999, p. 887). Here the attention is mainly paid to those occurring initially or finally since we are interested in those cases when they link pieces of language across the border of a turn.

Table 4.9

Distribution of linking adverbials

	No. of occurrences	At the beginning of a turn*	At the end of a turn*
so	2,043	467	109
then	126	4	1
though	0	0	0
anyway	2	0	0

* The numbers include those cases where the adverbial stands after/before a silent or filled pause: (*er*), […]

The figures in Table 4.9 prove a considerable preference for the linking adverbial *so*, which is not unexpected because of the students' first language. Here the strong influence of their mother tongue is clearly observable. At the very beginning of a turn, it is used even more often than the common DM *well*. Even though it may seem that the primary function of *so* is not discoursal, since it is placed initially in 22.9 per cent and finally in 5.3 per cent of cases, we must not forget that if it occurs in the middle of a turn, in 364 cases (i.e. 17.9%) it is used at the beginning of a sentence. It means that about half of the occurrences (53.9%) occur inside a sentence; however, in most cases it has a connective function as well because it links clauses or smaller pieces of language. The typical linking use is exemplified by the following utterances:

So, I have to go there with my prepared materials … (T1417A)
So, you feel better when you don't eat meat. (D1440)

What was rather surprising, however, was the use of *so* at the end of a turn with its primary function of a response elicitor.

Yeah, we are non-smokers, so […] (T1448A)
I, I, I'm not like I don't like (er) working with people. (+) So. (T1344A)

The second frequent linking adverbial is *then*, but there are huge differences, not only in terms of its frequency of use, but also in particular functions. While *so* mainly serves as a connector, sometimes in combination with a filler, *then* sometimes adds a function of temporal connection. Thus, out of its overall number of occurrences in the whole corpus – 257 instances – half of them (i.e. 131) were excluded because they were classified as purely temporal expressions. And in some other cases it may also be disputable which function is basic or prevailing. Moreover, it is only exceptionally used initially, which means that it does not serve as a turn-taking device.

Yeah, then isn't it problem for you to share your room with, with your sister? (T1434B)
Then there's this language examination. (T1324B)

The other two linking adverbials are not in fact used by the learners at all, since the two occurrences in the corpus are used by one student, and moreover not as connecting utterances, but in the middle of a turn.

Table 4.10

*Co-occurrence of **so** with other inserts or hesitators*

	To the left	To the right
(er)	154	187
OK/okay	155	6
yes/yeah	46	25
well	11	6

Table 4.10 demonstrates that the devices used for expressing interaction, transition, and hesitation tend to co-occur, especially at the primary and secondary boundaries (i.e. the beginning of a turn, sentence, or clause). Leaving aside the co-occurrence of *so* and filled non-word pauses, similarly to the high frequency of co-occurrence of one-word DMs discussed in Section 4.5.1.1, the figures show a significant collocation of *so + OK/okay*, while *well* collocates relatively rarely – both with *so* (17 instances) and *OK/okay* (10 instances). It seems that the interlocutors in the CCSSE tend to use *well* mostly separately, while they use *so* and *OK/okay* in longer lexical bundles.

Okay, so […] do you want to plan some more activity (T1325A)
So (er) well the thing is (er) […] I recently moved here … (T1321B)
So, OK, what do you consider as a […] healthy diet? (D1450)
Oh yeah so they have no further information yet. (T1331A)

4.5.3 Stance adverbials

In this section three semantic groups of stance adverbials (disjuncts) are in focus: those expressing doubt, imprecision, and actuality. Similarly to the previous sections, the primary criterion for including particular adverbs into the analysis is their highly significant frequency in NSs' conversation compared to other registers.

4.5.3.1 Expressing doubt

Probably and *maybe* represent the most common single adverbs expressing uncertainty in both British and American English; however, there is a big difference in distribution between the two varieties. While in AmE the frequency of both is more or less balanced, in BrE *probably* is used three times more often than *maybe*, and if we compare the use of *maybe*, it is used four times more often in AmE than in BrE (Biber et al., 1999, p. 869).

Table 4.11
Distribution of stance adverbials expressing doubt

	No. of occurrences	At the beginning of a turn*	At the end of a turn*
probably	62	5	1
maybe	265	34	17

* The numbers include the cases when the adverbial stands after/before a silent or filled pause: (er), […]

As can be noticed from Table 4.11, the stance adverbial *maybe* is used more than four times more frequently than *probably*. It seems that it is another area where we may explain the students' use of certain structures by a stronger influence of American English on their performances than British English.

Maybe phone number is not that critical but I think you shouldn't have … (D1401)
It's maybe, it's I I supposed, (er) from eight I think I supposed I had, I had to look … (T1419B)

Just one person used both adverbials:

Probably, maybe, but some basic furniture, you know, not […] (T1423A)

Even though it may seem that *maybe* is not primarily used as an utterance launcher (12.7% at the very beginning of a turn), quite frequently it follows another opening

expression such as *yeah/yes*, *well*, *so*, *but*, or *and*, which means that the proportion of its use at the beginning of a turn or an utterance increases noticeably:

> *Yeah, maybe in the flat you have to clean more […]* (D1409)
> *Well, maybe rent the flat.* (T1340B)
> *So, maybe I will go there be you.* (T1425B)
> *But maybe it (er) it became (er) becomes big (er) bigger problem …* (D1348)
> *And maybe nowadays he should be open minded and […]* (D1331)

The examples above show that besides the primary function of these stance adverbials – expressing uncertainty – especially *maybe* often co-occurs with various utterance launchers and to some extent it also plays a discoursal role. The total number of occurrences, however, is surprisingly low and it is evident that for hedging students prefer to use modal verbs (mostly *can*).

4.5.3.2 Expressing imprecision

Ways of expressing imprecision are typical structures in the grammar of speech. Similarly to the previous group of stance adverbials, there are big differences in the use of individual constructions between British and American varieties: AmE: *like* – 1,500 occurrences per million words, *kind of* – 400, *sort of* – 200; BrE: *sort of* – 600, *like* – 200, *kind of* – 50 (Biber et al., 1999, p. 870).

In the case of all three selected items, manual categorisation was essential after the use of a concordancer in order to exclude (a) instances in which *sort of* and *kind of* do not express imprecision but are just heads of a NP with the meaning *type* and (b) occurrences of *like* used as a different word class (especially those expressing comparison), but also instances in which it is an adverb, but functioning as an approximator – mainly with numerical expressions. Since sometimes the meaning is not clear and the structure can be ambiguous, the primary criterion chosen for distinguishing between comparison and imprecision was structural: e.g. classified as comparison: NP *like* NP, VP *like* VP; classified as imprecision: VP *like* NP, aux *like* lexical verb, etc. It means that only about ten per cent of all the occurrences could be categorised as expressions of imprecision. It is exemplified in the following turn, where there are four instances of the use of *like*: the first is identified as comparison, the third as an approximator, and only the second and fourth as imprecision.

> <A> *Well, I totally agree but I just have one problem with this information source,* **like** *the internet. (+) That some information may be* **like** *changed or it cannot be* **like** *one hundred per cent reliable, because you know, there is no one* **like** *signed actually under that. (+) </A>* (D1439)

Table 4.12

Distribution of stance adverbials expressing imprecision

	No. of occurrences
sort of	4
kind of	17
like	165

The distribution of individual structures is substantially unequal in favour of *like*. Thanks to the findings presented by Biber et al. (1999), as mentioned above, we can conclude that it is the third group of expressions with a significant influence of American English.

> *Yeah yeah I do feel kind of scary right now when you talk said it out aloud.* (T1328A)
> *… because I live now in, at like student's accommodation (er) and I am really, (er) un= unhappy there* (T1327A)
> *I guess when you are like writing bach= bachelor work …* (D1403)
> *… I don't know which one is my like the favourite, maybe salmon.* (D1450)
> *Are there any like interesting places?* (T1406B)

The overall figures might be slightly shifted by the influence of individual idiolects because in a few cases the students evidently overuse this adverb, but it would require a more thorough analysis of all their performances where this device is used. There are also interesting cases of the use of imprecision expressions together with two-word discourse markers expressing interaction. Though the cases are not very frequent, we believe they show a higher degree of mastery of a wider range of discourse management strategies by some of the students as they usually employ various strategies and use a variety of means of interaction and discourse management:

> *(Er) right, now I'm living in a really, really small room […] we have like, you know, I really don't like it …* (T1439A)
> *Yeah, I mean like author reading or something like that.* (T1324A)

4.5.3.3 Expressing actuality

Actuality is expressed far more predominantly in speech than in writing as a result of the nature of conversation, especially the shared context and interactivity. Single adverbs used for that are predominantly *really* and *actually*; unlike with previous groups, there are almost no differences between British and American English.

Again, with these adverbs there was a need to exclude instances where they did not function as actuality expressions. About half of the occurrences of *really* were cases of an adjective or adverb modifier; that is why they have not been counted.

Table 4.13

Distribution of stance adverbials expressing actuality

	No. of occurrences	Per one million words		
		CCSSE	AmE (LGSWE)	BrE (LGSWE)
really	269	1,755	1,100/1,700*	1,100/1,400*
actually	64	417	800	700

* The second figure includes semantically ambiguous adverbials

As is apparent from the figures in Table 4.13, there is a high preference for *really*, which corresponds to the findings of the analysis of native speakers' conversations. However, there is a significant difference in dispersion between the corpora. While in the L1 corpus, the ratio is about 2:1, in the CCSSE it is more than 4:1. It can possibly be explained by the apparent underuse of *actually* by the students, which could, among other factors, be caused by the completely different meaning of the word in Czech.

> *Yeah, I I actually now live just with with my sister so I, well I I would call …* (D1314)
> *Of course, you can learn something and it's actually your work …* (D1445)
> *Could you suggest me which course is actually better for me for an instance?* (T1346B)
> *And I think that really depends who is asking I mean the teacher …* (D1405)

Concerning other findings, an interesting point is a significant collocation of the adverb *actually*, which is the personal pronoun *I* (first to the left ten times, first to the right six times). As the use of adverbials of actuality is primarily motivated by the shared context of a conversation, we would expect the co-occurrence of pronouns and adverbs referring to the participants in a dialogue or the time and place of the events, however, the first person singular personal pronoun is the only significant collocation that we identified. Even though the utterances represent 25 per cent of all the occurrences, because of the relatively low total number it is impossible to make any more general conclusions concerning the influence of a topic or type of task (half of all the instances is found in the discussions).

Another interesting point was what seemed to be the quite high frequency of repetition of *really*; however, after thorough inspection it was proved that in 21 instances out of 22 the adverb functioned as an adjective or adverb pre-modifier, so it is commented on in connection with other repetitions of single words in Chapter 6. As regards the use of *really*, the prevailing collocations directly to its right are verbs (the most frequent include: *like* – 64, *love* – 17, *want* – 7, *think* – 6, and *know* – 6). Compared to the figures in Table 4.5, we can conclude that especially *really love* represents a very strong collocation.

4.5.4 Non-word fillers

The above-mentioned typical spoken structures are used to signal transition and interaction or to express various forms of uncertainty, but at the same time they can be used as hesitators with the intention of gaining time while planning utterances ahead. Apart from them, we can observe filled and unfilled pauses as a manifestation of the same process. Generally, silent pauses cannot be too long in authentic conversation because the primary principle of interaction would be violated. It is the reason why the pauses are so frequently filled with a vowel, which signals that the speaker wants to continue his/her turn but needs some more time. In this section the distribution of these two instruments is considered even though some authors suggest to exclude from the analysis all the chunks like false starts, repetition, or self- correction (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 148). We believe that they are integral parts of spoken performance and they must be considered in the analysis. In Chapter 6, another means of hesitation will be explored – the repetition of words, parts of words, or longer chunks of language in the form of repeats and repairs.

Basically, what does not correspond to the findings in the native speakers' corpus is the distribution of filled and unfilled (silent) pauses. The overall numbers are: filled – (*er*) 7,985, silent – […] 2,415. The figures recalculated per million words are summarised in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14
Distribution of (er) and […]

	CCSSE	LGSWE
filled (*er*)	52,089	13,000
silent […]	15,754	20,000

Figures per million words

It is probably not necessary to deal with the lower frequency of use of silent pauses because it is not so substantial. The far higher occurrence of filled non-word vocalic pauses can possibly be explained by the influence of two factors. First, students feel the necessity to signal somehow that they are continuing their utterance but they need some more time to formulate their thoughts and their wording. The second reason for such a high frequency of filled pauses is the absence of alternative ways of enabling students to gain time while speaking.

Nevertheless, the figures below (see Table 4.15) must also be taken into account. There is a high degree of co-occurrence of (er) + […]. If we consider such clusters as undivided units of hesitation, the frequency of the overall occurrence of hesitators decreases.

Table 4.15

Collocations of (er) and […]

	No. of occurrences	Proportional occurrence (%)
To the left	166	26
To the right	381	60
Both sides	97	15

Another situation deserves a comment – the overall occurrence of filled pauses in the positions at the borders of a turn: the most frequent one is at the beginning of a turn: 1,209 (equally distributed among the students: A – 567, B – 562), which represents 15.1 per cent. Together with Table 4.16 below, it gives a picture of a situation where students mostly use the "easiest" hesitators.

So […] (er) you can choose a destination for example Washington, California, Florida […] (er) […] you will stay there […] (er) about […] (er) ten weeks.
(T1402A)
(er) the other course is (er) […] more expensive it costs (er) three thousand seven hundred and ninety crowns. (T1310A)

Table 4.16

Collocations of (er) and […]

	To the left	To the right
(er)	and, so, but, because, be	I, you, it, the, in, for, there, my what, on, this, we
[…]	and, so, or, some	I, so, but, what, well, do, this

Table 4.16 reveals the common tendency for the pauses to be used mostly at the boundaries of a turn, a sentence, a clause, a phrase, which is proved by the collocation on the left after a conjunction and a collocation on the right before the subject (nominative of pronouns, dummy *there*, determiner) or preposition.

4.5.5 Summary of the section

Regarding the pragmatic competences, we can conclude that the students' spoken performances revealed a rather satisfactory level of: discourse competence, as they were able to produce utterances which are organised, structured, and arranged; functional competence, as they are able to perform appropriate communicative functions, and design competence, as their turns are sequenced according to interactional and transactional schemata (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 123). Their particular strategies, however, indicate that the level of their acquisition of specifically spoken structures is not as desired and the repertoire is very limited. Such findings seem to support our suspicion that most of the study materials are based on the grammar of written texts and so students do not have

many opportunities to benefit from language input in the process of English language learning in terms of the skill of speaking (Wray, 2000; Trillo, 2002).

Another point contributing to the opinion that the attention paid to the development of the skill of speaking is not sufficient is the finding that in cases where there is a significant difference in the use of particular structures between British and American English, the students showed that they are closer to American patterns, although the standard laid down in curricula is British English. Here we can only speculate that if students acquire typically spoken structures, they do so through their out-of-school and informal activities (see also Section 6.3.3).

The last comment on the students' discourse management strategies concerns differences between individual performances. Being aware of the influence of a speaker's idiolect, we have to note that there are really very significant differences, although most of the students subjectively assessed their level of English as B1 or B2 according to the CEFR. It is illustrated by the two extracts below, both of them from the discussion part, where we would expect balanced participation of both interlocutors:

D1443–B:

<B> Firstly, I […] are there any fees in our university? (+) Like I didn't know I have to pay something. (+) Do we? (+) Do we have to pay any fees here, yes? (+) </B>
…
<B> (Er) so also this is suppose to be like a general discussion. (+) Ok so (er) I (xy) the possible benefits for students are I guess that the more you pay the more care you should get, the more you pay the more the teacher should pay (er) his attention to you and the more you pay the more, the better […] the better stuff you should get in contact with like (er) technologically like you know like (er) if you are at the university and it's free you can expect that the computers there, there might not even be any computers, but if you have been pay, if you are paying for university, there should be (er) technology that allows you to study better. (+) </B>

…
<B> Although I am not sure if (er) university if all universities should be free as well since the education you will receive here is of much higher level, like specially for sp= like like like in America there is this thing where doctors if they want to go to be, (er)

…
<B> But but you mean like that you don't have to pay back during the studies.

D1341

<A> Yes. (+) How much do you use social networks? (+) </A>
…
<A> Yeah. (+) </A>
…
<A> Yes, definitely. (+) </A>
…
<A> Yeah. (+) […] (er) well […] (+) </A>
…
<A> Yes, exactly. (+) </A>

4.6 Conclusion

The analysis of the grammatical, lexical, and discourse features of the CCSSE corpus in this chapter has not been carried out in an exhaustive way. The main aim of Section 4.4 was to focus on the most dynamic part of the sentence, that is, the VP in both its finite and non-finite forms. In spite of this limited observation, some partial conclusions have been collected which might contribute to the improvement of the students' linguistic competences. Section 4.5 attempted to monitor the use of selected devices identified as salient in studies of English NSs' spoken discourse. More importantly, the CCSSE is now available for detailed analysis of any aspect of discourse (Carter, 2004) in the future.

4.6.1 Positive outcomes:

(a) the students managed the verb *have* in its modal meaning well;

(b) the number of existential sentences in the corpus is rather high, and they are mainly well-formed;

(c) the high number of occurrences of the verb *think* is assessed as the students' skill of expressing ideas as opinions, which is common in English;

(d) the complexity of their sentences and clauses is satisfactory, even if there are a number of mistakes in the forms of verbs (irregular past tense forms, -s ending of the 3rd person singular), prepositions, and articles;

(e) the nominal syntactic positions of non-finite verb forms (subject, object, complement) are managed quite well;

(f) the students demonstrated their ability to structure and manage discourse in terms of thematic organisation, coherence and cohesion, and Grice's cooperative principle;

(g) the turn-taking strategies were appropriate and mostly natural;

(h) certain common features of NSs' spoken performances are observed: clustering DMs and linking or stance adverbs into repetitive lexical bundles (which also co-occur with silent and filled pauses).

4.6.2 Imperfections to be improved:

(a) exceptionally high occurrence of the copula *be* (6,370), whose complementation is not very imaginative;

(b) the infrequent use of the verbs *be* (and *have*) as auxiliaries, which results in a very low number of verb forms expressing aspect and voice;

(c) the unsatisfactory variety of lexical verbs – compared with the occurrence of the verb *be* – and several other verbs mentioned as frequent in conversation in the LGSWE;

(d) surprisingly limited use of the very common verb *get*, not covering the variety of its meanings;

(e) unsatisfactory usage of condensed relative clauses post-modifying nouns;

(f) only occasional use of zero relativisers;

(g) few comment clauses;

(h) the backshift rules not observed;

(i) the limited variety of DMs and adverbials, in some cases influenced by the Czech language as a mother tongue;

(j) very few occurrences of two-word DMs and other more or less formulaic lexical bundles – typical of NSs' dialogue – which would help students gain time while preparing the wording of their thoughts;

(k) the prevailing hesitator in the form of a filled pause (*er*), which could be replaced by more natural ways of expressing hesitation.

Selected pronunciation features in focus

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on selected pronunciation features of English (5.3) which have been acquired by mainstream Czech learners under the conditions of the Czech educational setting up to their entry to TEFL university studies.

First, overall control of the English language and phonological and orthoepic control as specified in European and Czech documents are discussed (Section 5.1). Second, in the literature review the differences between Czech and English pronunciation-related issues are dealt with from the point of view of their phonemic inventories (Section 5.2.1.1), differing distributions of pronunciation phenomena (Section 5.2.1.2), the frequency of occurrence of English phonemes (Section 5.2.1.3), the pairs most frequently conflated by foreign learners, especially Czech ones (Section 5.2.1.4), and grapheme-to-phoneme correspondence (Section 5.2.1.5) focusing on the selected features. Third, relevant results of research-based studies examining the pronunciation of Czech university students are considered (Section 5.2.1.5). Fourth, the transactional nature of reading aloud is debated (Section 5.2.2).

The research design and findings stemming from this study are presented in Section 5.3. They indicate which pronunciation features are the most troublesome for the 228 Czech informants in terms of difficulty indices and discuss the likely causes of their mispronunciations. Afterwards, an overview of the most frequently occurring conflations is provided in Section 5.3.7.10. In Section 5.3.9 conclusions are drawn and discussed. Finally, the limitations of the study, specifically in relation to the number of assessors and percentages of individual substitutes for RP phonemes, are considered, then different areas for future research are thought over, and afterwards practical implications, primarily with respect to teaching some orthographical and phonological rules, are suggested (Section 5.3.9).

5.1.1 Students' overall level of English

With respect to data stemming from the questionnaire (Section 2.3.1.2, Table 2.2), the majority of the Czech learners in question (81%) self-assessed their overall level of English achievement at the B1 (29%) and B2 (53%) levels according to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001). Apart from the students' subjective evaluation of their overall proficiency in English, a more objective criterion can be stated; they all successfully passed the entrance written test at B1 level (Council of Europe, 2001), including a listening component, in order to enter an English language teacher education study programme. Nevertheless, there was no oral component in the entrance test.

All things considered, it seems to be of vital importance to discuss the expected outcomes in English in relation to pronunciation in Czech educational documents.

5.1.2 Definition of the expected outcomes in English pronunciation in Czech official documents

In order to relate the Czech situation with regard to learning English to the European one, some attention has to be paid to the current revised version of the Framework Education Programme for Basic Education (MŠMT, 2013), which defines the expected outcomes of FLL with respect to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001). In terms of foreign language communicative competence, learners are expected to achieve B1 or B2 when graduating from various types of upper-secondary schools (Framework Education Programme for Secondary General Education (Grammar Schools) (VÚP, 2007).

Since reading aloud is the only tool for the elicitation of samples of English provided by students (Section 1.2.1.1 (b)) in the study presented in Chapter 5 and its use involves both phonological and orthoepic competences, which are constituent parts of linguistic competence as defined by the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), these competences are the object of discussion of Sections 5.1.2.1.–5.1.2.2.

5.1.2.1 Phonological competence

Phonological competence is specified in relation to speaking and listening as

a knowledge of, and skill in the perception and production of:
the sound-units (phonemes) of the language and their realisation in particular contexts (*allophones*);
the phonetic features which distinguish phonemes (*distinctive features*, e.g. voicing, rounding, nasality, plosion);
the phonetic composition of words (*syllable structure*, the sequence of phonemes, word stress, word tones);
sentence phonetics (*prosody*);
sentence stress and rhythm;
intonation;

phonetic reduction:
vowel reduction,
strong and weak forms,
assimilation,
elision.

<div align="right">(Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 116–117)</div>

In spite of the availability of a definition of phonological competence, the expected levels (B1 and B2) of phonological control presented in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) are specified only in general terms:

B2
Has acquired a clear, natural pronunciation and intonation.

B1
Pronunciation is clearly intelligible even if a foreign accent is sometimes evident and occasional mispronunciations occur.

<div align="right">(Council of Europe, 2001, p. 117)</div>

The Czech curricular documents for upper-secondary education with respect to pronunciation are mostly vaguely worded, e.g. B2–level learners are expected to master "the phonetic structure of a word, the phonetic aspect of a sentence, phonetic reduction, and phonetic features" [my translation] (FEP SGE, 2007, p. 17).

Furthermore, there is not much agreement between the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) and the curricular documents (FEP BE, 2013; FEP SGE, 2007) regarding the level of the expected outcomes of phonological control by the end of upper-secondary schooling. As a consequence, secondary school teachers may experience difficulties when thinking about the relevant targets of their pronunciation instruction.

5.1.2.2 Orthoepic competence

In the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), orthoepic competence is defined in relation to FL learners as the translation of the written form into its spoken one:

[…] users required to read aloud a prepared text, or to use in speech words first encountered in their written form, need to be able to produce a correct pronunciation from the written form. This may involve:
knowledge of spelling conventions; […]; knowledge of the implications of written forms, particularly punctuation marks, for phrasing and intonation; ability to resolve ambiguity (homonyms, syntactic ambiguities, etc.) in the light of the context.

<div align="right">(Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 117–118)</div>

Unlike the specifications of phonological and orthographical controls given by the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 116–118), there are only some descriptors of the expected

outcomes of orthoepic control in FEP SGE (2007, p. 17), in spite of the fact that orthoepic control is of salient importance, particularly in reading aloud, because of the many differences in English written and spoken correspondence (Section 5.2.1.3).

5.1.2.3 Orthographic competence

Orthographic competence concerns reading aloud only to the extent it "it involves a knowledge of and skill in the perception […] of the symbols of which the written texts are composed" according to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 116), including the recognition of contracted forms. The perception of written symbols in English is an essential prerequisite for their translation into a spoken form.

5.2 Literature review

The aim of this study is not to carry out a comprehensive phonetic or phonological analysis of students' spoken discourse; rather, its scope is limited to evaluating a number of selected pronunciation features. The features under analysis were chosen to reflect the basic differences between the standard Czech and British reference accents, specifically Received Pronunciation (RP).

The features of interest include the following: the front open vowel /æ/, the weak central mid vowel /ə/, the dental fricatives /ð, θ/, the bilabial approximant /w/, the velar nasal /ŋ/, and word-final voiced consonants, including the -ed suffix. These features were selected since they were found crucial in research-based literature dealing with the target population of Czech learners (Černá et al., 2011b; Černá & Ivanová, 2016; Ivanová, 2011; Nádraská, 2013; Skaličková, 1974; Skaličková, 1982). Consequently, this literature review narrows down its focus to these phenomena after providing a general background about a specific pronunciation feature.

5.2.1 Comparison of the pronunciation-related features in English and Czech

The selected pronunciation features are dealt with from the point of view of the differences between the standard Czech and British English phonemic inventories (Section 5.2.1.1), the distribution of the phenomena being studied (Section 5.2.1.2), the frequency of English phonemes (Section 5.2.1.3), the pairs of English phonemes most frequently conflated by Czech learners (Section 5.2.1.4), and grapheme-phoneme correspondence (Section 5.2.1.5).

The comparison of the Czech and English inventories of vowel and consonant phonemes draws on the model of British English pronunciation termed "BBC pronunciation" by Wells, which is a reference accent recorded in the Longman Pronunciation Dictionary (LPD) (Wells, 2008a) as "a modernized version of the type known as Received Pronunciation or RP" and "[…] a model for correct pronunciation, particularly for educated formal speech"

(Wells, 2008a, p. xiv). It is so in spite of the fact that "not more than about 10 percent of the population of England can be considered as RP speakers" (Wells, 1982, p. 118). General American (GA) as a reference accent is referred to only in cases where there are crucial differences between both accents in relation to the pronunciation phenomena being studied.

In Czech and English, pronunciation is guided by phonological rules. From the point of view of generative phonology, Wells writes that:

> […] it is hypothesized that words are stored in the speaker's mental lexicon in a form analogous to the systematic-phonetic representation. When any word is actually uttered, its shape is successively modified as it undergoes phonological rules which apply to it. The input of the body of rules is the stored form; the output is the form uttered in a given context.
>
> (Wells, 1982a, p. 57)

Unlike native speakers of English, however, Czech learners have to keep developing their mental lexicon with phonological rules in order to produce correct pronunciation output. Some of these phonological rules are the subject of Sections 5.2.1.1–5.2.1.6 which always contrast Czech and English linguistic contexts.

5.2.1.1 Differences between inventories of Czech and English phonemes

The basic differences between standard Czech and RP lie in the number of phonemes, in their articulation features and vocalic space (Volín & Studenovský, 2007), and in the existence of different RP phonemes in contrast with Czech ones. In standard Czech, there are 13 vowels – 10 monophthongs (five long and five short ones) and three diphthongs – and 26 consonant phonemes, whereas RP comprises 20 vowels – 12 monophthongs and eight diphthongs – and 24 consonants. Figure 5.1 provides an overview of the differences between the RP and Czech system of individual phonemes. In the chart the shaded phonemes do not have equivalents or near equivalents in standard Czech.

i:	ɪ	ʊ	u:	ɪə	eɪ		
e	ə	ɜ:	ɔ:	ʊə	ɔɪ	əʊ	
æ	ʌ	ɑ:	ɒ	eə	aɪ	aʊ	
p	b	t	d	tʃ	dʒ	k	g
f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ
m	n	ŋ	h	l	r	w	j

Figure 5.1: English inventory of phonemes (after Swan & Smith, 2001).

Czech vowels

In Czech length is a phonological opposition because "each articulatory position is occupied by a short and long vowel", with the exception of the /iː/ – /i/ pair, which, apart from length, differs in the salient quality of /i/, which is more open and lax than /iː/ (Volín & Studenovský, 2007, p. 186).

In Czech it is estimated that the ratio of short and long vowels is somewhere between 3:1 and 4:1 and, in comparison with English, there are fewer minimal pairs (MPs) based on the length in Czech, e.g. "dal x dál, stály x stálý" (Volín, 2010, p. 45).

Unlike the English language, there is no nasalisation as a distinctive feature in Czech vowels (Volín, 2010, p. 43).

RP vowels

The English vowel system has more vowels: 12 monophthongs (five long and seven short ones), as shown in Figure 5.2, and eight diphthongs, which are considered long (Roach, 2009; Wells, 1982a). There are three centring and five closing diphthongs according to a glide towards a central vowel or a closing one (Roach, 2009, p. 18).

Length in RP is a relative quality and "'short' vowels /ɪ, e, æ, ʌ, ɒ, and ʊ/ are indeed of relatively short duration when compared with their 'long' counterparts in identical surroundings" (Wells, 1982b, p. 119), e.g. l*i*ck, l*ea*k.
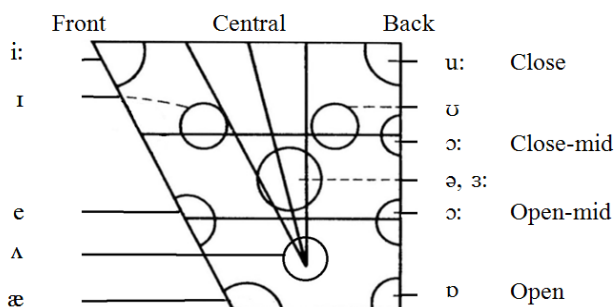

Figure 5.2: The vocalic space of RP monophthongs (after Roach, 2009, pp. 13–16).

In comparison with Czech, the totally different phonemes are the ash /æ/, the mid central vowels /ə/ and /ɜː/, and the seven diphthongs /eɪ, aɪ, ɔɪ, eə, ʊə, ɪə/, and /əʊ/.

The RP schwa is the most frequently pronounced RP phoneme and on average it occurs as every fourth vowel in spoken English (Crystal, 1995, p. 239) (cf. Table 5.1). Most Czech learners find difficult to produce the schwa in weak forms of grammatical words and in the unstressed syllables of English content words, which is a problem as English is a "language which has a high proportion of unaccented syllables" (Gimson, 1989, p. 149).

The mid central vowels /ə/ and /ɜ:/ can be articulated on their own by Czech learners of English without serious difficulties but they can cause a varying level of difficulty in different word contexts (Section 5.2.1.2). Volín (2010, p. 44) claims that the schwa sound /ə/ has no functional equivalent in Czech, in spite of the fact that it is frequently used by Czechs; first, it is used as a hesitation sound; second, he agrees with Skaličková (1974, p. 40), who states that it typically occurs in the isolated pronunciation of Czech consonant letters (e.g. /bə/, /də/).

In Czech the mid central /ɜ:/ is often used as a hesitation signal by native speakers of the language, who experience relatively few problems with its pronunciation in English when speaking; however, some Czech learners might pronounce *heard* as /he:d/, applying the Czech long vowel, or /he:rd/, using the combination of a long Czech vowel and the *r* suggested by the spelling.

Many Czech learners find the production of the ash /æ/problematic, and it is typically substituted by a front vowel halfway between the close-mid and open-mid /e/ (Ivanová, 2015, Skaličková, 1974). This is often reflected in their inability to discriminate between /æ/and /e/ (Roach, 2009, p. 15; Gimson, 1989, pp. 99–102). Although the ash is considered a short vowel (Wells, 1982a), Czech students may tend to lengthen the Czech e-sound to imitate the English pronunciation of the ash (Šturm & Skarnitzl, 2011). However, in comparison with the Czech long front mid vowel /e:/, the ash is relatively more open, darker in timbre, and more variable in length (Skaličková, 1974, pp. 31–32).

The English diphthongs /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /eə/, /ʊə/, /ɪə/, /aʊ/, and /əʊ/ are articulated without serious difficulty by Czech learners, although seven of them (/eɪ/, /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /eə/, /ʊə/, /ɪə/, and /əʊ/) do not occur in the Czech language, which has only three diphthongs, /oʊ/, /aʊ/, and /eʊ/, the last two occurring only in words of foreign origin, e.g. *auto*, *euro*.

Some confusion may arise in the case of /eə/, /ʊə/, and /əʊ/. The last one is often replaced by the Czech diphthong /oʊ/, which is a near equivalent to GA /oʊ/ and the /ɔʊ/ of the northern part of Britain (Wells, 2008a, p. xx; Wells, 1982b, p. 364). The centring diphthongs /eə/, /ɪə/, and /ʊə/ are the least frequent ones in BrE (Table 5.1) and typically become monophthongised (Wells, 1982, p. 914), which seems to be a tendency among Czech learners of English, e.g. /ɪə/ becomes /ɜ:/ in *year* (Wells, 2008a, p. 864). The process of the monophthongisation of diphthongs belongs among British prestige innovations in the linguistic environment of a following /r/, e.g. *beer*, *chair*, *more*, and *sure* (Wells, 1982a, pp. 212–217).

Czech consonants

Volín (2010, p. 49) states that 26 Czech consonants can be differentiated as each consonant has its own set of distinctive features; voicing is one of them and has a crucial but distinctive role in Czech and English. Nine voiced-unvoiced pairs exist: /p-b, t-d, ˇt-ˇd, k-g, f-v, s-z,

š-ž, c-ʒ, č-ǯ, h-x/. (The Czech transcription system is used which is in accord with Volín (2010) when dealing with the Czech inventory of phonemes.)

Apart from the aforementioned 26 Czech consonants, Volín (2010, p. 46-48) claims that there are other consonant sounds without a phonemic status: (a) the glottal plosive or glottal stop [ʔ], e.g. *k ovoci* [kʔovocɪ]; (b) the voiced velar fricative [ɣ], e.g. bych byl [bɪɣ bɪl], represented in writing by the digraph -ch-; (c) the voiced alveolar affricate [ʒ]; (d) the unique voiceless fricative vibrant [₀ř], e.g. *tvář* [tvɑ: ₀ř], and (e) the velar nasal [ŋ], which functions as an allophone of /n/ in front of /g/ or /k/, e.g. *fungovat* [fuŋgovat].

RP consonants

In BrE there are 24 consonants, unlike the 26 in standard Czech. From the point of view of a Czech learner of English, the totally different RP consonants are either very frequent ones: /ð/, /w/, unvoiced /h/, /ŋ/ as a phoneme, or the least frequent phonemes: /ʤ/, /ʧ/, and /θ/ (cf. Table 5.1). The remaining RP consonants are near-equivalents or equivalents of the Czech ones.

Even at B1 and/or B2 levels, Czech learners of English may mispronounce some of them. The voiced dental fricative /ð/ might be replaced by /d/ (Gimson, 1989, pp. 165, 185), /z/, or /dz/. The voiceless dental fricative /θ/ is often replaced by /t/ (Gimson, 1989, pp. 165, 185), /f/, or /s/. The bilabial approximant /w/ is sometimes mistakenly articulated as the labiodental fricative /v/ (Gimson, 1989, pp. 210–213; Roach, 2009, p. 61; Skaličková, 1982, pp. 140–141). The velar nasal /ŋ/ is often replaced with Czech substitutes /n/, /nk/, or /ng/, especially in word-final positions. The unvoiced /h/ is often realised as a voiced one, e.g. *hotel*. The devoiced /b, d, g, v/ occur in word-final positions and are realised as unvoiced. (For details, see Section 5.3.7.10 and Table 5.13.)

All these conflations are also reflected in the literature. Gimson (1989) ends each section dealing with a particular phoneme with "*Advice to foreign learners*" and his pronunciation guidance is in many cases directly applicable to Czech learners.

5.2.1.2 Insights into differing distribution of pronunciation phenomena in Czech and English

At the onset, the structure of English syllable has to be dealt with, more precisely the phonetic syllable (spoken), not the orthographic one (written) (Wells, 2008a). In RP each complete phonetic syllable contains one vowel as its nucleus, which may be preceded or followed by one or more consonants. At this point it is useful to distinguish open syllables from closed syllables. The nucleus is preceded by one or more consonants, which constitute the so called syllable onset, e.g. *tea, to* (CV), *cry* (CCV); in the closed syllable the nucleus is followed by one or more consonants, which constitute the so called coda, e.g. *ill, an* (VC), *ant, and* (VCC); and many English syllables have both the onset and coda, e.g. *street, from* (CCCVC) (Crystal, 1995, p. 246; Wells, 2008a). What has been stated about the structure

of English syllable is applicable to both strong and weak vowels, in particular in content words and the weak forms of function words. In English, the nucleus can be also formed by the consonants such as /l/ or a nasal, e.g. *bottle* /ˈbɒtl̩/, *button* /ˈbʊtn̩/ (Crystal, 1995, p. 246). Crystal (1995) claims that "in a very slow articulation of these words, the vowels would re-appear, and the consonant would revert to their normal coda value, ([…]/ˈbɒtəl/)" (p. 246).

Weak and strong vowels in stressed and unstressed syllables

In standard Czech pronunciation, there is no vowel reduction in unstressed syllables; as a result, neither the quality (Skaličková, 1982, pp. 256–257) nor the quantity of Czech vowels (Volín, 2010, p. 45) is affected by the presence or absence of word stress, and so there are no weak vowels with a phonological status. Consequently, many a Czech learner might produce faulty pronunciations of vowels in unstressed syllables, misleadingly prompted by a written vowel grapheme (Section 5.2.1.5), as Czech learners may fail to reduce vowels to weak ones, e.g. in *suspected* /sʊs-/ instead of /səs-/ (Section 5.3.7.2).

In RP, most unstressed syllables contain weak vowels, which are /ə, i, u/, sometimes /ɪ, ʊ/, or /oʊ/ in GA, the schwa being the most frequent one (Gimson, 1989, pp. 118–121; Roach, 2009, pp. 64–72; Wells, 2008a). Nevertheless, in RP in some unstressed syllables a strong vowel, i.e. any monophthong except /ə, i, u/, and all diphthongs, can appear, e.g. *remember* /rɪˈmembə/, *stim**ulus*** /ˈstɪmjʊləs/ (Wells, 2008a, p. 776).

Wells (1982a, pp. 166–167) characterises the schwa as one of the weak vowels which occurs most frequently in unstressed syllables. It can be found in word-final positions and in non-final environments, where its distribution is more varied: (a) in word non-final position preceding a final consonant, e.g. *diet*; (b) guided by the syllabic consonant rule, e.g. *nat**ion*** /ən/; and (c) in polysyllabic words with disyllabic suffixes, e.g. *econom**ical***.

(a) Word-final positions

The schwa occurs in unstressed RP syllables in word-final positions in content words: words such as *letter*, orthographically ending in final *-r* or *-re*: e.g. *pressure*, *failure*; or words such as *comma*, orthographically ending in final *-a*: e.g. *phobia* (Wells, 1982a, pp. 166–167). It also occurs in the weak form of *her*.

(b) Word non-final positions

It appears in word non-final positions preceding a final consonant, with an evident opposition between /ɪ/ and /ə/ in unstressed syllables; thus the traditional RP *Lenin* /ˈlenɪn/ is mostly, however not systematically, distinguished from *Lennon* /ˈlenən/ (Wells, 1982a). Similarly, /ɪ/ in *it*, *him*, or *in* is hardly ever reduced to /ə/.

The RP schwa in polysyllabic words with disyllabic suffixes competes with a strong penultimate vowel, which typically occurs in GA, e.g. /ˈnesəsɛrɪ/, /ˈkætɪɡɒrɪ/. The "RP

penultimate vowel is normally weakened, and may be entirely elided" (Wells, 1982a, p. 231) in words ending in these suffixes:

(a) *-ary* in *necessary*, e.g. /ˈnesəs(ə)rɪ/;

(b) *-ory* in *category*, e.g. /ˈkætɪg(ə)rɪ/;

(c) *-mony* in *testimony*, e.g. /ˈtestɪmənɪ/;

(d) *-borough* in *Scarborough,* e.g. /ˈskɑːb(ə)rə/, *-boro, -burgh* in *Edinburgh*, e.g. /ˈedɪ/(ə)nbərə/;

(e) *-berry, -bury* in *strawberry*, e.g. /ˈstrɔːb(ə)rɪ/;

(f) *-arily,* in *primarily*. Needless to say, though, the traditional RP pronunciation /ˈpraɪm(ə)rɪli/ has undergone stress shift under the influence of GA /praɪˈmɛrəli/ into an RP form /praɪˈmerəli/.

In relation to the syllabic consonant rule, /-ən/ in *reason* can be realized as a syllabic RP [n̩], e.g. /ˈriːzn̩/, or with the schwa, e.g. /ˈriːzən/. But /-ɪn/ is not a prerequisite of a syllabic consonant, e.g. Martin /ˈmɑːtɪn/.

Front open /æ/

The distribution of the ash /æ/ (non-final position and occurrence before a velar nasal) classes it with short vowels; on the other hand, its absence from diphthongs and its quantity, especially in a pre-lenis position, classes it rather with long vowels. Consequently, it may be possible to regard the ash as a long counterpart, however imperfect, to the short front vowel /e/ (Gimson, 1989, pp. 100–101; Skaličková, 1974, pp. 30–31). In accordance with the aforementioned authors, Wells relates its distribution to the syllables always including the stressed /æ/ in RP. He specifies it phonetically as "a front nearly open unrounded" vowel (1982a, p. 129).

It is quite conceivable that the learner of English might be flabbergasted by the intricate complexities of the manifold pronunciations of the ash (Section 5.3.7.4). In the LPD Wells states that in spite of the fact that it is a short vowel and "it is not similar in quality to any long vowel … many speakers lengthen it (particularly before certain consonants, notably *b* and *d*)" (2008, p. 739). Its spelling representation in words such as *trap* is nearly always *-a-* (Section 5.2.1.5).

Czech and English vowels in stressed syllables

In RP stressed syllables, some phonotactic constraints are imposed on the distribution of short and long vowels in word-initial and word-final positions in comparison with Czech.

(a) Word-initial positions

In RP word-initial positions, the frequency of vowels in stressed syllables is limited to words such as *anchor*, but high in lexical items such as *sugar, father, etc.*

In Czech, there is a relatively limited occurrence of vowels in word-initial positions; they are ordered here from the least to the most frequent ones: front vowels, mostly in words of foreign origin; central vowels either in words of foreign origin *a-*, e.g. *amorální*, or in highly frequent one-syllable words, e.g. *a*, *aby*; *o-* often occurs in polysyllables, e.g. *otvor*, *otočit*; *u-/ú-* are the most frequent ones, e.g. *ucho*, *úkol* (Volín, 2010, p. 45).

(b) Word-final positions

Short vowels occur in a stressed monosyllabic word with a final consonant, e.g. "*fit, rent, cat, cup, shock, put*"; this is unlike the long vowels and diphthongs, which can appear both in a stressed monosyllable with no final consonant, e.g. "*key, play, fear, snow, two*", and in a stressed monosyllable with a final consonant, e.g. "*keep*" (Wells, 1982a, p. 119). In contrast, RP unstressed syllables with no final consonant can contain /ə, ɪ, ʊ/, e.g. *a*, *father* /ə/, *happy* /-ɪ/, *value*, *to a* […] /-ʊ/.

In Czech, however, both short and nearly all long vowels, including the diphthongs /ou/ and /au/, occur in the word-final position in stressed monosyllabic words with or without a final consonant, e.g. *tá, tou, ty*, *klít*, *led*, *kout*, and in some MPs: *kout – soud*.

Primary stress in RP and standard Czech

Word stress, together with accent, sometimes called sentence stress, lies at the heart of English rhythm, which is stress-timed (Roach, 2009), unlike Czech syllable-timed rhythm, where vowel quality and relative quantity are not interrelated with word stress (Volín, 2010, p. 45). In most Czech words the primary stress falls on the first syllable of a word, e.g. ˈ*musí*, ˈ*mokrý*, with the exception of grammatical words, e.g. ˈ*byl jsem*, unlike English words, whose primary stress can fall on any syllable of a word being guided by word structure hand in hand with related phonological rules, e.g. ˈ*corner*, *a*ˈ*gain*, *limi*ˈ*tation*, *evacu*ˈ*ee* (Section 5.3.7.3).

At the word level, this might explain the tendency among Czech learners to mispronounce words beginning with a vowel as a nucleus in an unstressed syllable prompted by the vowel grapheme as strong vowels, e.g. *e*ˌ*vacu*ˈ*ee* /e-/.

Weak and strong forms of grammatical words

Similarly, Czech learners might experience numerous problems in pronouncing grammatical words (also called function words) which have two pronunciations, "a strong form, containing a strong vowel, and a weak form, containing a weak vowel" (Wells, 2008a, p. 891). Articles (the, a, an), most pronouns (you, he, she, we, your, her, his, me, him, us, them), modals (can, must, shall, should, would, could), auxiliaries (am, are, was, were, have, has, had, do, does), prepositions (at, from, for, of, as, in/to), adverbs (some, there, than), and conjunctions (but, and, that) fall into this category (Roach, 2009, pp. 89–96). Their weak

forms are used when they are unstressed, which is usually the case with function words. The strong form is used when a function word is accented:

(a) usually for contrast, e.g. *We say '**at** /æt/ home', not 'in home'.*;

(b) always when it is "stranded (= left exposed by a syntactic operation involving the movement or deletion of the word on which it depends)" (Wells, 2008a, p. 891), e.g. *Where does she come **from**?* /frɒm/. (See Section 5.3.7.2.)

Wells (2008) warns foreign learners of English that they should be careful about the appropriate pronunciation of weak forms; "otherwise, listeners may think they are emphasising a word where this is not really so" (p. 843), this is particularly true of NSs of English.

Czech learners find the pronunciation of function words challenging, particularly when an identical word form, e.g. *had*, *that*, serves different functions within a certain linguistic context, e.g. a full-meaning *had* or a demonstrative pronoun *that* is pronounced with /æ/, whereas an auxiliary *had gone* or the conjunction *that* is realised with /ə/.

Voicing of Czech and English phonemes

One of the distinctive features of both Czech and English phonemes is their voicing. From the point of view of terminology, we use *voiced* and *unvoiced* instead of *lenis* and *fortis* unless necessary, because the opposition *voiced* and *unvoiced* is widespread among TEFL teachers even if we are aware they are not equal. In this area, however, a number of other key issues arise. First, in English /p, t, k, tʃ, f, θ, s, ʃ, h/ are normally voiceless and the remaining phonemes (35) are voiced in RP (Roach, 2009), while in Czech /h/ is voiced. Second, /b, d, ɡ, dʒ, v, ð, z, ʒ/ are "reliably voiced" only "when they are between other voiced sounds," e.g. *river*, and "in other positions there is often little or no actual vibration of the vocal folds during their production" (Wells, 2008a, p. 881).

Voicing (voiced-voiceless) and tenseness contrasts (or fortis-lenis contrasts) play different roles in Czech and English. In Czech the fundamental contrast distinguishing between paired consonants is that of voicing (Skaličková, 1974, pp. 64). In English, tenseness is crucial because voicing opposition may be modified to some extent in initial and final positions (Gimson, 1989, p. 32; Roach, 2009, pp. 33–34; Skarnitzl & Poesová, 2008, p. 9). Skaličková (1974) and Skarnitzl and Poesová (2008) stress the intricate complexity of the phenomena and hold that the qualitative differences between fortis and lenis consonants and the quantity of the whole syllable, especially in connection with pre-fortis shortening and pre-lenis lengthening of vowels, should be taken on board.

Although in RP there might be numerous cases of variation in consonant articulation either within a word or at word boundaries, only selected ones which seem to be relevant to the current study are dealt with, e.g. assimilation within a word and fortis/lenis variation

across word boundaries (Gimson, 1989, p. 296) and across morpheme boundaries (Roach, 2009, p. 112) in comparison with similar processes in Czech.

Word-final consonants

In Czech word-final positions, a final voiced consonant which has an unvoiced counterpart is devoiced, e.g. *led* (Eng. ice) is pronounced as /let/ (Volín, 2010, p. 50; Romportl et al., 1978, p. 47). But the voicing of the first phoneme of the following word might cause regressive assimilation even in Czech across word boundaries, e.g. *rá**d** t**ě** vidím* /ra:t t…/, *rá**d** **b**ych šel* /ra:d b…/, and the same is realised inside the word, e.g. *dru**žs**tvo* /dru**š**stvo, *dru**žb**a* /dru**žb**a/ (Volín, 2010, p. 51), although there are many constraints as far as the types of consonants other than obstruents, which are ususually devoiced, are concerned.

In English, word-final consonants might be context-sensitive and regressive assimilation of voice might take place (Gimson, 1989, pp. 269–270; Volín, 2006, p. 67). This usually happens in the following instances when the first word ends with a single final voiced consonant and the second one starts with a single initial consonant (Roach, 2009, p. 111) and "two words form part of a close-knit group" (Gimson, 1989, p. 296):

(a) /ð/ is read as /θ/ in *wi**th** thanks*;

(b) /z/ is pronounced as /s/ in *wa**s** sent*;

(c) it concerns final voiced fricatives, mainly in function words forming a tight grammatical unit with the following word where /v/ is pronounced as /f/ (e.g. *o**f** course*, *ha**ve** to*, *we'**ve** found it*) (Gimson, 1989, p. 296; Roach, 2009, p. 112). Apart from partial devoicing, there is also a complete phonemic change of the preceding vowel, e.g. /ɒ/ becomes /ə/;

(d) the weak form of *is* and *has* is pronounced with /z/ or /s/ under the influence of the word-final consonant of the preceding word, e.g. *the dog ha**s*** with /z/, *the cat ha**s*** with /s/ (Gimson, 1989, p. 296);

(e) word-final /b, d, g/ rarely become devoiced in RP, e.g. *goo**d** /d/ time*, *bi**g** /g/ case* (Gimson, 1989, p. 296) (cf. Section 5.3.7.6).

It is to be noted that, first, "these devoiced consonants do not shorten the preceding vowels as true fortis consonants do" (Roach, 2009, p. 112); second, assimilation of voice never takes place in RP when the first word ends with a single final unvoiced consonant and the second one starts with a single initial voiced consonant, e.g. /k, t, k/ in *I li**ke** tha**t** bla**ck** dog* never change into /g, d, g/ (Roach, 2009, p. 112).

In Czech assimilation of voicing takes place within words, e.g. *-sh-* in *na**sh**ledanou* can be pronounced [sch]/[zh], and word-finally before a pause voicing opposition is neutralised and only voiceless consonants can occur (Skaličková, 1974, p. 71), e.g. had /hat/ (Eng. snake). In English, non-paired consonants partially assimilate to a preceding unvoiced consonant (e.g. *please*, *true*, *queen*); paired consonants do not assimilate in any

position, though word-initially or word-finally voiced consonants may partially or totally lose their voicing (Skaličková, 1982, pp. 119–120), (cf. Section 5.2.1.7).

The past tense suffix -ed and various -s suffixes

The process of assimilation is related to the concept of voicing. English progressive assimilation of voicing is limited to grammatical suffixes (-s, -ed) (Skaličková, 1974, pp. 71–72). Further, some cases of assimilation across morpheme boundaries are discussed. In order to choose among the /t/, /d/, or /ɪd/ pronunciations of *-ed*, foreign learners are expected to judge the voicing of the stem-final phoneme of a verb (Dickerson, 1987), which appears to be extremely difficult for many a Czech learner (Ivanová, in press). First, if a verb stem ends in a pronounced /t/ or /d/, e.g. *wan**t**ed*, *nee**d**ed, -ed* should be realized as /ɪd/. Second, if a verb stem ends in a pronounced vowel or a voiced consonant, e.g. *pla**y**ed*, *hum**m**ed*, it must be pronounced /d/. Third, if a verb stem ends in a pronounced unvoiced consonant, e.g. *kic**k**ed*, it must be pronounced with /t/. (See Section 5.3.7.6.)

In a similar vein, progressive assimilation takes place in the case of the suffixes -s and -z for a verb in the third person singular of the present simple and in a plural noun and the possessive suffix. The pronunciation is /s/ (the preceding consonant is voiceless, e.g. *ca**ts***) or /z/ (either the preceding consonant is voiced or a vowel, e.g. *do**gs***, *to**ys***), but the learner is expected to pronounce /ɪz/ when the preceding consonant is /s, z, tʃ, dʒ, ʃ, ʒ/, e.g. *clas**ses*** (Roach, 2009, p. 112). (See Table 1.2 in Section 1.2.1.2.) There is an exceptional change in the last consonant of a stem in *houses* /haʊzɪz, -zəs/ vs. *house* /haʊs/ (Wells, 2008a, p. 388). (cf. Section 5.2.1.5.)

Pronunciation of the suffix -ing

The articulation of the velar nasal /ŋ/ troubles many Czech speakers, who might mispronounce it as /n/, /nk/, /ng/, /ŋk/, or /ŋg/ instead of /ŋ/. When dealing with some other British innovations, i.e. the pronunciation of *-ing*, Wells (1982a, pp. 262–263) maintains that even across native accents of English, there is "the sociolinguistic variability of the ending *-ing*," e.g. *runni**ng*** can be realised as /ˈrʌnɪŋ/ by a higher social class, or /ˈrʌnɪn/ by a lower social class. This variability in the enunciation of *-ing* is also typical of weak syllables in nouns and adjectives, e.g. *ceili**ng***, *cunni**ng***. (See Section 5.3.7.3.)

While the pronunciation areas discussed above might concern both read and spoken texts, the following field is entirely related to texts that are read aloud.

5.2.1.3 Frequency of occurrence of English phonemes and monosyllabic and polysyllabic words

As far as the frequency of English phonemes is concerned, Crystal (1995, p. 239) and Wells (1982a) cite Fry (1947), who gives the following ratio of vowel-consonant frequency of

occurrence in spoken English: 39.21 per cent occurrence of vowels versus 70.79 per cent occurrence of consonants.

Table 5.1

Frequency of RP phonemes (adopted from Fry, 1947, in Crystal, 1995, pp. 239, 242)

Vowels	%	Consonants	%
ɔ	10.74	n	7.58
ɪ	8.33	t	6.42
e	2.97	d	5.14
aɪ	1.83	s	4.81
ʌ	1.75	l	3.66
eɪ	1.71	ð	3.56
iː	1.65	r	3.51
əʊ	1.51	m	3.22
æ	1.45	k	3.09
ɒ	1.37	w	2.81
ɜ	1.24	z	2.46
uː	1.13	v	2.00
ʊ	0.86	b	1.97
ɑː	0.79	f	1.79
aʊ	0.61	p	1.78
ɔː	0.52	h	1.46
eə	0.34	ŋ	1.15
ɪə	0.21	g	1.05
ɔɪ	0.14	ʃ	0.96
ʊə	0.06	j	0.88
	39.21	ʤ	0.60
		ʧ	0.41
		θ	0.37
		ʒ	0.10
			60.78

According to Fry (1947), the most frequently-occurring English vowel in conversational RP is the schwa (10.74%); /e/ and /æ/ come third and ninth; the most frequent English consonant is /n/ (7.58%), followed by /d/ (5.14%); /ð/ and /w/ come sixth and tenth; the twelfth is /v/; /ŋ/, /g/, and /θ/ belong among the least frequent ones (Fry, 1947) (Table 5.1). The frequency of occurrence of English phonemes plays an important role in the functional load, as discussed in Section 5.2.1.4.

From the point of view of grammatical words, which are nearly always one-syllable ones, and the potential occurrence of /ə/ in the unstressed syllables in content words, their approximate percentages of occurrence in conversational English are of great value for TEFL. Gimson (1989, p. 306) provides this information concerning the occurrence of one-syllable, two-syllable, and polysyllabic words in English: one-syllable words (81%), two-syllable words (15%), and three-syllable words (3%). The remaining words (1%) have four syllables or more. (See Section 5.2.1.2.)

5.2.1.4 The pairs of English phonemes most frequently conflated by Czech learners

So far the pronunciation flaws of Czech readers aloud have been enumerated, without consideration being given to which phonemic contrasts are more important than other contrasts. An example of the contrast is the proper realisation of an RP phoneme versus an incorrect substitution by a Czech learner: e.g. /d/ pronounced instead of /ð/. In this chapter, the concept of functional load (FLD) is considered since it might help a teacher or learner to decide which phonemic contrasts merit remedial pronunciation teaching or learning.

There have been many differing and often one-sided attempts at defining the concept of FLD. The most useful one seems to be the concept of FLD by Brown (1988) related to pronunciation teaching. Apart from the frequency of phoneme occurrences in conversational RP English, it takes into account a number of other conditions which are dealt with below.

Cumulative frequency is defined as the sum of the individual frequencies of each phoneme of a minimal pair (MP) (Brown, 1988, p. 596), e.g. 4.42 per cent per /e, æ/ (Table 5.3). A pair with a high cumulative frequency appears to be important in relation to the intelligibility of words in which they are located. The individual frequencies of both vowels in a pair are not even, e.g. 2.97 per cent for /e/, which is about twice as much as the 1.45 per cent for /æ/. In order to calculate the *probability of occurrence of a member of a pair*, the individual frequency of a particular member is divided by the cumulative frequency for the pair in question. If the probability of occurrence of each member is near to .50, the potential for confusion to be caused by the conflation of the pair is high (Brown, 1988) (cf. probability of occurrence b-c in Tables 5.3 & 5.4). Brown (1988) further distinguishes four categories in descending order of importance: "(a) pairs with a high cumulative frequency and relatively equal probability, […] (b) pairs with a high cumulative frequency but unequal probability, […] (c) pairs with a low cumulative frequency but relatively equal probability,[…] and (d) pairs with a low cumulative frequency and unequal probability" (p. 599).

The simplest pointer to the FLD of a phonemic contrast is *the number of minimal pairs* containing competing phonemes. The functional load is low if there are just a few MPs. This applies to the /u:, ʊ/ contrast in four pairs of common English words, i.e. "*pool/pull, fool/full, who'd/hood, suit/soot*" (Brown, 1988, p. 601); on the contrary, there are 20 MPs based on the /n, ŋ/ contrast.

The question of MPs is further specified in terms of:

(a) "the number of MPs belonging to the same part of speech or grammatical category": for instance, /ð, d/ are unlikely to confuse learners because of the discourse context, which differentiates the use of /ð/ in grammatical words;
(b) as for the number of inflections of MPs, Brown (1988, p. 601–602) suggests treating all inflections (*learns*, *learning*, *learned*) as one MP;

(c) he (1988, p. 601) also advocates that the frequency of both words in a MP should be high, which is not the case of the /uː, ʊ/ contrast in "*should/shoed, shooed; look/Luke*," as the latter items are infrequent;

(d) with respect to common contexts in which MPs occur, Brown (1988) points out that both members of an MP should be "plausible alternatives, both grammatically and semantically" (p. 601), e.g. fate/faith are nouns and in all probability will be used in different contexts.

Another issue is *the occurrence of an MP in native accents*, e.g. /uː, ʊ/ is frequently used in Scotland and /ð, d/ rarely in the Republic of Ireland, but its use in both cases is stigmatised; as a result, native speakers "are accustomed to making the perceptual adjustments necessary for the intelligibility of these conflations" (Brown, 1988, p. 596).

Acoustic similarity is not so important. However, for example, the pairs /θ, f/ and /ð, v/ have more acoustic features in common than /θ, s/ and /ð, z/. The members of the MP /n, ŋ/ are also acoustically very similar, e.g. *thin*, *thing*.

Phonetic similarity means that two phonemes are similar either in articulation or from the acoustic or auditory point of view (Brown, 1988), e.g. /n, ŋ/ are both nasals and difficult to distinguish in fast speech through hearing (cf. Section 5.3.7.3)..

As far as the *structural distribution of members of an MP* is concerned, only those members of an MP which occur in the same linguistic context might be open to misunderstanding. The phonemes /n, ŋ/ appear after short vowels, e.g. /ŋ/ in s*ing*, s*ung*, s*ong*, and /n/ in s*in*, s*un*. Otherwise, /n/ must follow after a long vowel, e.g. s*een*, s*ign* (Brown, 1988, p. 598). Syllable structure constraints limit the potential confusion of conflated pairs.

Some phonemes occur in a *limited number of English words*, e.g. the stressed /ʊ/. According to Wells (1982a, p. 133, in Brown, 1988, p. 599), it can be found in about 40 words; some of them are very frequent ones, e.g. p*u*t, g*oo*d, l*oo*k, but the frequency of /ʊ/ is low (1.95).

Brown (1988, pp. 597–599) places individual "phonemic contrasts along a continuum of importance" (10 = the most important, 1 = the least important), separately for vowels and consonants on the basis of a rank ordering of RP phoneme pairs commonly conflated by learners (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2

Rank ordering of RP pairs commonly conflated by foreign learners

Rank ordering	Vowel pairs	Rank ordering	Consonant pairs
10	/e, æ/ /æ, ʌ/ /æ, ɒ/ /ʌ, ɒ/ /ɔ:, əʊ/	10	**/p,** b/ /p, f/ /m, n/ /n, l/ /l, r/
9	/e, ɪ/ /e, eɪ/ /ɑ:, aɪ/ /ɜ:, əʊ/	9	/f, h/ **/t,** d/ /k, g/
8	/i:, ɪ/	8	/w, v/ /s, z/
7	-	7	/b, v/ **/f,** v/ /ð, z/ /s, ʃ/
6	/ɔ:, ɜ:/ /ɒ, əʊ/	6	/v, ð / /s, ʒ/
5	/ɑ:, ʌ/ /ɔ:, ɒ/ /ɜ:, ʌ/	5	/θ, ð/ /θ, s/ /ð, d/ /z, dʒ/ /n, ŋ/
4	/e, eə/ /ɜ:, e/ /æ, ɑ:/ /ɔ:, ʊ / /ɑ:, ɒ/	4	/θ, **t/**
3	/i:, ɪə/ /ɑ:, aʊ/ /u:, ʊ/	3	/tʃ, dʒ/
2	/ɪə, eə/	2	/tʃ, ʃ/ /ʃ, ʒ/ /j, ʒ/
1	/ɔ:, ɔɪ/ /u:, ʊə/	1	**/f,** θ/ /dʒ, j/

MPs relevant to Czech learners are in bold (information added by the author).

[a] cumulative frequencies based on figures provided by Denes (1963)
[b] + = more than 20 MPs can be found; – = fewer than 20 MPs can be found
Only some illustrative information is given in Table 5.2.
MPs relevant to Czech learners are in bold (information added by the author).

On the contrary, many of the vowel pairs tabulated above hardly ever get conflated by Czech learners in comparison with other foreign language learners of English:
(a) in vowel-based MPs: 10–/æ, ɒ/, /ʌ, ɒ/, /ɔ:, əʊ/; 9–/e, ɪ/, /e, eɪ/, /ɑ:, aɪ/, /ɜ:, əʊ/, /ɒ, əʊ/; 5–/ɑ:, ʌ/, /ɜ:, ʌ /; 4–/e, eə/, /ɑ:, ɒ/, /ɔ:, ʊ /; 3–/i:, ɪə/, /ɑ:, aʊ/; 1–/ɔ:, ɔɪ/, /u:, ʊə/;
(b) in consonant-based MPs: 10–/p, f/, /m, n/, /n, l/, /l, r/; 9–/f, h/, 7–/b, v/, /s, ʃ/; 6–/v, ð/, /s, ʒ/; 5–/z, ʤ/; 2–/tʃ, ʃ/, /ʃ, ʒ/, /j, ʒ/; 1–/ʤ, j/.

In Tables 5.3 and 5.4 phoneme pairs relevant for Czech learners are displayed. Unlike Brown's (1988) calculations, which are based on Denes' phoneme frequencies (1963), the cumulative frequencies in Tables 5.3 and 5.4 draw on the figures of Fry's RP phoneme frequencies (1947), cited by Crystal (1995) and Wells (1982a) (cf. Section 5.2.1.3). Brown's (1988) rank ordering was adopted, but *0 rank* was added for frequent conflations realised by Czech learners which occur in stressed syllables and were nor categorised by Brown (1988).

Table 5.3

Rank ordering of RP vowel pairs commonly conflated by Czech learners

			Frequency (in %)		Probability of occurrence	Examples of MPs
			individual	cumulative[a]		
Rank order	10	/e, æ/	2.97:1.45	4.42	**.67, .33**[d]	bed – bad, kettle – cattle
		/æ, ʌ/	1.45:1.75	3.20	**.45, .55**[b]	lamp – lump
	9					
	8	/i:, ɪ/	1.65:8.33	9.98	.17, .88 [e]	seat – sit, leak – lick
	7					
	6	/ɔ:, ɜ:/	1.24:0.52	1.76	**.71, .30** [d]	course – curse, warm – worm
		/ɒ, əʊ/	1.37:1.51	2.88	.91, .52 [c]	cod – code
	5	/ɑ:, ʌ/	0.79:1.75	2.54	**.31, .69**[d]	last – lust
		/ɔ:, ɒ/	1.24:1.37	2.61	**.48, .53** [b]	short – shot
	4	/ɜ:, e/	0.52:2.97	3.49	.15, .85 [e]	bird – bed
		/æ, ɑ:/	1.45:0.79	2.24	**.45, .35** [b]	ham – harm
	3	/u:, ʊ/	1.13:0.86	1.99	**.57, .43** [b]	Luke – look
	2	/ɪə, eə/	0.21:0.34	0.55	.38, .62 [b]	pier – pear
	1					
	0	/əʊ, oʊ/	1.51:1.52	3.03	**.50, .50** [b]	RP home – GA home
		/ɜ:, eə/	0.52:0.34	0.86	**.60, .40** [b]	her – hair
		/ɒ, æ/	1.37:1.45	2.82	**.49, .51** [b]	adopt – adapt

[a] individual frequencies based on figures provided by Fry (1947)
[b] the probability of each member is close to .50
[c] the probability of one member is close to .50, the other one is either too high or low
[d] the probability of each member is within the range .70 ≥ .50≥ .30, .41 ≥ range≥ 0.25
[e] the probability of neither member is close to .50, their range ≥.50

Table 5.4:

Rank ordering of RP consonant pairs commonly conflated by Czech learners

			Frequency (in %)		Probability of occurrence	Examples of MPs
			Individual	Cumulative[a]		
Rank order	10	/p, b/	1.78:1.97	3.75	**.47, .53**[b]	pin – bin; hop – ho**b**
	9	/t, d/	6.42:5.14	11.56	**.56, .44**[b]	ton – done; kit – ki**d**
		/k, g/	3.09:1.05	4.14	.75, .25[e]	cod – God; clock – clo**g**
	8	/w, v/	2.81:2.00	4.81	**.58, .42**[b]	**w**est – vest
		/s, z/	4.81:2.46	7.27	**.66, .34**[d]	Sue – zoo; niece – knee**s**
	7	/ð, z/	3.56:2.46	6.02	**.59, .41**[b]	**th**en – Zen; brea**th**e – bree**z**e
		/f, v/	1.79:2.00	3.79	**.47, .53**[b]	fan – van; leaf – lea**v**e
	6					
	5	/θ, ð/	0.37:3.56	3.93	.09, .90[e]	mou**th** (n.) – mou**th** (v.)
		/θ, s/	0.37:4.81	5.18	.07, .93[e]	**th**in – sin
		/ð, d/	3.56:5.14	8.69	**.41, .59**[b]	**th**en – den
		/n, ŋ/	7.58:1.15	8.73	.87, 0.13[e]	sun – su**ng**
	4	/θ, t/	0.37:6.42	6.79	.50, .95[c]	**th**ree – tree
	3					
	2					
	1	/f, θ/	1.79: 0.37	2.16	.83, .17[e]	fought – **th**ought
	0	/s, k/	4.81:3.09	7.90	**.61, .39**[b]	**s**cene – keen
		/ʒ, dʒ/	0.10:0.60	0.70	.14, .86[e]	pleasure – pledger
		/g, dʒ/	1.05:0.60	1.65	**.64, .36**[d]	**g**ill /gɪl/ – Jill

[a] cumulative frequencies based on figures provided by Fry (1947)
[b] the probability of each member is close to .50, their range ≤0.24
[c] the probability of one member is close to .50, the other one is either too high or low
[d] the probability of each member is within the range .70 .50≥ .30, .41 ≥ range≥ 0.25
[e] the probability of neither member is close to .50, their range ≥.50

The probability of the occurrence of both members of a given contrast was calculated using Brown's (1988) formula, e.g. in the instance of /e/ = .67, /æ/ = .33. The potential confusion of the members of an MP (groups [b] and [d] in Tables 5.3 and 5.4) is high and the numbers in the *Probability of occurrence* column are in bold. In the last column there are only illustrative MPs, ignoring the distinction between word-initial, word-final, and word-middle positions.

5.2.1.5 Grapheme-to-phoneme correspondence in reading aloud

The main problems of Czech readers might stem from the dissimilar relationship between the spoken and written form of English in comparison with Czech. Cross-linguistic differences may be further complicated by intralingual transfer, typically by the overgeneralisation of spelling-pronunciation rules.

Grapheme-to-phoneme correspondence in Czech

In Czech there is relatively consistent correspondence between both language forms, guided by a relatively limited number of rules (Holub et al., 2008). Czech orthography is phonemic, which means that an individual grapheme usually represents a phoneme (Volín, 2010, p. 35) and the Czech alphabet contains 41 graphemes plus the diagraph *ch*, which is placed between the graphemes h and i.

With respect to grapheme-phoneme correspondence, in Czech there are 13 vowel phonemes, but 14 vowel graphemes; 26 consonant phonemes are represented by 27 graphemes. The graphemes *q*, pronounced as /kv/, and *w*, pronounced as /v/, exist only in words of foreign origin, e.g. **kv***óta*, **w***att*, whether they are proper names or common words (Academia, 1978; Volín, 2010).

Grapheme-to-phoneme correspondence in English

On the other hand, a speech-writing difference is typical of English and only a few words in English have "spelling pronunciation," i.e. pronunciation that "corresponds closely to spelling" (Wells, 2008b), e.g. let /let/. According to Crystal (2010, p. 224), though, about 75 per cent of English spelling-sound correspondence is rule-governed; however, there are about 400 English words whose written-spoken relationship is totally unpredictable, e.g. the word *heir* is pronounced as *air*. However, most of them are very frequent ones.

A Czech reader of an English text has to decide how to determine the sound of a particular spelling within a certain linguistic context on the spur of the moment. Thus it might be useful to motivate learners "to use orthography as a pronunciation resource" (Dickerson, 1987, in Brown, 1991, p. 161). For example, Dickerson (1987, in Brown, 1991, pp. 168–169) seems to uncover the source of the manifold difficulties of many foreign learners with the pronunciation of the *-ed* suffix, claiming that "no rule should require the learner to have prior knowledge of the word in question as a prerequisite to using the rule on the word" and calls it "prior-knowledge assumption" and finds it inherently unfair to less proficient learners. Dickerson (1991, p. 169) suggests a spelling-based rule once learners decide that *-ed* is not pronounced as /ɪd/. In order to choose between the voiceless /t/ form and the voiced /d/ form, learners should remember that the latter pronunciation is required when there are either vowel letters or the consonant letters b, d, g, l, m, n, j, r, v, and z in front of *-ed* (Dickerson, 1987, in Brown, 1991), e.g. pla*y*ed, jud*g*ed.

Grapheme-to-phoneme vowels

Crystal (1995) also emphasises the striking differences between vowel grapheme-to-vowel phoneme correspondence in comparison with consonantal grapheme-to-phoneme correspondence. He lists five grapheme vowels, i.e. *-a-, -e-,-i-,-o-*, and *-u-,* or six if *-y-* is

taken into account as well. In speaking they can be realised as "some 20 or so vowels in most accents of English" (Crystal, 1995, p. 237). For the purposes of this analysis, the schwa/ash-grapheme correspondence merits careful examination.

Schwa in content and grammatical words

In different linguistic contexts of the overwhelming majority of unstressed syllables in content words, be they monosyllabic or polysyllabic (Gimson, 1989; Wells, 1982a; Wells, 2008a), the phoneme /ə/ can be represented in British English writing by:

(a) any of five vowel graphemes, e.g. *banana*, *performance*, *capacity*, *phonology*, *suppose* (Gimson, 1989, p. 125);

(b) -ar, -er, -or, -our, -ure, -ous, e.g. *particular*, *mother*, *doctor*, *colour*, *figure*, *famous* (Gimson, 1989, p. 125); the first four might be summed up as -a/e/o/ou+r;

(c) in opposition to a zero vowel, e.g. *about – bout*, *away – way* (Gimson, 1989, p. 125);

(d) in opposition to an unaccented /ɪ/, e.g. *affect – effect*, *accept – except* (Gimson, 1989, p. 125).

Gimson (1989, p. 269) states that "even the monosyllabic content words may be reduced in rapid casual speech, if they occur in a relatively unaccented situation adjacent to a primary accent, and especially if they contain a short vowel," most frequently with these short vowels: /ɪ/ *You sit* /sət/ *over here.*; /ʌ/ *He'll come* /kəm/ *back.*; /e/ *Don't get* /gət/ *lost*. In such speech even the diphthong /əʊ/ is "readily reducible to /ə/ under weak accent": *You can't go* /gə/ *with him.* (Gimson, 1989, p. 269).

The phoneme /ə/ is extremely frequent in weak forms of grammatical words, e.g. *a, am, an, and, are, as, at, but, can, could, do, does, for, from, had, has, have, her, must, of, Saint, shall, should, Sir, some, than, that, the, them, there, to, us, was, were, would*; on the other hand, *Saint, Sir*, and *than* occur rarely (Gimson, 1989, p. 266), (Section 5.3.7.2). The 25 grammatical words *a, an, and, are, as, at, but, can, do, for, from, had, has, have, her, of, shall, some, that, the, them, there, to, us*, and *was* occur in the 200 most common words in English connected speech and 90 per cent of the occurrences of the fourteen words *a, an, and, as, at, but, for, her, of, shall, the, them, to*, and *was* are in their weak forms (Gimson, 1989, p. 266).

The inappropriate realisation of the schwa in weak forms of grammatical words belongs among the most frequent errors made by Czech learners (Ivanová, in press), the main cause being the orthographic form of the weak form, e.g. *from*, *of*, *them*, which, however, at the same time may be also explained as intralingual transfer of strong form vowels. Intralingual transfer seems to be the major source of errors in *but, could, do, does, for, from, her, must, of, Saint, should, Sir, some, the, there, to, us, was, were*, and *would*, while the reason for the mispronunciations of the schwa may also be explained as a combination of intralingual transfer and cross-linguistic differences, that is the learners' inability to pronounce the ash,

which is replaced by /e/ in *a*, *am*, *an*, *and*, *can*, *had*, *has*, *have*, *shall*, *than*, *that*. Needless to say, the weak-strong form opposition is further refined in English by weak forms which are context-sensitive: e.g. *int**o*** /u/ *a house* vs. *int**o*** /ə/ *trouble*.

Ash

In spelling, the phoneme /æ/ corresponds with the grapheme *a*:

(a) in a one-syllable word ending in a pronounced consonant, e.g. *bla**ck*** (Wells, 2008b);

(b) in a polysyllabic word with the stress on a penultimate syllable ending in two or more consonant letters, e.g. *b**a**ttle* (Wells, 2008b);

(c) when followed by the pronounced /l/ represented in writing by *l* or *ll*, e.g. *alphabet, sh**a**ll, b**a**lcony, sc**a**lp* (Gimson, 1989, p. 107);

(d) exceptionally, in a one-syllable word ending in a silent *e*, e.g. *h**a**ve*; in all other cases, e.g. *f**a**me*, a diphthongal pronunciation is the regular one (Wells, 2008a, p. 699);

(e) rarely written *ai*, e.g. *pl**ai**t*, *pl**ai**d* (Crystal, 1995, p. 242).

In relation to the articulation of /æ/, Gimson (1989) points out that in words such as *cab* or *had* it "appears to be lengthened … in front of the lenis consonants" and this lengthening serves as "an additional distinctive feature" between RP /e/ and /æ/. At the same time, though, he warns foreign learners that /æ/ articulation should not be too open as it might be confused with /ʌ/ articulation, e.g. *nut* /nʌt/ vs. *gnat* /næt/ and foreign learners should not conflate it with RP /ɑ:/ (Crystal, 1995, p. 240; Gimson, 1989, pp. 108–113). (cf. Section 5.3.7.4.)

The origin of production errors in the pronunciation of the ash has been partially dealt with above in connection with weak forms, but here it is worth noting, first, the orthographical impact in cases such as /a, ʌ/ in *black*, which may be also explained as interlanguage transfer, and, second, overgeneralisation of the rule governing spelling-sound correspondence in English in *plait*, *plaid.*

Central vowel /ɜ:/

In reading aloud some Czech readers might be puzzled by the varied representation of /ɜ:/ in writing by a number of vowel-letter+r-letter combinations (e.g. *-ir, -yr, -er, -ear, -ur, -or* in *shirt*, *myrtle*, *nerve*, *earth*, *hurt*, *work*) (Wells, 1982a, pp. 138–139).

Consonants

The difference between the number of letters and phonemes is not so dramatic in the area of English consonants as there are 24 RP consonant sounds in most accents of English, which can be represented by 21 consonant letters (Crystal, 1995, p. 242). Some spelling-to-sound guidelines concerning likely causes of problems for Czech readers are discussed below and provide an immediate insight into their intricate complexity.

/ð/, /θ/ – th

The digraph *th* can represent the spoken voiced dental /ð/, e.g. **th***at*, *fa***th***er*, *smoo***th**, or voiceless /θ/, e.g. **th***ree*, *me***th***od*, *tru***th**, but exceptionally also /t/, e.g. **Th***omas,* **Th***ames,* **th***yme.* Wells (2008, p. 804) outlines these guidelines:

(a) the pronunciation of the word-initial *th* depends on the grammatical class; the voiced dental fricative /ð/ occurs in function words such as determiners (*the*), pronouns (*they*), conjunctions (*though, nevertheless*), and adverbs (*there*), and is always followed by a vowel sound. The unvoiced dental fricative /θ/ can be found in full-meaning words, e.g. *thin*, *thing* (Wells, 2008a, p. 804);

(b) its pronunciation in word-middle positions mostly depends on the origin of the word, if it is not the end of a stem. There is /ð/ realisation in words of German origin (*father*, *together*), but /θ/ realisation in words of Latin and Greek origin (*method*, *author*);

(c) the pronunciation of the word-final *th* or when it is at the end of a stem is /θ/ in *breath*, *truth*, but /ð/ in *smooth*, mostly in RP *with*, in front of silent *-e*, e.g. *breathe*, *teethe*, *soothe*, and in inflected forms, e.g. *soothing, soothed, soothes*;

(d) the regular transitions from /θ/ to /ð/ occur:

(da) in the plural, e.g. *mouths* /maʊðz/, *booths*, *truths*, *youths*;

(db) in the suffixes *-ern* and *-erly*, e.g. *southern*, *southerly*;

(dc) in conversion from a noun to a verb, e.g. *to mouth* /maʊð/.

The digraph *th* is frequently mispronounced even by very advanced Czech learners of English as /d, dʰ, dᶻ, z/ in the case of the voiced dental phoneme, or /t, tˢ, tʰ, f/ instead of the voiceless dental phoneme as a result of cross-linguistic differences, and so learners come up with the nearest equivalents in their mother tongue (cf. Sections 5.3.7.5 & 5.3.7.8).

/ŋ/

In British English, in word-final position, it regularly reflects spelt *ng* after short vowels /ɪ, æ,ɒ, ʌ/, infrequently after /e/, e.g. *sing*(s), *hang*(s, ed), *wrong*(s, ed), *tong*(s, ed), *among* (Gimson, 1989, p. 199). It also occurs as a spoken counterpart of the French /ã/ in *restaurant* (Gimson, 1989, p. 199), but, according to Wells (2008, p. 529), in British English the /-rɒŋ/ pronunciation is decreasing (4%), being replaced by /-rɒnt / (39%).
In word-final position the letter combinations n+c/k/ct/gth are pronounced as /ŋk/, e.g. *chunk*(s), *monk*(s), *rank*(s, ed), *sink*(s); /ŋkt/ in *distinct*, /ŋkθ/ in *strength* (Gimson, 1989, p. 199), which is not so commonly problematic for Czech learners.

Otherwise, the translation of the written form into the spoken one is guided by more specific rules in the word-medial position at the end of a stem:

(a) /ŋ/, e.g. *si***ng***er*, *ha***ng***er*, *lo***ng***ing*;

(b) /ŋg/, e.g. *a***ng***le*, *a***ng***er*, *a***ng***ry*, *E***ng***land*, *fi***ng***er*, *stro***ng***est* (Gimson, 1989, p. 199);

(c) /ŋk/ reflecting the combination of letters n+c/k/q/x/g, which are realised as the phoneme /k/, e.g. *bronchitis*, *conclude*, *concrete*, *income*, *encourage*, *uncle*; *thanks*; *conquer*, *enquiry*; *anxious*; *amongst* (Gimson, 1989, p. 199; Wells, 2008a, p. 529).

Czech learners are able to pronounce the velar nasal phoneme /ŋ/, because it is pronounced in the middle of Czech words *Hanka*, *branka*, but experience a lot of difficulties with its realisation as it (a) never appears in Czech in word-final position, unlike English (interlingual transfer), and (b) in the word-medial position the rules governing *ng* pronunciations in English as /ŋ, ŋg, ŋk / are intricate. As a result, Czech learners' errors are the manifestation of an allophonic error, e.g. an inability to pronounce /ŋ/at the end of the word *long*, in combination with a distributional error, e.g. mispronunciation of combinations of sounds, e.g. in *bronchitis (cf. Section 5.3.73)*.

Summary

In order to get a more global perspective on the challenges the Czech reader of an English text must cope with, let us quote Selikowitz (1998, p. 60), who states that the 26 letters of the English alphabet and 44 phonemes of English present the reader of an English text with 577 realisations of letter-phoneme correspondence.

5.2.1.6 Types of pronunciation errors

So far we have systematically discussed the concept of FLD, which deals with the conflation of two different phonemes in MPs existing in English, e.g. /v/ in *vine* and /w/ in *wine*, the latter words is often realised with the /v/ sound instead of the /w/ phoneme. This section deals with segmental errors which do not occur in MPs. Errors are in general defined as FL learners' deviations from the target language forms used by NSs of the target language and are evidence of deficient target language competence (Council of Europe, 2001). As a result, errors cannot primarily be self-corrected by learners themselves. Our understanding of errors distinguishes them from mistakes, which are explained as a slip of the tongue and thus can be self-corrected by learners because they "reflect learners' inability to use what they actually know of the target language" (Ellis, 1997, p. 141).

In the present study we deal with phonological orthoepic, and partly orthographic competences and the main focus is on the selected pronunciation features, mostly segmental ones, that is, errors involving vowels and consonants, from the point of view of their production in reading aloud (Chapter 5) and in spoken discourse (Section 6.1.2.1).

This section presents one of the many existing taxonomies of production errors, that devised by Moulton (1962), who differentiates four types of errors; we may call them all interference errors: (a) phonemic errors; (b) phonetic errors; (c) allophonic errors; (d) distributional errors (in Odlin, 1989, p. 116). Phonemic errors stem from cross-linguistic differences between two phonemic inventories, but phonetic errors represent

"cross-linguistic equivalence at the phonemic but not phonetic level" (in Odlin, 1989, p. 116), e.g. the Czech /r/ and English retroflex /r/ are equivalent phonemes with different acoustic properties. Allophonic errors are connected with "interlingual identification of phonemes between two languages" (in Odlin, 1989, p. 116), which concerns, for example, Czech learners' pronunciation of the voiced velar /ŋ/ at the end of English words as */ŋk/ or */nk/. Distributional errors deal with the extent to which the combination of sounds and the position of a phoneme(s) in a word can influence their correct or incorrect pronunciation. For instance, Czech learners find the pronunciation of voiced consonants in the word-initial position easy, e.g. *day*, *game*; however, they tend to make mistakes in word-final position as they completely devoice these consonants, e.g. *had*, *bag* are enunciated with complete devoicing as /t/ and /k/.

5.2.1.7 Research-based studies examining segmental and suprasegmental pronunciation features

This section aims to contribute to the dilemma of what to focus on in teaching English pronunciation. It has always been problematic to diagnose: (a) which pronunciation features contribute most to the accentedness, intelligibility, and comprehensibility of Czech learners' English; (b) which mispronounced features occur most frequently; (c) which ones matter most and thus merit intensive remedial pronunciation teaching; and (d) what is the teachability and learnability of segmental in comparison with suprasegmental pronunciation features.

Teachability, i.e. how easy it is to teach a certain pronunciation feature by the teacher, as well as learnability, i.e. how easy it is to acquire it for the learner, are the notions of salient importance in teaching English pronunciation (Dalton & Seidlhofer,1994). These notions are related to the communicative importance of segmental features, stress, and intonation as shown in Figure 5.3 by Dalton & Seidlhofer (1994, p. 73), who view individual English segments as more teachable than stress, and stress more teachable than intonation in spite of the fact that the realisation of appropriate intonation is significant for communicative importance. They hold that intonation is "extremely dependent on individual circumstances and therefore nearly impossible to isolate out for direct teaching" (Dalton & Seidlhofer,1994, pp. 72-73). So they consider the stress a crucial notion in teaching English pronunciation in agreement with Daniels (1995).

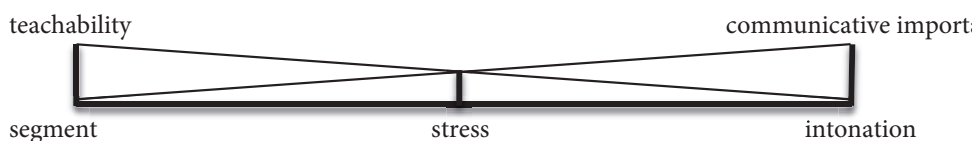

Figure 5.3: Teachability and communicative importance relationship
(after Dalton & Seidlhofer,1994, p. 73).

In the foreign language acquisition context, we wanted to see the extent of teachability and learnability of chosen individual sounds, some of them influenced by the primary stress placement. Furthermore, we agree with Nádraská (2013), who maintains that the relevance of the pronunciation features selected for the pilot stage may be driven by:

(a) the general theoretical differences between the Czech and English phonological systems as dealt with in Section 5.2.1;

(b) study results that mainly examine the pronunciation of Czech university students of English.

Nádraská (2013, pp. 7–8) summarises the fields of interest of Czech researchers who deal with one phonemic contrast, with suprasegmental features, and/or with a selection of the pronunciation features or accentedness of Czech learners.

Šturm and Skarnitzl (2011) are concerned with the acceptability of the ash from the point of view of its perception and assessment by students. Volín (2009) contrasts the ash with the less open front vowel /e/, discussing its synesthetic support. Volín et al. (2013) describe the differences in spectral features of the schwa in English function words that are characteristic of native English and Czech speakers. Having examined the pronunciation of the schwa in differing distributional contexts, Ivanová (in press) claims that Czech subjects have considerable difficulty in pronouncing it in the weak forms of grammatical words, whereas they face fewer problems with its pronunciation in the unstressed syllables in content words.

Skarnitzl and Poesová (2008) explain the transfer of Czech assimilation of voicing in relation to English linguistic contexts, focusing mainly on the inter-sonorant environment and word-final obstruents. Skarnitzl (2005) studies Czech students' perception of English word stress and aspects causing difficulties in the identification of prominence.

Let us enrich this inconclusive picture in research by drawing on the first-year university students' pronunciation in another two studies. Černá et al. (2011) assess selected pronunciation features of Czech university students of English, who made the most mistakes in: (a) the enunciation of the ash, which is replaced by the front open-mid/close-mid vowel; (b) the pronunciation of the voiced dental fricative; (c) the voiced variants of the suffixes -s and -ed, and (d) in the realisation of the velar nasal.

Ivanová (2011) inspects the extent of accentedness in the speech of 66 Czech first-year university students studying English in a pre-service teacher education programme in relation to the causes of this accentedness (word stress, sentence stress, rhythm, intonation, and individual phonemes). The accent of the students, who are mostly at B2 level according to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), in reading aloud is ranked as medium (3.57) on a five-point scale. The assessors (three Czech university teachers and one British native speaker university teacher) identified the following causes of the Czech accent

from the most to the least prominent ones: rhythm, intonation, individual phonemes, word stress, and sentence stress. Interestingly, the British native speaker assessor chose the mispronunciations of individual phonemes as the most problematic ones, while the non-native speaker assessors selected them as the third parameter. In the same study, 32 students out of 66 also provided reading aloud which was rehearsed using a model recording of a BBC speaker (Ivanová, 2011). Ivanová (2011) compared reading aloud without and with prior pronunciation practice for each informant. On average, the strength of the students' accent decreased by 0.43, which revealed that prior practice helped students to reduce faulty rhythm by 27.2 per cent and sentence stress by 28.6 per cent, but both intonation and individual phonemes deteriorated by 2 per cent and word stress by 48.3 per cent.

We can be inspired by the study carried by Gonet (2010) who discusses the transfer of Polish assimilation of voicing as a myth in relation to English linguistic contexts:

> The interpretation of the devoicing process that emerges from so incomplete descriptions is misleading to those foreign teachers and learners of English whose native languages favour complete word-final obstruent devoicing. They do not appreciate sufficiently the actual incidence of devoicing in native English articulations, and strive to overcome what they fear would be a facet of negative interference of their native language, preserving overlong and over-strong segment of phonation, producing unnaturally voiced sounds that strike the native ear. (in Waniek-Klimczak, 2010, p. 365,)

Gonet (in Waniek-Klimczak, 2010, p. 369) inspected the 630 speech samples elicited from six NSs of English with an aim to diagnose pronunciation factors responsible for the production and perception of word-final voiced plosives and fricatives. With respect to /b, d, g/, he found out that NSs fully or partially devoice them before a pause with equal frequency, while their full voicing rarely occurred. So Gonet (2010) concludes that "the choice of the voicing strategy is free, and any variant is as good as any other" (p. 370). However, the word-final voiced plosives in the case of the following word with word-initial voiced phoneme are completely voiced in more than 80 per cent, while the remaining 20 per cent preserve partial voicing.

Gonet (in Waniek-Klimczak, 2010, pp. 365-366) gathers strong arguments for partial or full devoicing of word final stops as a natural aspect of English NSs' speech. First, he cites the authors of textbooks of English pronunciation (Ball & Rahilly, 1999, pp. 72-73; Catford, 2001, p. 46; Davenport & Hannahs, 1998, p. 24; Roach, 2009, p. 28) who agree with Roach's claim that: "Final b, d, g normally have little voicing: if there is voicing, it is at the beginning of the compression phase [...]. The difference between p, t, k and b, d, g is primarily the fact that vowels preceding p, t, k are much shorter" (2009, p. 28).

The above mentioned authors seem to agree that word final voiced stops are likely to be "wholly or partially devoiced" (Davenport & Hannahs, 1998, p. 24), "totally devoiced" (Ball & Rahilly, 1999, pp. 72), "almost completely voiceless" (Catford, 2001, p. 46) and that vowels preceding /b, d, g/ sound longer, which is most noticeable in the case of the long vowels and diphthongs (Roach, 2009, p. 28). The authors also believe that RP voiced consonants /b, d, g/ are fully voiced between two other voiced sounds, i.e. ladder, lagging.

Then Gonet (2010) goes on to quote phoneticians (Gimson, 2008; Jassem, 1983, in Waniek-Klimczak, 2010, p. 367) who deal with theoretical knowledge concerning (de)voicing on words and across word boundary. Gimson (2008, p. 160) asserts that voicing of /b, d, g/ is preserved between two voiced phonemes of which the second is the initial part of the next word and devoicing can also be realised before silence, e.g. bag /bæk/. Jassem (1983, pp. 203-207) explicitly refers to the impact of the quality of the following word-initial sound on (de)voicing.

We hope that the study results concerned with Czech university students might contribute to the ongoing discussion as to whether segmental or suprasegmental features affect the comprehensibility or intelligibility of L2 learners' speech, and to what extent they contribute to the accentedness of their speech. In an L2 context, Moyer (2013) asserts that it is a common perception that "sounding foreign is primarily a matter of segmental accuracy" (p. 57). The following studies cited by Moyer (2013) support this claim. In their research into 100 adult ESL learners from various L1 backgrounds, Derwing and Rossiter (2002, p. 164) state that 55 per cent of a foreign accent is due to the inappropriate pronunciation of segmental features. Further, Moyer (2004, in Moyer, 2013, p. 52) claims that 40 per cent of the study participants relate their difficulties in pronunciation to segmental features, 13 per cent to intonation.

On the other hand, there are studies whose results provide evidence of the salient importance of prosodic features (Anderson-Hsieh et al., 1992; Moyer, 1999). Similarly, Goh and Burns quote the results of a study carried out by Derwing et al. (19980, which views prosodic features as having "a greater impact on the intelligibility of learners' speech production than clear articulation of […] phonemes" (in Goh & Burns, 2012, p. 60). In this respect, even the outcomes of L2 studies remain inconclusive.

5.2.2 Reading aloud

First, the specifications of the process of reading aloud are dealt with and afterwards the nature of reading aloud tasks used in the present study is discussed.

5.2.2.1 Specifications of the process of reading aloud

In comparison with silent reading for comprehension, reading aloud is viewed as one of the speech processes which, first, calls into play a person's analytical powers, immediately followed by synthesis; the process is stimulated by the graphical form of a word, which has to be mentally processed (Hartl & Hartlová, 2000, p. 95). Reading aloud is perceived as a combined language skill which makes the reader transform the written form into an oral one (Hendrich, 1988, p. 191) and the cognitive demands of this transformation grow with the level of relative ir-/regularity of the written-sound relationship of English (Crystal, 2010, p. 18).

On top of that, the level of comprehension in reading aloud affects the reader in terms of their ability to: (a) cope with some ir-/regular sound-letter correspondence in their mother tongue (L1) in comparison with English (L2) (Crystal, 2010; Volín, 2010); (b) decode consonant clusters that do not exist in their L1 (Richards & Smith, 1974), for example, *thr-* or *-ght* in **thr**ow, tau**ght**; (c) retrieve the meaning of a less frequent lexical item from their mental lexicon (Selikowitz, 1998); and (d) plan ahead for further reading aloud. According to the CEFR, the reader is expected to activate reception and production strategies which enable them to: (a) plan (select a mental set and activate schemata); (b) execute strategies (locate cues and infer from them); (c) evaluate (match the identified cues to schemata); and (d) repair (remedy, if there is a mismatch between the identified cues and the activated schemata) (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 72).

Wells (1982a) writes about phonological rules (Section 5.2.1) "within the overall framework of a generative transformational grammar" (p. 57) with respect to speaking, but the reader has to activate similar phonological rules proceeding through stages (a) to (d), according to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 72) in order to be able to choose a "concrete phonetic representation" (p. 57) of the text or part of it. Wells (1982a) provides the example of the word *bad*, which has /bæd/ as an underlying "phonemic representation" (p. 57), or the so-called dictionary pronunciation, in RP as well as in most standard accents. The "concrete phonetic representation" of the word *bad* is triggered by an RP (optional) assimilation rule: "whenever a word ending in an alveolar stop occurs before a word beginning with a bilabial or velar stop", which is the case with the phrase *bad girl*; the reader may produce /bæg/ *girl*, which represents the "concrete phonetic representation" of the word *bad* within this context (pp. 57–58). Hence, when reading aloud in English, a foreign learner has to be aware of the fact that almost all phonological rules are context-sensitive, that is, they apply only in certain linguistic contexts (Wells, 1982, p. 58). As a result, the dictionary pronunciation of most words is altered, e.g. weak forms of grammatical words, stress shift, /r/ insertion, etc.

All the likely difficulties mentioned above lead us to believe, in line with Richards and Smith (1985), that readers are primarily faced with negative transfer, which might stem from two facts. First, there is a consistently regular relationship between spoken and written Czech, with the exception of words of foreign origin (Volín, 2010, p. 35). Second, the pronunciation of the majority of Czech lexical items can be derived from a relatively limited set of rules (Holub, 2008), unlike English, with (a) a relatively high number of rules governing the regular spelling-sound correspondence (Gimson, 1989; Wells, 1982a) and (b) the irregularity of the spelling-sound correspondence of 70 very frequent and common words, e.g. *all*, *answer*, *busy*, *come*, *do*, *does*, *eye*, *listen*, *of*, *one*, *said*, *says*, *was*, *were*, *what*, *you*, *who*, etc. (Crystal, 2010). This may increase the processing demands on Czech learners of English when reading aloud. Further differentiation of errors was dealt with in Section 5.2.1.6. Secondarily, in reading aloud intralingual interference may lead to faulty pronunciations of words, if students overgeneralise the rule of the sound-form correspondence (Richards, 1974, p. 175), e.g. learners are familiar with the pronunciation of famous and consequently they use the same vowel in infamous. Thirdly, faulty training of reading might cause problems in reading aloud as well, e.g. pronunciation of strong forms of function words instead of weak ones in model reading.

5.2.2.2 Reading aloud tasks

Reading aloud tasks are generally used for testing or the diagnosis of various aspects of examinees' pronunciation. They are highly structured speaking tasks, since the examinees are provided with all the content they are going to convey (Luoma, 2004). Consequently, they lend themselves to comparative analysis of the pronunciation features under scrutiny. From the point of view of test-takers, not only do they limit their self-expression and involvement in a task, but test-takers also lack pay-off value. In spite of the fact that reading aloud might be considered closed-ended as the language material is provided by the teacher/interlocutor and not produced on the spur of the moment (Luoma, 2004, p. 50), it might be assumed that in a way it manifests some features of open-endedness in view of the translation of the written form into its spoken one (cf. Section 5.2.1, specifically Section 5.2.1.7). It depends on the conditions under which it is conducted – whether the learner has been given enough time to prepare the reading aloud and if a model recording was available prior to recording, or whether the reader is expected to read a text or isolated words, in which case the text layout is of fundamental importance.

5.3 Research study

Unlike most of the research studies considered in Section 5.2.1.7, the aim of this study is to analyse the appropriateness of the production of a number of pronunciation features:

the front open vowel (i.e. the ash) /æ/, the weak central mid vowel (i.e. the schwa) /ə/, the voiced and voiceless dental fricatives /ð, θ/, the bilabial approximant /w/, the velar nasal /ŋ/, and the pronunciation of the word-final voiced consonants /g/ and /d/. These features were identified as problematic for Czech learners (see Section 5.2.1.7). However, apart from purely statistical results, it is innovative in relating them to: (a) two different formats of elicitation instruments; (b) variability in the difficulty indices for each pronunciation feature, and (c) the substitutes the tested Czech learners use for the mispronounced RP phonemes.

Its main strengths stem from the number of subjects (n = 228) who participated in this part of the research and the overwhelming number of occurrences of the individual pronunciation features (Table 5.5 in Section 5.3.2).

First, the research questions and hypothesis are outlined (Section 5.3.1); second, the choice of the Longman Pronunciation Dictionary as the chief control corpus is justified (Section 5.3.2); third, the advantages and disadvantages of an NNS as an assessor are discussed (Section 5.3.3); fourth, the conditions under which the recordings were carried out are outlined (Section 5.3.4); fifth, the individual stages of the assessment procedure are presented in detail (Section 5.3.5); and sixth, the overall results enabling comparison of all the pronunciation features that were examined, as well as the specific data dealing with each feature separately, are tabulated and discussed (Section 5.3.7).

5.3.1 Research questions and hypothesis

In relation to the appropriateness of the pronunciation of features in question, these research questions were formulated.

(a) What are the difficulty indices of the selected pronunciation features elicited from the Czech students by means of the two reading aloud tasks?

(b) What is the variability in the difficulty indices for the chosen pronunciation features with respect to varying linguistic contexts?

(c) What are the Czech learners' substitutes for the mispronounced RP phonemes?

(d) What is the relationship between the two reading aloud tasks in relation to the selected pronunciation features? Is there correlation between the mean difficulty indices for the pronunciation features being examined in the text and wordlist respectively? It was also hypothesised that the difficulty indices for the individual pronunciation features would be higher in the case of reading isolated words aloud than in the case of reading a text.

The selected pronunciation features are discussed in terms of their difficulty indices, which were elicited by the two different formats of the reading aloud tasks.

5.3.2 Instruments

The pronunciation test consisted of two reading aloud tasks (Section 1.2.1), a short text (Appendix 4) and a list of isolated words (Appendix 5), referred to as the wordlist in the text.

The short passage consists of 153 tokens, out of which 98 are different types of words. Although the subjects were asked to read the whole text, the pronunciation analysis was concerned only with pronunciation features present in 24 words, which are identical to the words in the second reading aloud task.

The second task draws on a list of 24 tokens which are taken from the short passage; 19 are different types of words. From the point of view of the number of syllables in the 19 words, there are twelve one-syllable words (i.e. *lamp*, *watch*, *bag*, *had*, *long*, *that*, *they*, *bed*, *planned*, *thought*, *threw,* and *then* – 63.2%), five two-syllable words (i.e. *away*, *locking*, *again*, *twenty*, and *waited* – 26.3.2%), and two three-syllable words (i.e. *everything* and *suspected* – 10.5%), which is quite proportionate to the number of syllables in English provided by Gimson (1989) (Section 5.2.1.3). These five words, *bag*, *away*, *again*, *everything*, and *suspected*, were read twice in the wordlist.

Table 5.5

Number of occurrences of pronunciation features in the reading aloud tasks

	Number of occurrences per pronunciation feature		
Pronunciation features	in both tasks	in the short text	in the list of words
Word-final voicing in *bag* (2x only in the wordlist), *bed*, *had* (2x only in the text)	1,824	912	912
Word-final voicing in *suspected* (2x), *planned*, *waited*	1,824	912	912
Voiced dental fricative in *that* and *then* (2x only in the text), *they*	1,824	1,140	684
Voiceless dental fricative in *everything* (2x), *threw*, *thought*	1,824	912	912
Velar nasal in *locking*, *long*, *everything* (2x)	1,824	912	912
Ash in *lamp*, *bag*, *planned*; *had* and *that* (1x only in the wordlist)	1,824	684	1,140
Bilabial approximant in *watch*, *away* (2x only in the wordlist), *twenty*, *waited*	2,052	912	1,140
Schwa in *away*, *suspected*, *again* (2x only in the wordlist); *that* (2x only in the text), *had* (4x only in the text)	3,420	2,052	1,368
	Σ = 16,416	Σ = 8,436	Σ = 7,980

Both reading aloud tasks were designed with the aim of enabling comparative pronunciation analysis of eight pronunciation features in the context of a text and in isolation. Unlike the pilot stage, all the occurrences of each pronunciation feature in the chosen words in each reading aloud task were examined, as illustrated in Table 5.5. The total number of

occurrences of all the pronunciation features in question is 16,416; for each instrument there are 8,436 occurrences in the short text and 7,980 occurrences in the wordlist. Since the total of occurrences differs between pronunciation features (e.g. for both instruments: 2,052, 1,368, 1,140 (3x), 912 (9x), and 684 (2x)), the so-called composite score (Bachman & Palmer, 2004; Volín, 2007) is calculated calculated to enable comparative analyses (Section 5.3.6). Table 5.6 shows that the mode is the same in both reading aloud formats (912 occurrences) and that there are differences in the median (969 occurrences vs. 798 occurrences). The maximum in the short text is 2,052 occurrences, compared to 1,368 occurrences in the list of words.

Table 5.6

Descriptive statistics: all occurrences of pronunciation features in both tasks (N = 16,416)

	Occurrences in the short text	Occurrences in the list of words
Mode	912	912
Median	912	798
Mean	1,054.5	997.5
Maximum	2,052	1,368
Minimum	684	684
Range	1,368	684

As is evident from Table 5.6, the mean is a little lower in the list of words (997.5 occurrences) than in the text (1,054.5 occurrences), mainly thanks to the double reading of five words including nine pronunciation features and the loss of *had* and *that* as examples of the ash in the short text. In the text the two words *had* and *that* had to be read as weak forms of function words with /ə/ (Roach, 2009), i.e. *he thought that he heard, had seen/planned, had left/gone*, unlike their realisations with /æ/ as individual words in the list of words. On top of that, *had* occurred in two different contexts: e.g. twice in *had seen/planned*, where, under the influence of regressive assimilation, its phonetic representation was /hət/, and twice in the voiced realisation of /həd/ reflecting its use in *had left/gone*. No other words turned out to be context-sensitive across word boundaries in the text.

5.3.3 Control corpus

The British and American standards as presented in Wells' Longman Pronunciation Dictionary (2008) served as a point of reference for the assessor for the following reasons. First, the dictionary provides all the acceptable standard pronunciations of the same word in two pronunciation varieties (BBC English and General American). Second, it also provides non-standard pronunciation forms which should not be used by NNSs. Third, to the best of our knowledge it is the only existing research-based pronunciation dictionary,

unlike the 17th edition of Daniel Jones's English Pronouncing Dictionary (2006). Finally, it includes model sound files of BBC English, which is a wider concept of RP, and General American pronunciations of a given word. Apart from the main control corpus, the BBC recording of the short passage was used (Wilde, 2008).

From our standpoint, the concept of English as a lingua franca with its recommendations for teaching core features of English pronunciation (Jenkins, 2007, pp. 24–25) is not suitable for would-be teachers of English. We hold that although it might be an unattainable target for some Czech students in a TEFL programme, they should keep trying to improve their pronunciation with a native speaker model on mind, be it BBC English or General American, as far as the students acquire either of them consistently, and they should not consider core features advocated by the concept of English as a lingua franca (Appendix 17) sufficient for them. The would-be teachers of English are responsible for the impact of their pronunciation over several generations of learners of EFL.

5.3.4 Assessors

The analysis was carried out using subjective auditory assessment because of the huge amount of data and in order for it to resemble the real-life assessment of students' pronunciation of English phonemes. Each informant's performance was analysed by an experienced non-native teacher of English whose mother tongue is Czech and who has had 23 years' experience of teaching a phonetics and phonology course at university. To reduce the subjectivity of the judgements, whenever necessary, the recordings were slowed down, listened to as many times as needed, and processed in a similar way in two different time periods (2013: intra-rater reliability α=0.79, 2014: intra-rater reliability α=0.85) in a rearranged order of recordings, as suggested by Bachman (2004). In some cases a native speaker of English was consulted. Although no listener, even an expert and experienced one, can be fully reliable, it is believed that some tendencies could be detected with respect to the segmental features that were examined in 228 recordings by a non-native-speaker teacher as well.

The assessor was not the students' regular teacher, as the students came from three different universities in the Czech Republic (Section 1.1). It is understandable that it is far from being ideal in the case of performance tests, which are more subjective by their nature than objective tests. Nevertheless, in real classes it is the NNS teacher's job to evaluate their FL learners' performance in English on a daily basis.

With respect to judges, the following potential pitfalls in the assessment of the comprehensibility and intelligibility of learners' speech by non-native teachers are listed in the research-based literature. Overall, they are perceived as inadequate judges by Munro and Derwing (2006, p. 521), who claim that "second language teachers, who are

often very experienced in listening to L2 speech, are not necessarily the best judges of their own students' comprehensibility". Some authors are more specific. There are more studies employing native-speaking judges of foreign accents than non-native-speaking judges (Nowacka, 2010, pp. 63–4). Accented speech might be more understandable for non-native teachers when they share a mother tongue with the subjects being assessed (Major et al., 2002). On top of that, non-native teachers are claimed to be less benevolent than native-speaking judges (Piske et al., 2001).

5.3.5 Recordings

In order to obtain reliable data, recordings of reading aloud were collected in October 2013 and October 2014 at three different universities. The data was not modified in any way with respect to time or the order of the students. Nevertheless, some of the 350 recordings were excluded either because of background noise or their quality (not being complete or loud enough, too fast to be fairly assessed, or being incomprehensible in parts because of the students coughing or clearing their nose).

In order to achieve good-quality recordings, the Sound Forge Pro software, version 10, was used. This software allowed a chosen sequence to be listened to repeatedly and each chosen sequence of a particular recording to be slowed down.

Prior to being recorded, each reader was instructed to study the short passage and the wordlist for a minute, and to read the words in the list one by one, including the numbers at the beginning of each line. The stimuli were given to each student in the form of a written text (font Times New Roman, size 12) (Appendices 4 & 5). Then the informants were recorded one by one directly into the computer with the help of the Sound Forge Pro software. The recordings of reading aloud were then analysed by the assessor (Section 5.3.3).

5.3.6 Assessment procedure

The study uses a mixed-methods design. The individual pronunciation results in the two reading aloud tasks are analysed, compared, and finally also qualitatively evaluated, taking on board varied linguistic contexts.

The recordings of reading aloud were elicited from 228 Czech university students of English (Section 1.1) in two different periods, employing the same research design and assessors, and under comparable conditions in order to carry out a comparable replicated study.

The pronunciation assessment drew on dichotomous data; the individual pronunciation features were scored right-wrong (Bachman, 2004). That means each correctly pronounced feature was assigned one point, while each incorrectly enunciated feature was classified as zero. Correctness was assessed within the concept of BBC pronunciation (being wider

than RP) and GA. In some cases, the pronunciation of one word, e.g. *bag*, represented two test items, the front open vowel the ash and the word-final voiced consonant; therefore, their correct realisations were awarded two points.

The phonemes under investigation were transcribed by means of the International Phonemic Alphabet (IPA). The accuracy of these transcriptions relied on the human ear and thus, even if the ear is a trained one, this is believed to be less objective than spectrographic representations.

The statistical analysis of the categorical data (correct/incorrect pronunciation of the segmental features in question) is applied to calculate: (a) the classical difficulty index (p_i), which tells us "how a given group of individuals performed on average on a particular item"; (b) the average percentage success score per individual and task, i.e. "item difficulty" (Bachman, 2004, pp. 122–123). In both reading aloud tasks the difficulty index (p_i) was calculated for each pronunciation feature, p_i being "the proportion for the correct answer … as an indicator of item difficulty" (Bachman, 2004, p. 126).

Equation 5.1 is modelled on Chráska (2007, p. 196) and provides the interpretation of the difficulty index. If the difficulty index (p_i) equals or is lower than 20, a test item is very problematic for testees; if the difficulty index (p_i) equals or is higher than 80, a test item is very easy for testees; if the difficulty index (p_i) equals 50, a test item is challenging enough and can discriminate well among testees; if the difficulty index (p_i) nearly equals 100, it means that a test item is extremely easy for testees, but can be used at the beginning of a test to calm down testees; and finally, if the difficulty index (p_i) equals or is just slightly higher than 0, the test item is extremely difficult and should be excluded from the test (Chráska, 2007, p. 196).

Equation 5.1 $\qquad p_i = 100 \dfrac{n_s}{n}$

p_i = difficulty index
n_s = the number of testees who scored 1 on the item
n = the sum of all testees

In order to calculate the means of difficulty indices for each of the seven pronunciation features in both reading aloud tasks separately and together, the differences in the total number of all the occurrences of a pronunciation feature under examination as exemplified in Table 5.5 and 5.6 had to be taken on board.

Calculation of mean

Volín (2007, p. 50) distinguishes between a simple arithmetic mean and the mean stemming from putting together samples comprising different numbers of items, which is the case when there are various numbers of occurrences of an individual pronunciation feature,

and proposes the formula presented in Equation 5.2 to calculate comparable means based on other means. This is called the composite score, explained as "the sum of average part scores" by Bachman and Palmer (2004, p. 356).

Equation 5.2

$$\bar{x} = \frac{n_1\,\bar{x}_1 + n_2\,\bar{x}_2}{n_1 + n_2}$$

$\bar{x}$ = mean
n_1, n_2 = the sum of the measurements which lead to individual means
$\bar{x}_1, \bar{x}_2$ = mean part scores

Each individual pronunciation feature was treated independently. The schwa is used as an example. In order to be able to achieve a global overview, first, all the words containing /ə/ (*away*, *again*, *suspected*) were put together, then each acceptable pronunciation feature in question was awarded one point; all the faulty enunciations of each word were added and are marked with an asterisk, as shown in Table 5.7. Afterwards the total number of correct occurrences of the pronunciation feature was counted per student and afterwards for the whole sample, and finally calculated as percentages, that is, difficulty indices (p_i).

Table 5.7
Difficulty indices of the schwa for individual words in the wordlist (n = 228)

words	away	again	*suspected*	*away*	*again*	*suspected*
acceptable pronunciation	ə'weɪ	ə'gen ə'geɪn	səs'pektɪd	ə'weɪ	ə'gen ə'geɪn	səs'pektɪd
unacceptable pronunciations	*ə'veɪ *e'veɪ *e'weɪ	*e'gen *e'geɪn *bi'gæn	*'sʌspektɪd *sʌs'pektɪd *sʊs'pektɪd	*ə'veɪ *e'veɪ *e'weɪ	*e'gen *e'geɪn *bi'gæn	*'sʌspektɪd *sʌs'pektɪd *sʊs'pektɪd
p_i (in %)	66.23	64.47	50.44	65.35	68.86	48.68

The words *away, again,* and *suspected* were read twice in the wordlist.

5.3.7 Results and discussion

5.3.7.1 Overall results: difficulty indices of pronunciation features in the two reading aloud tasks

The 228 Czech students experienced numerous difficulties in the production of the selected pronunciation features. As shown in Table 5.8, the results in terms of the mean of the difficulty indices for the two reading aloud tasks, ranked in ascending order from the most to the least troublesome, are as follows: the schwa (p_i = 41.69), velar nasal (p_i = 44.47), front open ash (p_i = 49.49), voiced dental fricative (p_i = 49.91), word-final voiced consonants /d/ and /g/ (p_i = 58.14), bilabial approximant /w/ (p_i = 64.04), and voiceless dental fricative (p_i = 78.52).

Table 5.8

Difficulty indices in the two reading aloud tasks (n = 228)

Pronunciation feature	P_i wordlist (in %)	P_i text (in %)	Range between p_i wordlist and p_i text (in %)	Mean (wordlist, text) (in %)
Schwa (<u>a</u>way)	60.67	22.71	37.96	41.69
Velar nasal (lo<u>ng</u>)	38.60	50.33	-11.73	44.47
Ash (l<u>a</u>mp)	56.43	42.54	13.89	49.49
Voiced dental fricative (<u>th</u>at)	63.60	36.22	27.38	49.91
Word-final voiced consonant (ba<u>g</u>, ha<u>d</u>, waite<u>d</u>)	52.41	63.86	-11.45	58.14
Bilabial approximant (<u>w</u>aited)	73.68	54.39	19.29	64.04
Voiceless dental fricative (<u>th</u>ought)	80.59	76.45	4.14	78.52

On average, the vast majority of the students found the enunciation of the schwa most difficult.

We can see a dramatic drop in the difficulty index for reading the text (p_i = 22.71) in comparison with reading isolated words (p_i = 60.67). This seems to confirm the hypothesis that the difficulty indices for individual pronunciation features will be higher in the case of reading a list of words aloud than in the case of reading a text. This overall tendency is violated in two instances, since the students who were examined produced the velar nasal /ŋ/ (11.73%) and word-final consonants /g, d/ (11.45%) correctly more frequently when reading the text aloud. The range between the difficulty indices in reading the text and wordlist is as follows if ordered from the most to the least striking: /ə/ 37.96; /ð/ 27.38; /w/ 19.29; /æ/ 13.89; /θ/ 4.14.

We also wanted to find out how much the mean difficulty indices for seven pronunciation features in the wordlist and the text covary (Bachman , 2004, p. 85). The calculated Pearson correlation coefficient (r_p = 0.307563) is interpreted as weak correlation ($0.25 \leq r_p \leq 0.40$) in consensus with Volín (2007, p. 190). This means there is low probability that the higher difficulty index for the pronunciation feature in question in the wordlist directly correlates with the higher difficulty index for the same pronunciation feature in the text. The formula for the small-sample test criterion (t) was used to verify statistical significance of the calculated Pearson correlation coefficient. Because $t_{0.05}$ (5) = 0.722766 is lower than T=0.755, we have to admit that there is not statistically significant relationship between mean difficulty indices for seven pronunciation features in the wordlist and the text.

Further, the individual pronunciation features are debated in the order of their difficulty, with comments on their frequency and/or their distribution, erroneous substitutes provided by Czech learners, and discussion of the likely source of the pronunciation error.

5.3.7.2 Schwa /ə/

It is assumed that the students had enough time to concentrate on the pronunciation of /ə/ in front of the primary stress in isolated words (p_i = 60.67) when reading aloud; that is why its realisation came as the fourth most difficult (Table 5.8).

Table 5.9
Difficulty indices of the schwa in that, had, and content words in both formats (n = 228)

/ə/	P_i wordlist (%)	P_i text (%)	P_i mean (%) per word	P_i mean (%)
that	-	32.02	32.02	32.02
that	-	32.02		
had left	-	6.14		14.24
had seen	-	4.83	5.37	
had gone	-	5.26		
had planned	-	5.26		
again	64.47	40.79	58.04	
again	68.86	-		39.61
away	66.23	35.97	55.85	
away	65.35	-		
suspected	50.44	42.11	47.08	
suspected	48.68	-		

The difficulty indices for isolated words also provided a revealing insight into the varying levels of difficulty of the schwa in content words, e.g. *again*, *away*, and *suspected*, and function words, e.g. *had* and *that* in the text. In the first syllable of the two-syllable words *again* and *away* and the polysyllabic *suspected* the learners made relatively fewer pronunciation mistakes (p_i = 39.61 is related to both formats of reading aloud) than in the weak forms of the function words *had* and *that* (p_i = 14.25 is related only to reading the text aloud), as shown in Table 5.9.

The most frequent substitutes for the RP schwa are /e/ in *that*, *had*, *again*, and *away*, and /ʌ/ or /ʊ/ in *suspected*. It may be explained as the consequence of negative transfer, specifically the combination of phonemic and phonetic error in the -*a*- group, because the schwa is not a phoneme in Czech. Czech learners, however, can articulate it, but have difficulties to pronounce it in unstressed syllables. On one hand, as a result of the negative transfer from Czech sound-spelling correspondence and the placement of the primary stress on the first syllable in most Czech words, they tend to mispronounce most frequently the vowel in the first syllable of the content word *suspected* either as /ʌ/ or /ʊ/. It may be also explained as the intralingual overgeneralisation of the spoken realisation of the letter -*u*- in closed and stressed syllables as in the other English words, e.g. *bus*, *cup*. On the other hand, the pronunciation of the strong forms of the function words *that* and *had* instead of the weak ones may be expounded as the lack of the knowledge

of the phonological rule, that is the intralingual overgeneralisation of the use of the dictionary form of the two function words. When realised as /e/, it may be attributed to the negative transfer from Czech, that is the learners' inability to pronounce the front open /æ/, because the studied learners might use a compensation strategy in production falling back on the use of a mother tongue rule (Kraschen, 1983, p. 148, in Odlin, 1989, p. 27).

The more successful pronunciation of the schwa in the examined content words in both formats of reading aloud (39.61%) than in the tested function words occurring only in reading the text aloud (14.25%) may be defended on these grounds: (a) more students acquired their correct pronunciation in unstressed syllables in *again*, *away*, and *suspected* as it is dictionary pronunciation; (b) on top of that, *again* and *away* are very frequent lexical items (A1 level); (c) the realisation of the schwa in content words was not context-sensitive. In addition, there seems to be a slight difference in the success rate of the schwa pronunciation between the content words containing it on its own in the word-initial syllables, e.g. **again** (58.04%), **away** (55.85%), and the consonant-initial syllable, e.g. **suspected** (47.08%), which is also confirmed by the data stemming from the study by Gonet et al. (2010, p. 298) dealing with the schwa in different phonological contexts with 60 Polish university students. The phonetic realisation of the weak forms of the function words *had* and *that* is so challenging because it is context-sensitive (Wells, 1982) and it depends on their role in the sentences, e.g. *had* as the auxiliary, *that* as the relative conjunction (Roach, 2009).

This implies where remedial pronunciation teaching is needed, specifically in the weak forms of function words.

5.3.7.3 Velar nasal /ŋ/

The pronunciation of the velar nasal in the word-final position in words such as *long*, *locking*, and *everything* proved, on average, to be the second hardest nut to crack for the Czech students in both tasks (Table 5.8); however, it was the most troublesome in the list of words (p_i = 38.60), thus surpassing the schwa. Interestingly, the learners managed to say /ŋ/ in a proper way more often in the text (p_i = 50.33) than in isolated words (p_i = 38.60) (Table 5.8). Further careful examination of these three words in the text showed that: (a) /ŋ/ always occurred in front of a word beginning with a voiced consonant, e.g. *locki**ng** the*, *everythi**ng** was*, *everythi**ng** long*, *lo**ng** before*; (b) in the syllable after a short vowel, and most importantly, (c) in the word-final position represented in writing with the letters -*ng*, which is a regular representation of /ŋ/ (Wells, 2008a).

Table 5.10

Difficulty indices of the velar nasal /ŋ/ in the two reading aloud tasks (n = 228)

/ŋ/	P_i wordlist (in %)	P_i text (in %)	P_i mean (in %)	
long	31.58	63.16	47.37	
locking	32.98	26.32	29.65	
everything	46.05	75.44	60.75	50.44
everything	43.68	36.40	40.13	

As is evident from Table 5.10, in both reading aloud tasks, the phoneme in question was poorly pronounced in *locking* ($p_{i\,mean}$ = 29.65, $p_{i\,wordlist}$ = 32.98, $p_{i\,text}$ = 26.32), followed by *long* in the case of the wordlist ($p_{i\,mean}$ = 47.37, $p_{i\,wordlist}$ = 31.58), while in the word *everything* the phoneme was pronounced properly in every other case ($p_{i\,mean}$ = 50.44), probably because it has already been mastered correctly in *thing*. The students produced five different mispronunciations of the velar nasal: /ŋk, nᵏ, n, nᵍ, ŋg/ in the order from the most to the least frequent one.

To diagnose the incorrect pronunciation of the velar nasal /ŋ/ was the most difficult task for the assessor. There were numerous crystal clear cases of its mispronunciations as /ŋk/, /ŋg/, or /n/ at the end of *long*, *everything*, and *locking*, but in reading the text aloud its perception might have been affected by the speed of delivery of reading aloud, by the volume of the reader's voice, and sometimes by the student's avoidance strategy, that is, swallowing the ending of a word. As a result, this is the most dubious data obtained in this study.

Fortunately, the frequency of occurrence of the velar nasal is low in RP (1.15%) as it occupies 17th place among consonants (Fry, 1947, in Gimson, 1989). In spite of that, at B2 level it should be mastered, particularly in the very frequent suffix *-ing* and the most common words. Nevertheless, the high frequency of occurrence of the mispronunciation of -ng, which contributes to the higher extent of accentedness of Czech learners of English, has no impact on their intelligibility or comprehensibility.

5.3.7.4 Ash /æ/

The ash comes ninth among the vowels and its frequency of occurrence in RP is 1.45% (Fry, 1947, in Gimson, 1989). The realisation of the front open vowel, the so-called ash, represented in writing by the letter *a* in the four one-syllable words *lamp*, *bag*, *had*, and *that* ending in a consonant letter other than *–r*, required regular pronunciation /æ/. In the two-syllable word *planned*, its mispronunciation appears to be the third greatest problem on average for most of the Czech learners in both tests (p_i = 49.49) and separately as well. The Czech readers were less successful in its realisation in reading the text by about 14 per cent ($p_{i\,wordlist}$ = 56.43: $p_{i\,text}$ = 42.54) (Table 5.8).

The detailed analysis brought new information in relation to this pronunciation feature. The most problematic was its realisation in the word *bag* (p_i = 41.22) after the plosive /b/

and the least troublesome one in *lamp* (p_i = 64.48) after the lateral /l/, in both cases with nearly identical results in both formats (Table 5.11). As a result of the fact that the ash has no vowel counterpart in Czech, learners do not seem to be able to pronounce it, it is considered a phonetic error. Consequently, they come up with near-equivalents from their mother tongue: /e, ʌ, ɑː, ɒ, ə/; the first of these is typically the most frequent one, the last one exceptional.

Table 5.11
Difficulty indices of the ash /æ/ in the two reading aloud tasks (n = 228)

/æ/	P_i wordlist (in %)	P_i text (in %)	P_i mean (in %)
lamp	64.04	64.19	64.48
planned	67.11	21.92	44.52
bag	40.35	40.78	
bag	42.54	-	41.22
had	66.67	-	-
that	57.89	-	-

There was a striking difference by 45 per cent in the pronunciation of the ash in the word *planned* ($p_{i\,wordlist}$ = 67.11, $p_{i\,text}$ = 21.92), which might be attributed to time pressure when reading the text and to the high cognitive demands involved in pronouncing /æ/ in the context of the preceding weak form of the grammatical word *had* and the neighbouring suffix *-ed* , e.g. *as he had planned*, that is, the phonemes which do not exist in Czech, e.g. the schwa in *had*, and the voiced consonants in the word-final position, e.g. /z/ in *as* and /d/ in *had* and *planned*, which are part of the phonological rules which had to be recalled on the spur of the moment (Gimson, 1989; Wells, 1982). The word *planned* produced pronunciation realisations such as *planet, plant, plan*, or the non-existent /plenɪt/, /planet/, and /pleˌæntɪt/. This may also be due to the orthography of this word of foreign origin, which resembles the Czech word *planeta*. Then, apart from being classified as a phonetic error, it may also be explained as L1 transfer of reading strategy in its realisations as /*planet*/ or /plenet/.

Consequently, remedial teaching is needed in all regular contexts, particularly in one- and two-syllable words, and special attention should be paid to the differing grammatical functions of *that* and *had* which are also reflected in their weak or strong pronunciations (Wells, 1982).

5.3.7.5 Voiced dental fricative /ð/

The students had more problems with the pronunciation of the voiced dental fricative /ð/ than with the voiceless one /θ/. In the word-initial position in *that*, *they*, and *then*, the students showed better control over its enunciation in the list of isolated words (p_i = 63.60) than in the text (p_i = 36.22) (Table 5.7).

As displayed in Table 5.12, in all three words there is a critical decrease in the difficulty indices when they are read aloud in the context of the text: *they* ($p_{i\,\text{wordlist}}$ = 44.30, $p_{i\,\text{text}}$ = 15.97); *that* ($p_{i\,\text{wordlist}}$ = 79.40, $p_{i\,\text{text}}$ = 21.92/40.78); *then* ($p_{i\,\text{wordlist}}$ = 67.11, $p_{i\,\text{text}}$ = 27.63/35.53). The last two words, *that* and *then*, occurred twice in the text. At the beginning of a word, the digraph *th-* is read as /ð/ in grammatical words, which was the case of *they, e.g. they must*, and *that*, e.g. *it was to Paris that Basil had gone*, *he thought that he …* But for most of the Czech learners it was not the competition with the pronunciation of /θ/ but their inability to pronounce it properly as the dental fricative, not the alveolar plosive /d/, the most frequent one, or the other substitutes /d^h, d^z, z, t^h /, so we consider it a phonetic error.

Table 5.12

Difficulty indices of the voiced dental fricative /ð/ in the two reading aloud tasks (n = 228)

/ð/	P_i wordlist (in %)	P_i text (in %)	P_i mean (in %)
they	44.30	15.97	30.14
that	79.40	21.92	47.37
that	-	40.78	
then	67.11	27.63	43.42
then	-	35.53	

The acceptable pronunciation of the voiced dental fricative /ð/ is of fundamental importance for foreign learners because: (a) it comes sixth among the consonants from the point of view of its frequency of occurrence in RP, which is 3.56% (Fry, 1947, in Gimson, 1989); (b) it has no consonant counterpart in Czech; and (c) in word-initial position it occurs in grammatical words which are very frequent in RP.

Czech learners may be advised to touch their upper teeth with the tip of their tongue to achieve dental pronunciation when reading aloud, which might consequently be transferred into their speaking.

5.3.7.6 Word-final voiced consonants: velar and alveolar plosives /g, d/

Drawing on Gonet (in Waniek-Klimczak, 2010, pp. 365–374), it should be clarified what was considered appropriate pronunciation of word-final plosives /g, d/. We assigned one point for full or partial voicing of the word-final /g, d/. We also took on board the neighbouring phonetic context of the word being inspected, thus, we awarded full score for complete devoicing of *had* in *ha**d** seen/planned*, and for partial devoicing in front of a pause.

On average, the subjects experienced fewer pitfalls in reading the word-final voiced consonants in *bag*, *had*, *bed*, *suspected*, *waited*, and *planned* in reading isolated words aloud (p_i = 52.41) than in the text (p_i = 63.86) (Table 5.8). At first sight, it looks like good news. Nevertheless, it appears to be beneficial to inspect some subcategories, as suggested in Table 5.13.

Table 5.13

Subcategories containing the word-final voiced consonants /d/ and /g/

/d, g/	P_i wordlist (in %)	P_i text (in %)	P_i mean (in %)
All word-final /d/ and /g/	52.41	63.86	58.14
Grammatical suffix -ed	42.87	45.61	44.24
Word-final /d/ in had, bed	69.10	76.01	72.56
Word-final /g/ in bag	76.75	41.00	58.88

Because the pronunciation of the word final voiced consonants in different words show varying levels of difficulty, as shown in Table 5.13, we decided to differentiate: (a) the pronunciation of word final voiced consonants in *bag* with the lowest difficulty index in reading the text aloud (41%) although there is no phonetic justification for devoicing in "*saw the bag and coat*"; (b) their pronunciation as part of the grammatical suffix *-ed* in *planned, waited,* and *suspected*, which has the lowest mean difficulty index in both formats (44, 2%) in spite of the fact that its realisation is the focus of all textbooks of English, and that neither of the *-ed* suffixes is influenced by the phonetic context other than silence in reading the text aloud; (c) in the words *had* and *bed*. The word *bed* occurs sentence finally: "*were in bed. Paris!*", but we accepted at least partial voicing, not complete devoicing. The data revealed quite considerable flaws in the pronunciation of the grammatical suffix *-ed* in both reading aloud formats in *planned, waited,* and *suspected* ($p_{i\,mean}$ = 44.24). When the word *planned* was examined on its own, it became obvious that it caused enormous problems to the vast majority of the students who were tested. The pronunciation of the suffix *-ed* coming after the voiced alveolar nasal /n/ being preceded by the ash seemed to be extremely demanding cognitively and pronunciation-wise, and resulted in low difficulty indices ($p_{i\,mean}$ = 10.67, $p_{i\,wordlist}$ = 8.62, $p_{i\,text}$ = 12.72). On the other hand, *planned* is placed at the end of the sentence before a pause: "*as he had planned. It would be,*" which may be the reason for its devoicing as advocated by Gimson (2008) and Gonet (2010) as well as in the instance of *waited*: "*and waited. No, everything.*" We assigned one point for at least partial voicing, not complete devoicing in these cases. Unlike these two words, *suspected* occurs in the phonetic context requiring voicing: "*before anyone suspected anything.*"

Further, some of the Czech students faced the problem of not being able to pronounce the voiced consonants /d/ ($p_{i\,mean}$ = 72.56) and /g/ ($p_{i\,mean}$ = 58.88) in word-final positions as a result of negative transfer, since in Czech all the voiced final consonants are devoiced in *had*, *bed*, and *bag*. This error can be classified as distributional. On top of that, it is worth stating that in the text the word *had* appeared in two different phonetic contexts; followed by a voiced consonant, e.g. *had left* being the most difficult and causing more problems than *had gone*, and followed by an unvoiced consonant, e.g. *had seen* and *had planned*, where regressive assimilation of /d/ into /t/ takes place in English.

The pronunciation problems discussed above indicate that enough time should be devoted to voicing in word-final positions: (a) to combat negative transfer from Czech, where the neutralisation of voicing of the word final consonants takes place but respecting the phonetic context across word boundary; (b) to readily activate the phonological rule concerning regressive assimilation in RP; and (c) to attend to /d/ as the third most frequent consonant in conversational RP (5.14%), which often occurs in word final positions where it can be, however, partially or fully devoiced.

5.3.7.7 Bilabial approximant /w/

The relatively successful pronunciation of the bilabial approximant /w/ (p_i = 64.04) (Table 5.8) differed substantially with respect to its distribution in both reading aloud tasks in the initial position in *watch* (p_i = 76.98) and *waited* (p_i = 69.30), or non-initial position in *twenty* (p_i = 41.00), which led to unacceptable pronunciation of /w/ more often than in *away* (p_i = 67.33) (Table 5.14). In the case of *twenty* it seems to be caused by the preceding plosive alveolar /t/, which causes learners to replace it with the nearest similar phoneme, /v/, as it does not require lip rounding and putting both lips together.

Table 5.14
Difficulty indices of the bilabial approximant /w/ in the two reading aloud tasks (n = 228)

/w/	P_i wordlist (in %)	P_i text (in %)	P_i mean (in %)
waited	74.12	64.47	69.30
watch	82.46	71.49	76.98
away	76.75	57.90	67.33
twenty	58.33	23.68	41.00

It is a phonetic error as there is no /w/ phoneme in the Czech inventory of consonants. It is, however, worth practising since it is the tenth most frequent consonant in conversational RP (2.81%) and there are many MPs differing in /v/ and /w/, e.g. vine, wine, etc.

5.3.7.8 Voiceless dental fricative /θ/

The pronunciation of the voiceless dental fricative /θ/ is the least troublesome for the Czech learners in question in both reading aloud formats in *everything*, *threw*, and *thought* (p_i = 78.52), the range being 4.14 per cent (Table 5.8). In spite of this fact, the spelling of the words *threw* and *thought* produced the remarkable number of nine phonetic realisations: / f, t, th, t^{hs}, s, s^h, s$^\theta$, d, ð /. As shown in Table 5.15, the word-initial position in *thought* and *threw* faces Czech learners with more difficulties than the pronunciation of *everything*, in all probability because *thing* is a frequent word whose pronunciation has been mastered.

For example, the word thought was pronounced either like existing English words, with the correct pronunciation of /θ/ in thaw, threw, and throw, but incorrectly at the beginning of tore, tote, though, dough, true, two, tooth, tough, and Seuss, or like non-existent ones: /θɔːθ/,/θəʊt/, /thruːt/, and /tɔːθ/. Table 5.15

Table 5.15

Difficulty indices of the voiceless dental fricative /θ/ in the two reading aloud tasks (n = 228)

/θ/	P_i wordlist (in %)	P_i text (in %)	P_i mean (in %)
thought	56.90	57.90	57.40
threw	77.59	67.54	72.57
everything	92.24	90.35	91.30
everything	87.93	89.91	88.92

The voiceless dental fricative is also one of the least frequent phonemes (0.37%) in RP, according to Fry (1947, in Gimson, 1962).

5.3.7.9 Indicators of variability

To sum up, we can see quite a lot of variability in the pronunciation of the selected pronunciation features across the words that were inspected, as shown in Table 5.16. The indicators of central tendency, the mean and median, are close to each other in the instances of the velar nasal, word-final voiced consonants, and voiceless dental fricative.

Table 5.16

Descriptive statistics of selected pronunciation features in the words examined (p_i in percentage)

Pronunciation feature	Mean (wordlist, text)	Median	Min.	Max.	Standard deviation
Schwa (away)	41.69	26.925	14.24	39.61	12.685
Velar nasal (long)	44.47	43.75	29.65	60.75	11.313
Ash (lamp)	49.49	44.52	41.22	64.48	10.276
Voiced dental fricative (that)	49.91	35.53	30.14	40.78	7.370
Word-final voiced consonant (bag, had, waited)	58.14	58.51	44.22	72.56	10.016
Bilabial approximant (waited)	64.04	68.32	41.00	76.98	13.566
Voiceless dental fricative (thought)	78.52	80.75	54.70	91.30	13.685

5.3.7.10 Czech learners' substitutes for RP phonemes

As shown in Table 5.17, there is an overview of the substitutes for the seven pronunciation features that were examined. There are both envisaged substitutions, for example, ə→e in had; ə→ʌ, ʊ in *suspected*; ŋ→n, ŋk, ŋg in *long*; æ→e, ʌ, ɑː in *lamp*, *had*, and *bag*; ð→d, dᶻ in *then*, *that*, *they*, etc., and surprising substitutions: ə→e, uː in *suspected*; æ→ɒ, ə in

lamp and *bag*; ð→dʰ, tʰ in **then**, **th**at, and **th**ey; d→s, z, f in *had*; d→tə in *bed*; θ→th, tʰˢ, s, sʰ, sθ, d, ð in **th**rew and **th**ought. There are between one and three cases of substitutes, some of them might be explained as the impact of the written form on the spoken one: i.e. ə→uː in *suspected*; ð→tʰ in *then*; θ→th, tʰˢ in **th**rew and **th**ought, as well as the more predictable ŋ→ŋg in long.

Table 5.17
Czech learners' substitutes for RP phonemes in the words that were examined

Pronunciation feature	Error distribution	Substitutes	Words examined
Schwa /ə/	schwa in function words	ə → e	ha**d**, th**a**t
	schwa in content words	ə → e; ʌ, ʊ, uː	**a**way, **a**gain; s**u**spected
Velar nasal /ŋ/	velar nasal in -ng	n → n/nᵍ, nᵏ, ŋk, ŋg	lock**ing**, lo**ng**, everyth**ing**
Ash /æ/	open front vowel	æ → e, ʌ, ɒ, ɑː; ə	l**a**mp, b**a**g, pl**a**nned
	open front vowel	æ → e, ə	h**a**d, th**a**t
Voiced fricative /ð/	voiced dental fricative	ð → d, dʰ, dᶻ, z, tʰ	**th**en; **th**at, **th**ey
Word-final /t, d/	word-final /d/, /g/	d, g → t, s, z, f, tə; k	ha**d**, be**d**, planne**d**, suspecte**d**, waite**d**, ba**g**
	word-final /d/, /g/	g → k	ba**g**
	word-final /d/	d → t, s, z, f, tə	ha**d**, be**d**
	word-final /d/ in -ed	d → t	planne**d**, suspecte**d**, waite**d**
Bilabial approx. /w/	bilabial approximant	w → v	**w**atch, a**w**ay, t**w**enty
Voiceless fricative /θ/	voiceless dental fricative	t→f , t, th, tʰˢ, s, sʰ, sθ, d, ð	**th**rew, **th**ought, every**th**ing

Among the vowels, the schwa and ash are recurrently replaced, in four or five different ways by other RP phonemes or their nearest Czech equivalents, but there is a worrying trend of many different substitutions in unstressed syllables in content words. While the schwa is not difficult in terms of its articulation, the challenge lies in the linguistic context in which it occurs, so it is a distributional error. Unlike the schwa, the ash is a phonetic error; most Czech learners are incapable of articulating the RP phoneme, which is too challenging for them. We should be concerned with their numerous replacements as they belong among the most frequent vowels in RP English.

Inconsistent substitutes for the voiced dental fricative are annoying as they occur prevalently in the most frequent words in English (function words), and can be extrapolated as unsuccessful approximations based on learners' native inventory, e.g. d, dʰ, dᶻ, z, tʰ, and classified as phonetic errors. That is why they merit remedial teaching.

The greatest number of replacements (9: f, t, th, tʰˢ, s, sʰ, sθ, d, ð) was supplied for the voiceless dental fricative /θ/ and typically occurred word-initially in the past forms of irregular verbs. So their pronunciation should be practised in contrast with other words

of orthographically similar type with different word-initial pronunciations /θ, ð, d, t/: threw – throw/drew, thought – taught/though/through/thorough etc., particularly at B2 and higher proficiency levels, even if the voiceless dental fricative /θ/ is infrequent in conversational RP English.

Czech learners are likely to categorise the voiceless and voiced dental fricatives largely in terms of their native language phonemic inventory, although /s$^{\theta}$/ replacement might suggest intralingual interference too.

From the perspective of functional load, several comments must be added:

(a) the most frequent conflation by Czech learners, ð→d in *that* and *they*, may not lead to a loss of intelligibility as there are just a few minimal pairs in RP: *they – day*, *then – den*, and they do not belong to the same part of speech, so the sentence context might provide other cues to listeners (Brown, 1988, p. 600);

(b) the conflation ŋ→n violates the phonological rule of English syllable structure. Only regular /ŋ/ can be pronounced in a syllable containing a short vowel and in writing followed by the digraph -ng (Brown, 1988, p. 599);

(c) the conflation θ→f/s exists in other native accents, e.g. Northern Ireland. From the point of view of acoustic similarity, θ→f is a more acceptable conflation than θ→s.

Another explanation for the cause of the substitutes used by Czech learners may be the influence of the pronunciation of loanwords in Czech, which have an impact on the realization of English words. This plausible argument is based on the study carried by Gonet et al. (2010, in Waniek-Klimczak, 2010, pp. 216-219) dealing with the pronunciation of loanwords by 60 Polish university students. Thus the ash mispronunciation in planned as well as in lamp may be under the influence of the pronunciation of loanwords such as lampa and plán in Czech which are pronounced with /a/-like vowel. A parallel case might be the pronunciation of /w/ in twenty, which may be under the impact of the Czech pronunciation of the borrowing such as twitter from English, which is pronounced as /tv-/.

5.3.8 Conclusions

The literature review draws on a comparison between the standard Czech and British English phonological and orthographical systems. The selected pronunciation features are dealt with from the point of view of the differences between the standard Czech and British English phonemic inventories (Section 5.2.1.1), the distribution of the segmental and suprasegmental phenomena that were studied (Section 5.2.1.2), the frequency of English phonemes (Section 5.2.1.3), the pairs of English phonemes most frequently conflated by foreign learners and Czech ones in particular (Section 5.2.1.4), grapheme-phoneme correspondence (Section 5.2.1.5), different types of segmental errors (Section 5.2.1.6), the findings of research-based studies examining features of the pronunciation of Czech

university students of English (Section 5.2.1.7), and characteristic features of reading aloud tasks and reading aloud processes (Section 5.2.2).

These are the answers to specific questions:

(a) The difficulty indices elicited from the 228 Czech students by means of the two reading aloud tasks draw on the 16,416 occurrences of the selected pronunciation features (Table 5.5). The overall results of the pronunciation analysis showed the lowest difficulty indices in the wordlist and text respectively if we subdivide some pronunciation areas: the schwa (p_i = 60.67; p_i = 22.71) in *away*, *again*, and *suspected*, and in *had* and *that* in the text; the alveolar plosive in -ed (p_i = 42.87; p_i = 45. 61) if treated separately from the word-final /d/ in *bed* and *had*, the velar nasal (p_i = 38.60; p_i = 50.33) in word-final positions, e.g. *long* and *locking*; the front open vowel (p_i = 56.43; p_i = 42.54), e.g. *lamp*, *bag*, and *planned*, and the voiced dental fricative (p_i = 63.60; p_i = 36.22), e.g. in *they*, *then*, and *that*. Among the pronunciation features that were examined, the voiceless dental fricative (pi = 80.59; pi = 76.45) and bilabial approximant (p_i = 73.68; p_i = 54.39) were those mastered most successfully (Table 5.8).

From the point of view of Chráska's interpretation (2007) of the difficulty index (Section 5.3.6), the schwa realisation in the text (pi=22.71) faces the Czech learners with enormous difficulties, while the pronunciation of the voiceless dental fricative is found very easy by most of the students, in particular in reading isolated words aloud (pi=80.59). All the other difficulty indices ranging between 30 and 80 discriminate well between the better acquired pronunciation features and the less successfully acquired ones (see (d) below).

To a certain extent, the findings seem to correspond with the data of Nádraská (2013, p. 9), who, in her research, used nearly identical reading aloud tasks and arrived at similar results with respect to individual pronunciation features showing "the proportion of acceptable pronunciation of the items on the word list and in the text respectively": two different voiced consonants representing word-final voicing (/z/ 4.5%, 33.3%) and (/d/ 37.5%, 45.8%) and the voiced dental fricative (70.8%, 45.8%), ash (79.2%, 58.3%), velar nasal (66.7%, 66.7%), voiceless dental fricative (83.3%, 83.3%), bilabial approximant (100%, 79.2%), and schwa (100%, 100%). The most striking difference is the 100 per cent correct realisation of the schwa, which turned out to be the most troublesome phoneme among the 228 Czech students in the present study. Nádraská (2013, p. 9) employed a small sample of eight students who were volunteers and who might agree to take part in the recording sessions because their spoken English was of a very high standard, while the 228 Czech students in the present study were not volunteers but regular first-year university students (cf. Sections 1.1, 1.2.1.1).

(b) The variability in the difficulty indices for the selected pronunciation features in question with respect to varying linguistic contexts was identified in several cases.

The occurrence of a phoneme in different linguistic contexts, particularly phonetic, contexts may present special difficulties for foreign learners. We considered the phonotactic distribution of pronunciation features from either of these angles: (a) extending right across the word boundary, i.e. regressive assimilation; (b) existing in the permissible word initial, medial or final position in RP; (c) differing in the constraints on distribution.

As far as the pronunciation of the word final voiced consonants is concerned, their context-free pronunciations were poorer in the case of reading aloud individual words (52%) in comparison with their difficulty index (64%) for the text, but in both reading formats the difficulty indices were relatively low.

We had to take into account two influential factors that might have an impact on their pronunciations in the text. The /t/ pronunciation was appropriate in cases such as "… had seen …" and "… had planned …" as a result of regressive assimilation. Regressive assimilation affects mainly consonants across word boundaries in such a manner that the voiced consonant is enunciated as a voiceless one under the influence of a voiceless consonant at the beginning of the following word (Roach, 2009, pp. 110-111), which coincides with the Czech rule of devoicing of word final consonants. Consequently, these phonetic contexts increased positively the difficulty index of *had* and other words read aloud in the continuous text.

The overall trend in the case of the schwa led us to reinspect its pronunciation from the point of view of its distribution in the weak forms of function words and in the unstressed syllables of full-meaning words. It revealed the inability of Czech speakers to pronounce the schwa appropriately in the weak forms of the function words *had* and *that* ($p_i = 14.24$, 1368 occurrences), which became evident when we treated their pronunciations separately from those of full-meaning words ($p_i = 39.61$, 2052 occurrences) (cf. Table 5.9). In the word initial syllable of content words, in both formats students had more problems with the schwa preceded by a consonant, e.g. *suspected* ($p_i = 47.08$), than with the word initial schwa, e.g. *again* ($p_i = 58.04$) and *away* ($p_i = 55.85$).

In the pronunciation of the ash in the word *planned* there was a marked difference by 45 per cent ($p_{i\ wordlist} = 67.11$, $p_{i\ text} = 21.92$). The front open vowel was replaced by /e/ in most cases. We hold it is a phonetic error as in the Czech language there is no vowel counterpart of the ash. We can hypothesise that its faulty realization in *planned* may also be caused by the high cognitive demands involved in pronouncing /æ/ in the context of the preceding weak forms of the grammatical words *had* and *as*, that is, the phonemes which do not exist in Czech and the following suffix *-ed* which should not be devoiced, e.g. *as he had planned*. The correct pronunciations require the application of the phonological rules which had to be recalled on the spur of the moment (Gimson, 1989; Wells, 1982a).

(c) Czech learners use a number of substitutes instead of the RP phonemes. There is an overview of their substitutes for the pronunciation features that were examined; most of

them are predictable, but some are very divergent indeed (Table 5.17 in 5.3.7.10), e.g. the phonemes used as substitutes for /θ/, /æ/, and /ə/. The phonemes with a wide range of replacements (5–9) by other RP phonemes or their nearest Czech equivalents are: the schwa and ash among vowels; the word-final /d/, the velar nasal /ŋ/, and the voiced and voiceless dental fricatives among consonants. There was only one substitution identified in the case of /w/ →/v/ and the word-final /g/→/k/.

(d) The selected pronunciation features in relation to the two reading aloud tasks were inspected as well. Overall, it was confirmed that the difficulty indices for the individual pronunciation features are higher in the case of reading isolated words aloud than in the case of reading a text for all but two of the pronunciation features that were examined: in reading the text aloud, the students enunciated the velar nasal /ŋ/ correctly 11.73 per cent more frequently than in the wordlist and word-final consonants /g, d/ correctly 11.45 per cent more frequently (cf. Table 5.8). The findings suggest that more pronunciation features cause difficulties when presented in the continuous text, and thus merit further remedial teaching. Table 5.18 shows some tangible evidence if the difficulty indices are inspected within bands of 10 points. It reveals which pronunciation features require more remedial teaching in which context, in other words, prior attention should be paid to all pronunciation features with their difficulty index ranging between 20 and 70.

Table 5.18

Frequency distributions of the mean scores for the wordlist and the text concerning the pronunciation features

Score interval	Wordlist frequency		Text frequency		Total frequency
80 or more	80.59 /θ/		0		1
70-79.9	73.68 /w/		76.45 /θ/		2
60-69.9	60.67 /ə/	63.60 /ð/	63.86 /d, g/		3
50-59.9	52.41 /d, g/	56.43 /æ/	50.33 /ŋ/	54.39 /w/	4
40-49.9	42.87 (-ed)		42.54 /æ/	45.61 (-ed)	3
30-39.9	38.60 /ŋ/		36.22 /ð/		2
20-29.9	0		22.71 /ə/		1
20 or less	0		0		0

Let us discuss the likely causes of the Czech learners' difficulties in reading the continuous text aloud. Reading aloud is more cognitively demanding; they are not context-free, and the students had less time to concentrate on their pronunciation. This is also confirmed by other research studies with respect to Czech learners of English (Černá, Urbanová & Vít, 2011; Volín & Poesová, 2008). In this respect the overall results correspond to a large extent with the data stemming from Nádraská's pilot study (2013); her subjects achieved

either better or the same results in reading isolated words, the only exception being the word-final voiced consonants /d, z/.

Drawing on a rank ordering of RP phoneme pairs commonly conflated by Czech learners (Tables 5.3 & 5.4), the following pairs in the stressed syllables of words appear to be most relevant for them: /æ, e/, /æ, ʌ/; /t, d/, /k, g/; /w, v/; /ð, z/, /ð, d/, /n, ŋ /; /θ, t /; /θ, f /. In the unstressed syllables of words, the schwa realisation is of fundamental importance. On contrary, in word final, prevailingly unstressed syllables of words containing the suffix *-ing*, the substitutes of the velar nasal /ŋk, ŋk/ do not distinguish the meaning of two words in English, so they do not matter so much.

Overall, this study has its advantages and disadvantages. It revealed that there are many pronunciation areas worth investigating, as numerous pronunciation features become fossilised even at B2 level, but some are developmental ones. The quantitative analysis in terms of the difficulty indices had to be accompanied with further discussion taking into account qualitative arguments based on the studied phenomena in English in comparison with Czech. The number of subjects studied is unique (n = 228), as is the number of occurrences of examined pronunciation features (16,416) in reading aloud. In future, the collected recordings of the target population in CCSSE can be studied from different pronunciation perspectives (Section 7.7).

5.3.9 Study limitations, suggestions for future research, practical implications

Currently, we are aware of a number of limitations of this mixed-methods study. Primarily, it is the number of assessors, which limits the possibility of generalising the results for all first-year university students in teacher training programmes in the Czech Republic. Even if the intra-rater reliability of the assessor was relatively high (in the 2013 sample, n = 112: intra-rater reliability α = 0.79; in the 2014 sample, n = 116: intra-rater reliability α = 0.85) (Bachman, 2004, p. 170), it is more suitable to have at least two assessors (Bachman, 2004; Luoma, 2004), ideally one of them an NS. Nevertheless, the rater tried to meet the following requirements: (a) her proficiency level of English (C2.1, or 8.5 according to IELTS) is at least one level higher than that of the readers who were studied (Bachman, 2010, p. 418); (b) she has expertise in using IPA symbols in recording learners' data; (c) she has studied phonetics and phonology for 25 years, including her MA studies in Reading, UK, completed in 1999; (d) she has used the LPD reference corpora (Wells, 2008a) and model recording regularly; (e) she was a standardised assessor for the spoken component of the Cambridge English PET, FCE, and CAE examinations until 2012.

It is sometimes very difficult to persuade a native speaker of English or non-native speaker of Czech to devote 4–5 hours daily over about six months to listening to and recording their findings in IPA symbols which are alien to them.

The number of assessors also limited the amount of work which might have been carried out in terms of the variability of conflated phonemes per student, across students, and in the two reading aloud formats.

As far as the elicitation instruments are concerned, the greatest disadvantage of the wordlist is that it is context-free and requires the reading aloud of words such as *had* and *that* in their strong forms and, consequently, excludes the testing of weak forms of function words. In spite of the fact that reading a text aloud is not communicative by nature, it permits multiple comparisons of context-bound pronunciation features and proves less time-demanding in the process of collecting data. However, in the text the words such as *had* and *that* had to be read in their weak forms, but could not be compared with their strong form realizations in the wordlist. Consequently, the list of words does not seem to be a suitable instrument for eliciting word form which are context sensitive.

On top of that, we are faced with the question of how far a pronunciation feature that is being inspected can be perceived as a standard one and thus appropriate in the pronunciation of a non-native reader of a text. Second, the results are also influenced by the fact that the pronunciation focus in the text was limited to the words contained in the wordlist, which, on the other hand, made comparison feasible. Third, it might make a difference if the pronunciations of voiced consonants such as /v/ and /z/ at the end of all the words were studied, compared with the pronunciations of /d/ and /g/ in the same positions in the continuous text. Fourth, although the overall results dealing with the pronunciation of the selected pronunciation features help us diagnose the pronunciation features in need of remedial teaching as tendencies to follow in teaching English, they do not shed light on the variations within an individual learner's production. Fifth, the rather broad categories of the pronunciation features that were selected for analysis, e.g. final voiced consonants and the schwa, have to be revisited in order to attend to the frequency and distribution of the pronunciation features that are troublesome for Czech university learners who would like to become teachers of English. The pronunciation features discussed above merit precious class time and effort with respect to improving the pronunciation of would-be teachers of English.

The data indicates that pronunciation errors are not only due to the differences between the phonemic inventories of Czech and English (the schwa; the front open vowel ash (e.g. *lamp*); the voiced dental fricative (e.g. *the*) in any word position), but also stem from differences in their realisations in various linguistic, in particular, phonetic distributions, which might be intralingual or interlingual. Thus the plosive /d/ tends to be enunciated as /t/ at the end of words as a result of the loss of voicing in Czech, but at the same time the partial or complete loss of voicing may be ascribed to the regressive assimilation of voiced consonants in English. On the other hand, the explanation for inappropriate devoicing of RP word-final plosives (across word boundary in front of a voiced phoneme, e.g. *good*

girl) may be explained as a combination of causes: negative transfer and intralingual distributional interference. The velar nasal in *-ing* is not pronounced sufficiently well at word-final positions even if Czech learners pronounce it without any difficulty in the Czech *Hanka* in the middle of a word. Finally, the unvoiced dental fricative does not occur as frequently as its voiced counterpart. Consequently its mispronunciation is not so daunting.

Pronunciation problems can be attributed to spelling-sound correspondence, which is more regular and rule-governed in Czech than in English. In English there are many rules and there are always a lot of exceptions to the rules, especially pronunciation ones. For the purposes of training reading aloud, in many instances orthography is "a faithful reflection of word structure" (Dickerson, 1987, in Brown, 1991, p. 162), which can provide information about the sound system. For example, students need not memorise the consonant sound /ð/ of each grammatical word as "spelling gives them direct access to an important generalization that should become part of their phonology" and might become "a competence rule accessible through spelling," that is, each digraph *th* in grammatical words should be read as /ð/ and is always followed by a pronounced vowel (Dickerson, 1987, in Brown, 1991, p. 162).

Chapter 6

At an intersection of research findings

This chapter attempts to bring together the outcomes of several analyses. More specifically, it interrelates the learning experience of the students with their achievement in the selected categories of communicative language competences in spoken English. Built on the methodology of a multiple case study, this chapter represents a comparative summary of data elicited by means of a variety of instruments: the questionnaire, interview, and diagnostic speaking test (Section 1.2.1.1). The data elicited by this last instrument examines the performance of the twenty chosen students from several perspectives. The process of selecting the twenty students was discussed in detail in Sections 1.2.3.3 and 3.2.1.

6.1 Methodology

The researchers found the multiple case study to be the most relevant methodology. The focus of this type of a study is not "on one particular case, but a number of cases are studied jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon or general condition" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 152). In our case it means bringing together the data which provide the holistic description of the students' learning experience up to the beginning of their university studies, and the data of a qualitative and quantitative nature describing particular aspects of their current performance in spoken English.

Dörnyei (2007) expresses some reservations concerning the generalisability of results, specifically when dealing with individuals rather than social groups: "How can knowledge coming from one inevitably idiosyncratic source be of wider relevance?" (p. 153). We tried to overcome this issue by attending both to specific data on individuals, which was very insightful and enlightening, and to emerging commonalities and tendencies within and across the group of twenty students.

In spite of the fact that case studies typically give rise to qualitative data (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 152), the multiple case study discussed here also takes account of quantitative data. The individual researchers conducted their respective analyses using a variety of methods, which are described below. The results stemming from the assessment of the selected

aspects of three competences are related to individual learning histories, with an attempt being made to identify the shared characteristics. So the research aims to recognise the likely tendencies of the influences of various learning contexts on the achievement attained in the selected aspects of linguistic and pragmatic competences as manifested in spoken English. Before that, however, we have to ask three specific research questions concerning aspects of the competences under study:

(a) What is the inter-learner variability in terms of the selected aspects of linguistic (phonological, grammatical, and lexical) and pragmatic competences?

(b) What is the intra-learner variability in terms of the selected aspects of linguistic (phonological, grammatical, and lexical) and pragmatic competences?

(c) Do any of the twenty learners fall into noticeable groups with respect to the holistic and analytic assessment of their pragmatic and linguistic competences?

6.1.1 Individual learning histories

The questionnaire provided primary data regarding the individual learning histories (Chapter 2), on the basis of which the twenty students were selected for the interviews. The qualitative analysis of the biographies (Chapter 3) validated the findings and provided specific information to provide detailed portraits.

The students' overall involvement in informal learning is reported with reference to the indices of use of English outside school, i.e. I^{BS} for the period of basic school and I^{SS} for secondary school (Chapter 2), in the following way: very low (0–0.19), low (0.20–0.39), average (0.40–0.59), high (0.60–0.79), and very high (0.8–1.0).

6.1.2 Assessment of linguistic and pragmatic competences

This section endeavours to describe and evaluate the performances of the chosen twenty students from the perspective of selected components of the communicative language competences defined by the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), namely linguistic and pragmatic competences (p. 108).

In all areas we apply the combination of analytic and holistic assessment concerning the competences mentioned above, which are provided by three researchers who are experts in their fields. Together with Weir (2005), we believe in scoring validity, that means that "our overall understanding of how every aspect of the process of turning a test performance into a score or grade is important to the overall validity of inferences drawn from that score or grade" (p. 19). Detailed descriptions of the individual features assessed in the students' performances, including the evaluation criteria and methods used for quantification, can be found in Sections 6.1.2.1–6.1.2.3.

The scores stem from the analysis of the diagnostic speaking test (Section 1.2.1.1) of the twenty learners intentionally chosen for narrative interviews (Chapter 3).

6.1.2.1 Selected aspects of phonological competence

In order to specify the students' performances from the point of view of pronunciation, two approaches have been adopted to achieve "criterion-referenced interpretation" – "counting and judging" (Bachman, 2004, p. 299). Counting aims at finding out how much of a specific linguistic domain a student has mastered (Bachman, 2004). The specific pronunciation domains are represented by the control of individual English phonemes, intonation, and rhythm, which were predetermined by the research findings obtained by Ivanová (2011) and by the findings of this research project (Section 5.2.1.6). Rhythm is perceived as an umbrella term for the pronunciation of stressed and unstressed syllables in both content and function words, the placement of word stress, and linking words within the rhythmical foot. The concept of intonation entails all four functions of intonation – grammatical, attitudinal, discoursal, and accentual – which help the speaker to convey their intended meaning. In each domain the student's performance is evaluated on a scale from 1 point to 3 points (1 = minimum, 3 = maximum, allowing for .5 of a mark in between), which represents subjective judgement of the quality of the student's phonological control awarded by one assessor. As shown in Table A1 in Appendix 8, the data in the fifth column of the table refers to the total score (the sum of columns 2–4), while the mean score for the analytic assessment is presented in the sixth column; a holistic assessment is given in the last column.

At the top of Table A1 (Appendix 8), there are eight students who achieved two or more points for each chosen pronunciation aspect, that is, the high achievers, while at the bottom, there are three students who scored only 1 or 1.5 points for each chosen pronunciation aspect. The points were awarded by drawing on the analytic scale of criteria for individual phonemes, intonation, and rhythm at the B2 level (Appendix 9). The band descriptors provide the assessor with a series of prepared descriptions which are modelled on the pronunciation bands of the analytic scale of the FCE Speaking Test (Cambridge English Language Assessment, 2015), and at the same time, they are informed by the CEFR descriptors of B2 phonological control (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 117).

Judging, on the other hand, is driven by grouping specific pronunciation domains together at each of three levels along a continuum (Bachman, 2004), and each level of phonological control is defined by a set of band descriptors that indicate what individuals are able to do at levels 1–3 (Appendix 10).

In order to provide more comprehensive and illustrative data, the subjective analytic and holistic assessments that were obtained (Table A1, Appendix 8) are accompanied by a follow-up written report (Bachman, 2004) that is a holistic assessment, usually worded as "can do" statements (Council of Europe, 2001). The written reports were provided by the

same assessor and were targeted at specific aspects of phonological control, i.e. L1 accent, intelligibility and/or comprehensibility, mastery of individual phonemes and function words, word and sentence stress, rhythm and intonation, strain on the listener, and spelling pronunciation/sound-spelling correspondence. The format of the written reports concerning phonological control (e.g. Frances in Section 6.2.1), is inspired by the analysis of the Cambridge English: First (FCE) Assessment Commentary and Marks (UCLES, 2015).

The specification of the content of the holistic assessment, the adoption of standard procedures in the assessment, and the provision of judgements drawing on specific defined criteria were believed to reduce the subjectivity of the assessment and lead to an increase in the validity and reliability of the assessment (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 188–189).

6.1.2.2 Selected aspects of grammatical and lexical competences

The research is aimed at a few structural and partly lexical features of the students' spoken discourse, as well as at selected means of discourse management. Major attention within grammatical and lexical competences (Council of Europe, 2001) is paid to the assessment of the students' ability to use certain lexical and grammatical elements (i.e. to prove their lexical competence) and the assessment of their ability to organise grammatical categories (i.e. to prove their grammatical competence) (pp. 110–113). Within this area we focused on the structure of the verb phrase in its finite and non-finite varieties in the sentences of the corpus that was analysed. Non-finite verb phrases are also assessed according to their syntactic positions within clauses and partly as modifying elements within the structure of noun phrases. The level of grammatical organisation is also taken into consideration and evaluated globally.

With reference to Chapter 4, where similar features of the students' performance were analysed, we decided to pattern this analysis on the positive and negative outcomes of the analysis of the spoken language of all the students (n = 228) participating in the monologues and dialogues of the CCSSE. The second criterion for the evaluation of certain grammatical and lexical competences of the students was the frequency of the selected phenomena in the LGSWE (Biber et al., 1999).

Table B1 in Appendix 11 presents a numerical assessment of the grammatical categories of the group of twenty students in terms of the individual language features of their performances, which were evaluated on a scale from 0 points to 3 points (3 = maximum). The analytic criteria are stated for each category separately. The number of occurrences for which the points are given is thus different for each column, because we do not evaluate the students' grammatical (or lexical) errors, but their achievement in the given register. However, correctness of grammar and lexis is reflected in the holistic assessment since it inevitably influences the assessor's perception of a student's performance. The examples of individual language features were counted in the recorded texts of the twenty students

and points were assigned according to their occurrences. Thus, the fact that there might be a zero score for one category but high points in others does not necessarily interfere with a very good or the best holistic evaluation of individual students (Shepard, 2000).

In the verbal holistic assessment the lowest mark, 1 up to 1.5, is given to the students who are able to provide the required information, but whose vocabulary is not rich and whose sentence structures are rather simple and produce a number of either morphological and/or structural errors. Marks from 1.5 to 2.5 are assigned if there is evidence of good communicative language competences and a few mistakes. The vocabulary of such speakers is more varied and in their speech they can include complex sentences and noun phrases. An evaluation ranging between 2.5 and 3 indicates that the students are eloquent speakers with diverse and (mostly) correct grammatical structures and an extensive vocabulary, or they prove their ability to self-correct themselves efficiently. All the categories described below were selected on the basis of the findings presented in Section 4.4.

The figures in the first two columns of Table B2 in Appendix 11 appraise the students' usage of verb forms expressing the progressive (pr) and perfect (per) aspects. The outcomes of the analysis of the CCSSE revealed surprisingly low levels of occurrence of both aspect verb phrases, which is the reason for checking it with these twenty students, because aspect verb phrases are quite common in conversation (Biber et al., 1999, p. 461).

The third column focuses on the students' usage of non-finite clauses (verb forms) in their nominal syntactic positions – the subject (S), object (O), and complement (C) – which proved to occur quite frequently in the CCSSE, and is not infrequent in conversation in general (Biber et al., 1999, p. 698).

The fourth column evaluates the students' ability to construct noun and adjective phrases with pre- and post-modification expressed by non-finite verb forms (and other sentence elements). Very long and complicated noun phrases are not typical of conversation (Biber et al., 1999, pp. 574–621); however, the topics of the CCSSE require their usage and the analysis of the whole corpus revealed an extensive use of gerundial pre-modification and not infrequent use of post-modification.

In the fifth column the students' control of condensed relative and adverbial clauses is assessed. This analysis reveals the occurrence of a great number of full relative clauses in the corpus, which is not so common in conversation (Biber et al., 1999, p. 610). The infrequent usage of condensed relative and adverbial clauses may suggest that the students are not yet fully aware of the differences between English and Czech in these structures. The analysis of the distribution of condensed relative clauses is closely connected with the results in column 5 (noun post-modification).

The sixth column presents information about the usage of the verb *have* functioning as a semi-modal in comparison with the modal verb *must.* The preference for the verb

have is evaluated positively in accordance with the results of the LSWE corpus analysis (Biber et al., 1999, pp. 486–488).

The frequency of the structure (*I, you*) *would like* in the next column provides information about the students' polite way of demanding information or expressing their future plans. The usage of the phrase is compared with the frequency of *want* in the given corpus and a detailed assessment of the results is mentioned in the individual holistic evaluation of each student.

The next column gives information about the occurrence of existential sentences in the individual students' performance. One reason for checking the usage of such sentences was their surprisingly high frequency in the analysis of the whole corpus (see Section 4.4). Biber et al. (1999) distinguish between existential and locative *there* and the frequency of both types in conversation is not insignificant: "existential *there* is used to present or introduce new elements into the discourse" (pp. 948–951), which is certainly important in the dialogues where the students inform each other about various facilities or opportunities located in the university and the town. That is the second reason for our interest in their frequency.

The occurrence of the verb *think* in the next column attests to the students' way of presenting information and assumptions and also to the structure of object clauses and their connection to the main clause. In Section 4.4.2 the results of the analysis reveal a relatively high frequency of *think*, probably because of the students' tendency to use it to replace other verbs expressing opinion or comment.

The last two columns present the overall evaluation of individual students: the last but one is counted as a mean of the previous nine categories, and the last expresses holistic assessment (Shuy, 1981).

6.1.2.3 Selected aspects of pragmatic competences

The component of pragmatic competences which is of major interest to us is discourse competence (Council of Europe, 2001), aimed at the assessment of students' ability to perform their communication in accordance with the principle of interaction, coherence, cohesion, and cooperation (p. 123). The selected categories reflect the requirements stated in Grice's cooperation principle (Grice, 1975) and also the requirements to produce organised structures and arranged messages, using appropriate interaction strategies. Thus for quantitative analysis the following four aspects of the spoken discourse are assessed: quantity of language, complexity of utterances, interactivity in dialogues, and activity of a participant in dialogues. In the qualitative analysis it is mainly the students' turn-taking strategies and use of various means of discourse management that are evaluated.

We decided to select certain discourse management categories to partially describe individual students' performances from the viewpoint of the level of their pragmatic

competences, from which the discourse competence is particularly in focus here. In order to obtain as objective a classification as possible, we opted for a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis. It means that in the analytic assessment each student got separate scores for every part of their spoken production (i.e. monologue, information transfer task – asking, information transfer task – answering, and discussion of a topic) in four categories (i.e. quantity, complexity, interactivity, and activity). Here too we decided on a scale from 1 point to 3 points with 1 = minimum, 3 = maximum.

For awarding points for students' performances, the following measure of dispersion, suggested by Carr (2011), was employed because it seemed to be the most balanced. Specifically, the dispersion of the marks is according to quartiles (the first quartile is up to the 25th percentile, the second quartile from the 25th percentile to the 75th percentile and the third quartile from the 75th percentile to the 100th percentile) (Carr, 2011, p. 230). We have to admit that in certain cases the evaluation had to be adjusted after considering the particular space between neighbouring results and also considering the standard deviation. As correction was necessary in 17 cases out of 280 (i.e. only 6%), we believe that the application of the chosen dispersion was appropriate. After judging the level of closeness of the results on the borders of the quartiles, the following corrections were made: in six cases the mark was moved from the first quartile to the second quartile, in one case from the second quartile to the first quartile, in two cases from the second quartile to the third quartile, and in eight cases from the third quartile to the second quartile. All of the figures are presented in tables in Appendices 12–15, where the students are ordered from the highest to the lowest scores, and the adjusted figures on the borders of the quartiles are highlighted.

The first category assessed analytically is the quantity of language, which is simply counted as the total number of words in the four individual parts of a performance (i.e. every student acquires four different scores on a scale from 1 to 3); thus the minimum in the total is 4, the maximum 12, and the average 8. The exact figures are presented in Appendix 12, where the students are ordered according to their results for each part separately.

The next category represents the complexity of a performance, where the figures in Appendix 13 represent the number of words per sentence in the individual parts. It should be noted that at this point complexity in terms of sentence structure is not taken into consideration; however, it is part of the individual profiles in the holistic evaluation of linguistic competences. Similarly to the previous category, students can get 12 points as a maximum, 4 as a minimum, 8 as an average.

As proposed by Goutéraux (2013), one of the aspects to be assessed in students' oral performance is interactional complexity, measured in terms of the number and length of turns (p. 203). Since the complexity is already described above, here the interactivity is defined as the number of turns per 100 words. Even though we are aware that this feature is

influenced by the other interlocutor too, we believe that it should be included here to give the overall picture of students' discourse competence. It should also be noted that a high score in this category does not always have to be positive. There can be dialogues where interlocutors use very short and simple structures (in extreme cases just one or two words), which results in high figures of frequency of turn taking; however, their performance is perceived as inadequate and poor. Needless to say, the category of interactivity can be evaluated only in dialogic speech, not in a monologue, which means that the figures in Appendix 14 present an evaluation of three parts of the students' performances (discussion once and information transfer conversations twice) and thus the minimum in the total is 3, the maximum 9, and the average 6.

The last aspect we included in the evaluation is the activity of a speaker. It is measured as the number of words in his/her turns versus the number of words in the whole dialogue. In tables in Appendix 15 it is converted to a percentage, while the minimum, maximum, and average which can be acquired by students are the same as in the previous category.

For qualitative evaluation a holistic approach was preferred, where the impression was primarily based on the perception of the discourse as natural, interactive, cooperative, and efficient, which are the criteria stated in the CEFR for the description of pragmatic competences (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 123). It is supplemented by considering the frequency of occurrence of common means of discourse management and their range (including discourse markers, stance and linking adverbials, natural repeats, and repairs). Besides individual students being awarded points for their performance, the impressions are also briefly described in order to give a more comprehensive picture.

6.2 Students' portraits

In this section the portraits of the twenty students are presented. The organising principle is the gathering of the twenty selected respondents (Sections 1.2.3.3 and 3.2.1), first, with respect to their individual learning histories, into four groups (6.2.1–6.2.4), and second, in relation to data stemming from Table 6.2 and concerning the scores obtained for linguistic and pragmatic competences, into five groups (6.3.4); these groups are discussed in the light of critical events observed among the students in their individual learning histories.

Each portrait contains the following parts:

(a) individual learning history – a profile based on both the quantitative and qualitative analysis;

(b) aspects of phonological competence – holistic assessment in the form of a pronunciation commentary (i.e. a qualitative component) accompanied by an analytic and holistic assessment (i.e. quantitative components);

(c) aspects of grammatical and lexical competences – the table includes two scores: the overall score, representing the mean of the nine categories described in Section 6.1.2.2 and summarised in Table B2 in Appendix 11, and the holistic judgement of a student's performance from the point of view of grammatical and lexical competences. The quantitative appraisal is accompanied by a short description of the students' most salient strengths and weaknesses in this area;

(d) aspects of pragmatic competences – the quantitative evaluation includes: quantity of language, complexity of utterances, interactivity in dialogues, and activity of a participant in dialogues (in the tables in Appendices 12–15 the abbreviations used in the columns are: Qua, Com, Int, Act) (see Section 6.1.2.3), and a quantified holistic evaluation is also added. Similarly to other areas, the analytic assessment is supplemented by a description of an overall impression gained from the students' performances that is focused on their ability to maintain efficient communication, chiefly the application of strategies of interaction and cooperation.

Although the assessment of linguistic competences offers just overall grades, in the area of pragmatic competences the scores for the individual parts of the performances are added since they may be interesting and bring a new perspective.

6.2.1 Group 1

Characteristics

The members of this group, i.e. Frances, Rose, Alice, Irene, Lara, and Paul, have a unique characteristic: their learning of English was predominantly bound to the formal educational context and the use of English beyond English classes did not play a significant role in their lives. It was only towards the end of secondary school that some of them, for example Alice, Irene, and Lara, started to use English in their out-of-school lives. While Frances and Rose have always been positive about English and learning English at school, the others have undergone a change for the better in their attitudes. The change was initiated by impulses originating in the formal educational context. It should be mentioned that Paul is not a typical representative of the group; he attended a pre-school course in English and at secondary school he experienced an NS teacher and a short stay in an ESC. This type of experience would have qualified him to be included in Group 3, which comprises those who learnt English in a variety of contexts, if he had used English outside school more extensively. Therefore, it is more appropriate to have him involved in Group 1, since formal education in English was essential in his life. His contacts with NSs were linked to the school environment; similarly, the trip to England was organised by the school.

Frances

She started to learn English in grade 1 of basic school. Her attitudes to English and learning English were positive throughout her formal education, though in the last two years of secondary school she was critical of her teachers and their ways of teaching – she perceived a very low level of challenge. Frances compensated for the lack of challenge by studying English on her own. Though she experienced quite a high number of English teachers at school, only one of them was an NS. She did not have any direct experience of the culture of ESCs. The only contact was mediated through listening to music, which was the only activity oriented towards fluent comprehension or production she was involved in. Otherwise, she was focused on translating lyrics and self-study. This is reflected in her overall involvement in informal learning, which was very low while at basic school and low at secondary school. Having decided to apply for the English language teacher education study programme, she attended a course to prepare for the entrance exams.

Frances passed her school-leaving exam, the one organised by the school, with grade 1. She self-assessed her level of English as B2.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences			
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences	
Individual phonemes	1.5		
Intonation	1.0		
Rhythm	1.0		
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.17	Analytic assessment (mean)	1.33
Holistic assessment	1.5	Holistic assessment	1.8

Frances produces individual sounds and prosodic features well enough to be understood, however, L1 accent and spelling pronunciations, e.g. /g/ *registration*, /c/ *centre*, /io/ *opinion*, /ag/ *agencies*, may cause occasional difficulty and strain on the listener. As far as her consonants are concerned, the digraph *th* is consistently mispronounced in *the*, *there*, *that*, but properly enunciated in *think*, *thank*; /w/ is sometimes pronounced properly; the velar nasal mostly sounds /nk/ instead of /ŋk/. She also incorrectly uses unvoiced consonants in word-final positions: /s/ in *crowns*, *copies*; /t/ in *hundred*, *thousand*, *and*; /f/ in *of*. With respect to vowels, she has problems with the schwa in unstressed syllables of full-meaning words, e.g. *common*, *reference*, *professional*, or in weak forms, e.g. *of*, *that*, *and*, *for*, *at*; she substitutes the ash with /e/ in *family*, *that's all*. Most grammatical words are incorrectly realized in their strong forms. Her rhythm is syllable-timed and at places disconnected. Apart from some occasional good intonation patterns in part one, she sounds monotonous throughout the rest of the interview.

Frances is not a very eloquent speaker. Both her questions and the answers she provides are rather short. Her way of speaking is polite, with numerous examples of *would like* and *I think* phrases, which are mostly followed by non-finite object clauses. Otherwise, the usage of non-finite verb phrases (NF VPs) is infrequent. Her sentences are short and only exceptionally complex. On the whole, it is difficult to evaluate her grammatical competences in such a minimal amount of language.

She does not encourage her partner in dialogues to go on asking questions, finishing the talk by *That's all* or *Thank you*. There are not many morphological or structural mistakes in her sentences.

Selected aspects of pragmatic competences				
	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	2	2		
Discussion	1	2	2	2
Task – answering	1	2	2	2
Task – asking	1	1	3	2
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.83			
Holistic assessment	1.0			

In fact, she did not produce much language so she could not demonstrate a higher level of pragmatic competences. Even though she occasionally uses structures which are identified in just a few performances (stance adverbials: *really*, *kind of*, pseudo-cleft sentences, *I think* functioning as a comment clause), the overall impression of her performance is substandard. Especially in the part of the information transfer task when she is supposed to ask, her utterances are limited to *yeah/no/OK*, sometimes followed by a very short and simple reply.

Rose

Rose's attitudes toward English and learning English were positive from the very beginning of her formal education in English in grade 4 to the beginning of her university education. She did not encounter an NS teacher and did not have a chance to visit ESCs. Nevertheless, she appreciated her ability to communicate in English during her stays in some other countries. Rose did not enrol in any free-time courses and did not use English much – towards the end of secondary school she listened to music and browsed the internet daily. Nevertheless, her overall involvement in informal learning remained very low.

Rose passed the B1 common maturita exam in English in 2014 with grade 2, the same year that she entered university. She self-assessed her level of English as B1. She marked reading and listening as her strengths and she indicated grammar and speaking as her weaknesses.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences			
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences	
Individual phonemes	1.5		
Intonation	2.0		
Rhythm	1.5		
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.66	Analytic assessment (mean)	0.56
Holistic assessment	2.0	Holistic assessment	1.0

Rose produces individual sounds and prosodic features well enough to be understood. Her L1 accent may cause occasional difficulty. Her speech is comprehensible, though. In the first part, the context helps the listener to understand that *she plays the flute*, not *the food* /fuːt/. She makes a number of mistakes in individual sounds. Among vowels, she finds the ash particularly difficult, e.g. *Italy* /ʌ/, *family* /e/; and also the pronunciation of the schwa in unstressed syllables of content words, as Rose is often misled by the orthography of the word, e.g. *reference, Wednesday, interested* /e/; *thousand* /ʌ/. As far as consonants are concerned, the digraph *th* is realised as /d/ in **th**ere, **th**e, or /tʰ/ in **th**anks, **th**ousands, but sometimes correctly in to**geth**er; in kinder**g**ar**t**en /d/ is pronounced instead of /t/. Most final voiced consonants are inappropriately devoiced, e.g. /t/ thousan**d**, foo**d**; /s/ year**s**, love**s**; /f/ o**f**, fi**ve**. All weak forms of grammatical words are systematically pronounced incorrectly with full vowel quality, e.g. *from, for, but, and, some, can*. She mostly produces very short utterances with syllable-timed rhythm and monotonous intonation.

Rose's performance is not very good. Her sentences are short and include numerous morphological and structural mistakes. The frequent usage of existential sentences in the speech of a majority of the 228 students participating in the corpus is just occasional here, even if it is often useful to locate the discussed courses or sports and cultural events in the town. Her exclusive use of *must*, which is a direct translation from Czech, confirms our supposition that the prevailing usage of *have* as a modal verb indicates a higher level of the students' English. She does not use any aspect verb phrases and there are hardly any NF VPs. A few subordinate clauses are presented in their full forms. She does use the phrases *I think* and *would like* now and then. Her vocabulary is not extensive, but she can provide simple information.

Selected aspects of pragmatic competences				
	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	2	2		
Discussion	2	1	3	2
Task – answering	2	3	2	1
Task – asking	2	2	3	2
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.08			
Holistic assessment	1.0			

Surprisingly, the figures for the analytic evaluation are average, while the holistic assessment is much lower. Rose does not use any DMs, and almost exclusively she uses *yes* as an utterance launcher. Her utterances are very short and simple (sometimes only *yes*) and quite often strangely incomplete or badly structured. Her repeats sound rather unnatural. The overall impression: she barely transmits/retrieves any information, which means that she did not prove the required level of pragmatic competences.

Alice

She was ten years old when she started to learn English as a compulsory subject in grade 4 of her basic school. The school was in the village where she lived with her family. At the age of fifteen Alice started to commute to a small town nearby to attend a secondary grammar school. Her experience of learning English up to the age of eighteen was limited to formal learning, with the exception of a short language school course taken before the maturita exam. Her attitudes to both the English language and learning English at school were prevailingly positive, although her attitudes to the school subject turned rather negative during her first years at secondary school. Throughout her school-based English language education she experienced neither an NS teacher nor a stay in an ESC. Her contact with English outside school was limited to listening to songs while at basic school and was of very low intensity. It increased at secondary school because of higher exposure – apart from listening to songs every day, on a weekly basis she was also involved in browsing the internet, watching films or TV series, and translating the lyrics of songs. Her involvement in using English outside school reached the average level.

Alice passed the B1 common maturita exam in English in 2013 with grade 1, the same year that she entered university. She self-assessed her level of English at B1 level. While she perceived herself as self-confident in written English, she found her spoken English inadequate. On the one hand, she blamed the school for not providing opportunities to interact with NSs, which she considered crucial; on the other hand, she did not actively search for opportunities to do so.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences			
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences	
Individual phonemes	1.0		
Intonation	2.0		
Rhythm	1.5		
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.5	Analytic assessment (mean)	1.94
Holistic assessment	1.5	Holistic assessment	2.5
Alice's L1 accent is noticeable throughout the whole interview, mostly in the area of segmental features: the *th* sound is well controlled in words such as **th***ink*, but less successfully in the case of **th***at*, **the**; there is a high frequency of faulty pronunciations of words ending in *-ng*, such as /nk/ or /ng/; *-a-* in one-syllable words, either with /e/ instead of the schwa in *can*, or /e/ instead of the ash in *salary*, *camp*; loss of voicing in word-final positions: *had*, *of*, *seems*, *questions*. Her word stress is quite reliable, but her rhythm gets disconnected at times and sounds syllable-timed. Intonation patterns get better by the end of the interview, not being so monotonous. There are just a few mispronunciations of individual words: *abroad* /ou/, **own** /au/. Overall, though, her accent does not affect her comprehensibility.		Alice's ability to participate in the conversation as an informant or someone seeking information is quite good. The structures of her sentences are mostly correct, with some mistakes in agreement and incorrect choice of relative pronouns and articles. She justifiedly reached a rather high score in the grammatical features under analysis. She is easy to understand and ranks among the few students who used both aspect verb phrases (perfect and progressive) repeatedly. She scored the highest number of non-finite clauses in nominal positions. She could have used *would like* in some sentences instead of *want*.	
Selected aspects of pragmatic competences			

	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	2	2		
Discussion	2	2	2	2
Task – answering	3	1	3	2
Task – asking	3	1	3	2
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.17			
Holistic assessment	3.0			

The overall impression is very positive and she sounds natural. Alice changes the complexity of her speech according to the function of a particular discourse: the information transfer tasks are much more interactive. Even though she does not use common DMs, she is able to navigate the conversation by some other means and create natural adjacency pairs. Neither the frequency nor the distribution of repeats and repairs (mostly personal pronouns, or pronouns + contracted verb forms) disrupts the flow of communication.

Irene

She first encountered English when she started to learn it as an obligatory subject in grade 4. While at basic school her attitudes toward English and learning English at school were positive; they changed after the transition to secondary school. Irene began to dislike the subject because of the teacher's predictable textbook-based lessons. This partly changed, however, in a seminar taught by the same teacher but in a different way – discussing topics related to ESCs made Irene more interested. She did not have a chance to experience an NS teacher or a stay in the target culture environment. Towards the very end of secondary school she started to use English outside school; watching TV series and films, listening to music, browsing the internet, and communicating online became regular activities. Her involvement in informal learning increased from a very low level to a high one.

She passed the B1 common maturita exam in English in 2012 with grade 2. She applied for a university study programme in English but she was not successful. Therefore, Irene decided to take a one-year intensive course in English, which facilitated the development of her communicative competence, as well as her motivation to study. She attributed this to the quality of her language school teachers, especially the NSs who taught her on a course. In 2013, on her entry to university education, she self-assessed her level of English as B2.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences			
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences	
Individual phonemes	2.0		
Intonation	1.5		
Rhythm	1.5		
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.66	Analytic assessment (mean)	1.67
Holistic assessment	2.0	Holistic assessment	2.4

Irene's L1 accent is very noticeable. Her individual sounds cause the listener occasional difficulty, e.g. the digraph *th* is sometimes pronounced as /dz/ in *that*, *then*; *-ng* as /nk/ in *anything*, *something*; /w/ as /v/ in *waitress*; the definite article sometimes correctly in front of the word beginning in a spoken vowel, e.g. *the internet*, sometimes incorrectly, e.g. *the Erasmus*. She keeps substituting the /e/ sound for the schwa in *can*, *about*, *as*. She occasionally omits final consonants, e.g. *entertainment*, or mispronounces *find* as *found*. She has a very unreliable pronunciation of the weak forms of most grammatical words; *to* and *you* are consistently fully enunciated. She has many problems with final voiced consonants, e.g. /s/ in *forms*, *pubs*, *friends*, and never pronounces linking /r/, e.g. *there are*. She very often uses spelling pronunciations instead of the schwa, e.g. *introduce*, *contact*, *computer*, *scholarship*, *internet*. She produces a number of short sentences and hardly ever uses appropriate English rhythm or intonation in its accentual or grammatical function.

Irene's participation in the given dialogues (and the structure of her monologue, too) proves that she has well-acquired grammatical competences. Her speech is informative and does not include many grammatical mistakes; it is structurally polite (*I think, I would like*). The verb *have* is used very often as a semi-modal and as a lexical verb. In this meaning it is also replaced once by *have got*, which is not common in the performances of the participants of the CCSSE. Apart from *have to*, she also uses *need to* or *should* as a variety for expressing somebody's neccessity to do something, thus avoiding the very strong *must*. There are not many complex noun phrases, but there are examples of perfect aspect verb phrases. There are enough examples of existential sentences used for the offer and location of various events.

Selected aspects of pragmatic competences				
	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	2	2		
Discussion	2	1	3	2
Task – answering	2	2	2	2
Task – asking	3	2	3	3
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.25			
Holistic assessment	2.5			

The overall impression is rather positive, though we would not give her the top mark. Irene shows quite a high level of interactivity and activity, which is reflected in the use of utterance launchers: the range is not very wide, but she manages to use them effectively to navigate the dialogue and perform interaction. She is also able to express doubts and imprecision by means of commonly used structures. Her repeats and repairs also function as a natural device in the process of constructing a dialogue. Interestingly, the occurrence of a non-word hesitator (*er*) increases significantly in the information transfer task – answering (which could be explained by reading the text while formulating the answer).

Lara

She began to learn English in grade 4 of basic school. While at basic school she liked neither English nor learning English at school. She was critical of her teachers and their teaching styles. In grade 6 she started to attend a secondary grammar school with an eight-year study programme. The situation regarding English was similar in the first two years, but then, with a new teacher, things changed for the better. Up to the age of fifteen, she did not use English in her life outside school at all, with the exception of listening to English songs infrequently. Then, in the middle of the eight-year study programme, Lara decided to apply for a different secondary grammar school. She was successful. Starting a different school also had a positive impact on her attitudes toward learning English since she liked the new teacher's style of teaching. The teacher motivated her to read magazines in English, which gradually became an occasional free-time activity together with watching TV series and films more frequently, listening to music, and browsing the internet. Nevertheless, her involvement in using English outside school remained low. During her formal education she never encountered an NS teacher and never visited an ESC.

Lara passed the B1 common maturita exam in English in 2014 with grade 1, the same year that she entered university. She self-assessed her level of English as B2. She marked pronunciation, reading, listening, and writing as her strengths. She indicated only one weakness – grammar.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences			

Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences	
Individual phonemes	2.0		
Intonation	1.5		
Rhythm	2.0		
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.83	Analytic assessment (mean)	1.44
Holistic assessment	2.0	Holistic assessment	1.8

Lara's L1 accent is noticeable, but she is almost always intelligible. She produces individual sounds and prosodic features sufficiently well to be understood. There is some L1 interference in the area of segmental pronunciation features and her troublesome phonemes are: /ŋ/ is replaced by /ng/ in *song*; /æ/ is often conflated with /e/ in *travel, as*, and her final voiced consonants in *as, songs, options* sound devoiced. Some weak forms of grammatical words are incorrectly pronounced with full vowel quality, e.g. *would, and, you*. She produces quite long utterances and in most instances was able to employ sentence stress to convey the intended meaning. Her word stress is accurate in most words. She improved her rhythm and intonation in the second part of the interview, whereas in the first part her rhythm was sometimes disconnected and she sounded quite monotonous because of a tendency to overuse list intonation.	Lara's ability to express her opinion and give information is not bad, even if there are some (not numerous) mistakes – in the usage of simple versus progressive verb forms or in the non-finite complementation of verbs (infinitive x gerund). There are quite a few complex noun phrases and there are also some comment clauses such as: *… you know, (er) you got to somehow manage to pay …* (D1421). Non-finite clauses are almost exclusively object clauses. Unlike a majority of students, she used one other linking verb (apart from *be*) – *sound* in the phrase: *… it sounds, it sounds good …* (T1421B). Existential sentences are common with her and there is also a condensed adverbial clause. Her parts of the dialogues are much longer than her partner's and she is always the leading person.

Selected aspects of pragmatic competences				
	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	2	3		
Discussion	2	2	2	2
Task – answering	2	3	2	2
Task – asking	1	2	2	2
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.06			
Holistic assessment	2.0			

Lara seems to be an average student of English as regards her ability to maintain the flow of the discourse. She tries to produce longer utterances; however, they rarely contain an exact expression of the relation between the individual parts; rather, the pieces of language are connected by (*er*), […] or other fillers. Among DMs she mostly uses *well*; imprecision is expressed by the particle *like*. Her reformulations are quite natural.

Paul

Paul first experienced English as a pre-schooler; he attended a one-year course at nursery school. His formal instruction in English started in grade 3 of basic school; his parents enrolled him in an optional course preceding the compulsory instruction. While at basic school, Paul felt positive about learning English, but, interestingly, not about English. He did not attend any extra courses and did not use English outside school at all. Following the advice of his parents, he applied for a Czech-English grammar school, which implemented CLIL to a certain extent and was also involved in international cooperation. Moreover, there were some opportunities for learning about ESCs through interaction with NS teachers from various countries, which Paul appreciated. For the same reason he was positive about a school trip to England, which made him more self-confident in communication with NSs. His attitudes to English and to learning English were positive while at secondary school. He passed an international exam in English before the maturita exam, but at that time his professional interests were oriented toward science. English did not play a major role in his life; it was limited to listening to songs, watching films, and browsing the internet regularly. Though his involvement in informal learning increased at secondary school, it was still low.

In 2014 Paul passed the school maturita exam with grade 3 and the B1 state maturita exam with grade 2. On entry to the English language teacher education programme, which was not his preferred choice, he self-assessed his level of English as B2, claiming that pronunciation and speaking were his strengths and vocabulary, grammar, listening, and translation were his weaknesses.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences			
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences	
Individual phonemes	2.0		
Intonation	2.0		
Rhythm	2.5		
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.17	Analytic assessment (mean)	0.72
Holistic assessment	2.5	Holistic assessment	1.0
Paul is always intelligible but his L1 accent is still noticeable. Although he can pronounce voiced consonants at the end of most English words, can properly realise the digraph *th*, and pronounce some weak forms of function words correctly, e.g. *that* and *have*/*has* in most contexts, there are some areas in which he needs to remedy his pronunciation. He tends to pronounce /e/ instead of the schwa in *them, especially, about, licence, confidence, assistant, salary, Germany*, and instead of /æ/ in *camp, assistant, salary*; sometimes /ɒ/ instead of /ə/, e.g. *promoter, confidence*. He has a tendency to conflate /v/ and /w/; for example, he pronounces *vintage* with /w/, but *work* or *one* often with /v/. In the area of the weak forms of function words, he hardly ever pronounces *to* with /u/ in *to our*, or with /ə/ in *to say/work*. Overall, his performance is much better in the first two thirds of the performance – he makes very good use of intonation and rhythm for meaning. He worsens, however, towards the end of the interaction and in a few places his rhythm occasionally becomes disconnected.		Paul seems to be the type of speaker who goes on and on without being disturbed by problems with structuring the specific sentence. He would repeat or try to correct the last phrase, which is not always for the better. His vocabulary is rather poor and there are a lot of morphological and structural mistakes, but he is not difficult to understand. Some subordinate clauses can be found, mainly finite. The examined beginnings of sentences as – *I think* or *I would say* – give the impression of trying to gain a second for structuring the sentence, not really presenting a fact as provisional. There are no aspect verb phrases included in his speech and there are hardly any non-finite verb forms, not even in the nominal syntactic positions, which is very common with other students.	
Selected aspects of pragmatic competences			
	Qua	Com	Int	Act

	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	2	2		
Discussion	2	2	1	3
Task – answering	3	3	1	3
Task – asking	3	2	1	2
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.10			
Holistic assessment	1.0			
Even though the figures in the table indicate above-average results, the holistic evaluation is the opposite. Paul uses hardly any discourse management devices (DMs, linking or stance adverbials); he tends to produce longer turns with little connection to the utterances of the other interlocutor. His individual utterances are mostly connected by filled pauses (*er*) and unfilled pauses […]. In all parts he attempts to speak more than his partner; however, he does not perform appropriate communicative functions and the expected interaction.				

6.2.2 Group 2

Characteristics

This group includes the students who learnt English extensively in an informal context – English played a significant role in their lives since they used it for a variety of purposes. The students form two sub-groups: those whose attitudes toward English and learning English at school have always been positive (Bill, Harry, Simon, and Tess), and those whose attitudes to learning English at school were negative up to a certain moment in their lives (David, Kate, Nicole, Olivia, and Victor). The people in the second sub-group share a distinct feature – it was informal learning which contributed to the considerable modifications of their attitudes. David and Victor counterbalanced their initially negative attitudes toward learning English at school by strong instrumental motives to learn the language. Kate's profile confirms the need to have personally relevant reasons for learning English and the power of informal learning. Originally, Nicole's attitudes toward English and learning English at school were also fairly negative, but, at the same time, English continually played an important role in her life. Olivia's profile is evidence of the rich and varied contexts in which she learnt English. At the same time it uncovers the divide between formal and informal learning in terms of success: while she was able to function effectively in communication with NSs outside school, she was unable to achieve better grades at school.

Bill

He was first exposed to English as a child through books and cartoons which were mediated especially by his older brother. As a pre-schooler he did not attend any language courses. In addition to formal education in English, which he started in grade 4, he also learnt extensively in informal contexts. Bill used English in activities outside school quite actively even before the age of fifteen (I[BS] average). Every day he enjoyed listening to songs, playing computer games, and browsing the internet. While at basic school he also visited the United Kingdom for a short time. He liked the whole experience; he especially appreciated the chance to use English outside school. He was successful in his communication with NSs, which made him more self-confident.

Since he studied at a Secondary School of Tourism, English was an important subject in the study programme. He experienced an NS teacher from England, which he appreciated because the NS teacher provided a model of English and discussed interesting topics with the students. English played a significant role in Bill's life outside school (I[BS] very high); he was involved in all his autonomous free-time activities regularly, i.e. daily or weekly, with the exception of email communication, which was reported as having happened occasionally.

Bill passed the B1 common maturita exam in English in 2013 with grade 1, the same year that he entered the university. He self-assessed his level of English at B2 level.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences			
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences	
Individual phonemes	1.5		
Intonation	2.0		
Rhythm	2.0		
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.83	Analytic assessment (mean)	1.39
Holistic assessment	2.0	Holistic assessment	1.5

Bill's L1 accent is quite noticeable throughout the whole interview, but never causes serious difficulty. His Czech accent is particularly evident as a result of voicing neutralisation in word-final positions, e.g. *lived* /-ft/, *have*; /e/ pronunciation in *exactly*, *have*. There are some good attempts at the pronunciation of /w/, e.g. *wow*, and systematically good pronunciation of the digraph *th* in words such as *through* in word-initial positions, but with incorrect /t/ pronunciation in the word-final position in *with*. His contribution is limited to a large number of short and simple utterances, with some attempts at quite good intonation, but unreliable word stress, e.g. *sys'tem*, *'unforgettable*, *'education*, *'events*. He only occasionally enunciates weak vowels in weak forms of grammatical words or in unstressed syllables of content words properly, e.g. *obtain* is not pronounced with the schwa.

Bill's performance is not very good, because of numerous mistakes in the structure of verb forms (e.g. infinitives versus gerunds), pronouns, word order, and articles. Bill's parts of the dialogues are usually much shorter than those of his partner. Very often he uses the verb *get*, which is uncommon with most other students, but not always correctly. His sentences are not very complex and his statements are only rarely introduced by *I think*. Also, we can only exceptionally find polite forms of statements or questions typical of the modal *would* or the verb phrase *would like*. There is a minimal number of aspect verb phrases and of non-finite verb forms functioning as object or complement clauses.

Selected aspects of pragmatic competences				
	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	2	1		
Discussion	1	1	2	1
Task – answering	2	2	2	1
Task – asking	1	1	2	1
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.44			
Holistic assessment	1.5			

Bill is a very passive interlocutor and with the exception of his monologue, he uses very simple and short utterances. His speech is rather dysfluent, with incomplete structures and quite long and unnatural repeats. Even though he tries to interact, the range of turn-taking means he uses is very limited (*yes, OK, so*). The relatively low occurrence of filled and unfilled pauses is a positive aspect of his performance. When he uses longer structures, they are almost exclusively connected by *and*.

Harry

Harry's experience of English was rich in terms of the contexts in which he encountered the language. He was exposed to English in early childhood, but only occasionally. Prior to the beginning of formal instruction in grade 3, he briefly attended a free-time course of English. He perceived the whole period of formal instruction positively; he appreciated his teachers, including NSs, textbooks, and also school trips to the United Kingdom. His experience of English culture motivated him to learn more about it and to improve in English.

In spite of the overall positiveness of formal education, Harry considered informal learning to be the most substantial part of his learning. Even while at basic school he used English extensively (I[BS] average) in the context of PC games throughout his childhood and teenage years. His participation in online games initiated a desire to contact peers through various tools of computer-mediated communication. Furthermore, common activities such as listening to songs, watching TV series and films, and browsing the internet were inseparable parts of his everyday life. His involvement in informal learning was high while at secondary school.

Harry passed the B1 state maturita exam in English in 2013 with grade 1, the same year that he entered university. He self-assessed his level of English as C1.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences				
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences		
Individual phonemes	2.5			
Intonation	2.5			
Rhythm	2			
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.33	Analytic assessment (mean)		1.78
Holistic assessment	2.5	Holistic assessment		3.0

Harry's L1 accent is still evident. He produces most individual sounds well, with the exception of the ash, e.g. *and*, *than*, *that* (the demonstrative pronoun), and the digraph *th* is realised as /d/, e.g. *this*, sometimes in *the*, *that*. Some weak forms of grammatical words are incorrectly pronounced with full vowel quality, e.g. *from*, *for*, *but*, in other cases he pronounces weak forms correctly, e.g. *to*, *and*, *of*, *would*, *can*, *you*, *your*, *but*. He does not pronounce most final voiced consonants appropriately, e.g. /t/ instead of /d/ in *called*; /s/ instead of /z/ in *hobbies*, *materials*; /f/ instead of /v/ *of*, *believe*. He mispronounces *afford* as *effort,* and says /z/ in *expensive*. He hardly ever pronounces linking /r/, e.g. *for individual*. He enunciates most polysyllabic words separately and disconnects them in phrases with small pauses, e.g. *science fiction / literature*, although some formulaic language, including reduced forms, seems to have been acquired with good rhythm and intonation.	Harry's performance is really impressive. There are various ways in which he structures his statements politely, so that they are open to discussion – *I think, I believe, in my opinion.* There are quite a lot of NF VPs used as objects and complements (and even one as a subject) and his usage of conditional clauses is truly excellent – with the subjunctive form: … *if I were you I would definitely …* (T1346A). He does not use perfect verb forms and only occasionally progressive ones. Noun phrases are structured well and for obligation he uses only the semi-modal verb *have*. Its occurrence is not very high, but satisfactory as he uses other ways of asking people to do things (*you should, it will be necessary, etc.*) His speech attests to previous experience of communicating with foreign friends and teachers who are native speakers. We consider his grammatical competence fully worth the mark three.

Selected aspects of pragmatic competences				
	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	1	2		
Discussion	2	3	1	3
Task – answering	2	2	1	1
Task – asking	2	3	1	1
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.73			
Holistic assessment	2.0			

With regard to pragmatic competences, Harry shows quite a significant imbalance. He attempts to create structured and well-arranged utterances; however, interactional and transactional aspects are missing. It is the reason for the discrepancy between the scores for complexity on one hand, and interactivity and activity on the other. His role in all the parts is very passive and not interactive. One positive feature in the area of discourse competence is the use of the two-word DMs *I guess, you know* (so rare in the whole CCSSE); occasionally, he also uses stance adverbials (*actually, like*). But the occurrence of common one-word DMs is very limited. Neither do his repeats, which mostly have the form of quite long chunks of language, contribute to the smooth flow of his dialogue.

Simon

Simon was exposed to some English when he was a pre-schooler, though only occasionally. He started his formal education at basic school in grade 4. From that moment onwards he felt positive about English and learning it at school. He attended a secondary grammar school with an eight-year study programme, where he experienced several teachers, including an NS teacher, whose lessons he valued, unlike the lessons of some other teachers. He visited the United Kingdom on a school trip and, furthermore, he had a unique chance to participate in a school trip to Australia. He was glad of the opportunities to communicate with NSs. Both the stays in ESCs motivated him to continue with his studies of English and made him more self-confident. Furthermore, even before the age of fifteen, he used English extensively in his life outside the school (both I^{BS} and I^{SS} high). He was involved in most of his autonomous free-time activities daily or weekly. His interest in wrestling contributed to his improvement in English – he watched shows in English and then wrote reports for a Czech website. Interestingly, he also wrote lyrics in English for his friends' bands.

Simon passed the school maturita exam in English in 2014, the same year that he entered university, with grade 1. He self-assessed his level of English as C1. He marked pronunciation, reading, writing, speaking, and translation as his strengths. He indicated only one weakness – listening.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences			
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences	
Individual phonemes	2.5		
Intonation	3.0		
Rhythm	3.0		
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.83	Analytic assessment (mean)	1.55
Holistic assessment	3.0	Holistic assessment	3.0

Simon is always intelligible but his L1 accent is slightly noticeable. Although he can pronounce voiced consonants at the end of most English words, and can mostly properly realise the digraphs *th* and *ng* and pronounce some weak forms of function words correctly, e.g. **tha**t, fro**m**, **an**d, **a**t, **of**, and **ha**ve/**ha**s in most contexts, there are some areas which are difficult for him. He tends to pronounce /e/ instead of /æ/ in *fantasy, Jack, flat, accommodating*; sometimes his /r/ in word-final positions, e.g. *brother, partner,* sounds GA. He mispronounces *poem* as */poem/. In the area of the weak forms of function words, he hardly ever pronounces *to* with /ə/, e.g. **to** *your*. Word stress is consistently well pronounced, even in polysyllabic words with stress falling on other than the first syllable. Overall, he makes very good use of intonation and rhythm for meaning, even in longer utterances. His performance worsens slightly towards the end of the interview.

Simon is a skilled speaker who can present information in a detailed way through grammatically correct structures, using diverse vocabulary. Even if his mean result is not very high (mainly because of the lack of perfect verb forms and almost no occurrence of the semi-modal *have*), his holistic evaluation is rightly the best. He, too, (like David and Victor) is able to use correctly other phrases (*you should, it is important that you,* etc.) than those expressing strict obligation. He uses progressive verb forms frequently. There is a variety of object clauses – both finite and non-finite, as well as other subordinate clauses – conditional, relative, time, and others – in their finite forms. Within relative clauses the relativisers are sometimes used, sometimes omitted. He can use the subject of an infinitival condensed clause correctly, which is not very common among the students: … *it's a big opportunity for you to speak in English and communicate* (T1455A).

Selected aspects of pragmatic competences				
	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	2	3		
Discussion	2	3	2	3
Task – answering	2	3	2	2
Task – asking	2	3	2	3
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.42			
Holistic assessment	3.0			

Simon always tries to produce well-structured utterances that react to the other interlocutor. The structure of his performances matches the purpose of the individual tasks (as regards the structure, length, and devices used). One significant positive feature is the use of a wide range of common DMs: *well, right, all right, maybe, OK, so* (and their combinations), which is an exception in the whole group. Another point which influences the perception of the performance is the occurrence of repeats (*I can – I can; that's – that's; the – the*), which is common in native speakers' conversation. Even though his turns are quite long (the rate for complexity is the highest), there are not many incomplete structures. The overall impression of the flow of conversation is very natural.

Tess

Tess was exposed to some English in her early childhood but only occasionally. She started to learn English in grade 3 of basic school. Her attitudes to English and to learning English at school were positive from the beginning of her English instruction till the end of secondary school.

In this period she experienced quite a lot of teachers, especially at secondary school, however, none of them was an NS. She never attended a free-time course in English or private lessons; moreover, she was never in an ESC. Most importantly, she was quite active in using English outside school even before the end of basic school; browsing the internet, listening to music, and communicating online were her most frequent activities. In spite of that the index of her use of English outside school remained low because she was involved in many other activities, though less frequently. While at secondary school Tess's involvement in informal learning increased to a very high level; she was immersed regularly in all the autonomous free-time activities which were presented in Table 2.1, except for playing PC games.

Tess passed the school maturita exam in English in 2014 with grade 1. When entering university the same year, she self-assessed her English as B2. She reported that grammar and reading were her strengths, while vocabulary and speaking were her weaknesses.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences			
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences	
Individual phonemes	2.0		
Intonation	2.5		
Rhythm	2.5		
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.33	Analytic assessment (mean)	1.33
Holistic assessment	2.5	Holistic assessment	2.0

Tess enunciates quite clearly most of the time, but uses some L1 features; as a result her L1 accent is noticeable. She makes some adjustments to her L1 vowels: in the area of individual phonemes it is mainly the use of /e/ instead of /æ/ in *clarinet*; /o/ instead of /əʊ/ in *older*; /e/ instead of /ə / in *comfortable*, *can*, *have*; /ʊ/ instead of /ə/ in *difficult, various*; /e/ instead of /eə/ in *various*. Most weak forms of grammatical words are incorrectly pronounced with full vowel quality, e.g. *from, for, to music,* but in other cases her weak forms are variable, e.g. *and*, *was*, *but*. She demonstrates a number of problems with word-final voiced consonants, e.g. /f/ instead of /v/ in *have*, /s/ instead of /z/ in *hobbies, sometimes.* She makes quite good use of stress, rhythm, and intonation for meaning. Her overall performance is very good.	Tess is not an inferior speaker, but she keeps her questions and answers very short. There is frequent use of evaluative structures in the form of sentences with an extraposed subject, e.g. *It is difficult to learn every day (to pronounce well, to say the words)* (M1445A). There are infrequent mistakes in her sentence structures. She uses perfect verb forms (mainly in the monologue), as well as other analysed grammatical structures with a medium evaluation, which is also the overall mark for her performance in Table B2 in Appendix 11. The frequency of using non-finite object and complement clauses is really high, but all her relative clauses are in their finite forms.

Selected aspects of pragmatic competences				
	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	3	1		
Discussion	2	2	2	1
Task – answering	2	2	2	2
Task – asking	2	3	1	1
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.81			
Holistic assessment	1.5			

As regards her pragmatic competences, Tess's performance cannot be evaluated very high. Not only does she not communicate enough, but neither does she use appropriate discourse management devices, such as DMs or linking and stance adverbials. Except for her monologue, her turns in performances are mostly short and simple, even though she occasionally tries to produce more complex utterances. She is a very passive participant in the conversation.

David

He started to learn English at school at the age of nine. While he found English useful for playing computer games and for understanding the lyrics of songs, his attitude to learning English at basic school was negative because of the nature of the tasks the learners were asked to do. Later, his attitudes toward learning English became positive thanks to his relationship with a secondary school teacher who facilitated David's progress in English. He lacked direct experience of the culture of ESCs, since he was never taught by an NS teacher and he never travelled to an ESC. Nevertheless, while at basic school he was frequently involved in several English-related activities (I^{BS} low), including listening to music, watching films, and browsing the internet. Most importantly, David's main driving force for learning English was playing online computer games – having better English was a gateway to a more prestigious group of players. Apart from the activities he did regularly while at basic school, as a student of a secondary school (I^{SS} average) he also read books, translated lyrics, and studied English autonomously. His passion for playing PC games persisted till the end of secondary school; it occupied most of his free time.

David passed the B1 state maturita exam in English in 2013 with grade 1, the same year that he entered the university. He was not able to self-assess his level of English; however, he considered his pronunciation the weakest aspect of his English. He blamed his former teachers, especially those at basic school, for not focusing at all on pronunciation in their lessons.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences			
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences	
Individual phonemes	1.5		
Intonation	1.0		
Rhythm	1.0		
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.17	Analytic assessment (mean)	1.67
Holistic assessment	1.5	Holistic assessment	2.5

David's L1 accent puts a strain on the listener as a result of his frequent mispronunciations of English phonemes and syllable-timed and disconnected rhythm. There are also numerous spelling pronunciations such as *club*, *culture* with /ʊ/, *student* /-tʊ-/, *events* /e/, *other* /o/, *frequently* /e/, *Wednesday* /-edn-/, *ballroom* and *hall* /a:/, and mispronunciations of other words which might confuse the listener, e.g. *match* /u/, *prefer*, *there*, *square* /e:/, *regularly* /dʒ…ʌ/, *theatre* /ɪeɪ/, *advantageous* /ɪ/. There are numerous faulty pronunciations of words ending in the digraph *ng* as /nk/, e.g. *interacting*. He experiences problems with -a- in one-syllable words, either with /e/ instead of the schwa in *can*, *that*, *and*, *at*, or /e/ instead of the ash in polysyllabic words, e.g. *family*, *advantageous*. An occasional loss of voicing occurs at the end of words, e.g. *have*, *I've*, but rather systematically in *of, stores, Wednesdays*. Most grammatical words are incorrectly realised in their strong forms, e.g. *you, your, do, does, for, from, at, but, and, are*. Interestingly, the correct weak pronunciation of *am* is the only exception. The linking r in *for example* is not used. Flat intonation is employed throughout the interview.

David's parts of the dialogues are often shorter than his partner's, but they are well structured, with just a few mistakes in the choice of lexical items. He makes frequent use of verb forms showing progressive aspect (which is not very common with the majority of the students), but there is just one marked for perfect aspect. Complex noun phrases included in his performance comprise both pre- and post-modifying elements, although not always non-finite verb forms. They are, however, frequently used in the nominal position in his sentences – as objects and complements. Apart from *I think* phrases, there are also sentences with the verbs *consider* or *find* (e.g. *I consider/find it very advantageous*). There are complex sentences with full adverbial clauses (conditional, reason, purpose, etc.). We can even find a sentence with an expressed subject of a non-finite clause: … *there is no need for me to separate from them* (D1314), which is rather unusual in the whole corpus. The zero occurrence of the semi-modal *have* lowered his score a little, but it is quite high, anyway. He transformed some obligations to suggestions.

Selected aspects of pragmatic competences				
	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	1	2		
Discussion	2	3	2	1
Task – answering	2	3	1	3
Task – asking	1	2	2	1
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.83			
Holistic assessment	2.0			

The interaction is maintained efficiently; apart from the use of *OK, so*, he also uses DM *well* and the stance adverbial *actually*. The positive impression is supported by the fact that there are only a few occurrences of filled pauses (*er*). Seemingly, his score for complexity is quite high; however, after a closer inspection of individual sentences, it is revealed that he has a tendency to repeat exactly the same structure several times. There is a striking difference in the length of his turns if he asks (relatively short) or answers (very long); however, it reflects the purpose of a particular discourse. The overall impression is rather mediocre as regards his discourse competence.

Kate

Kate was exposed to some English as a pre-schooler. Prior to obligatory instruction she attended a free-time course and visited London with her parents. Even though she had three years' experience of English before the beginning of her formal education, her attitudes toward English and learning English at school were very negative. The main reasons for that included the frequent turnover of teachers and a lack of motivation. Being an unsuccessful learner at that time, she was often tutored by her mother. Kate experienced many teachers of English, but none of them was an NS.

She maintained her negative attitudes till the middle of secondary school, when things changed considerably. Neither the teacher nor her teaching style changed, but Kate finally discovered a reason for studying English. It was her interest in Korean and Japanese culture, which led her to watch TV series in Korean or Japanese with English subtitles. Since she used to spend hours and hours watching every day, after about a year her English had improved considerably. Additionally, because of her interest in a healthy lifestyle, she started to browse the internet and read articles in English on a daily basis. These activities complemented her regular listening to music and communication via social networks. Her overall involvement in informal learning increased from a very low level at basic school to average at secondary school.

Kate passed the B1 common maturita exam in English in 2013 with grade 1. One year later, when entering the English language teacher education study programme, she self-assessed her level of English as B2. At that time she considered vocabulary, reading, listening, and translation to be her strengths, unlike pronunciation, grammar, and speaking, which she believed to be her weaknesses.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences			
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences	
Individual phonemes	1.5		
Intonation	2.0		
Rhythm	2.0		
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.83	Analytic assessment (mean)	1.06
Holistic assessment	2.0	Holistic assessment	1.5

Kate's L1 accent is noticeable all the time, but never causes more than very occasional difficulty, e.g. *horse* for *hours* in *opening hours*, *mate* for *made*, *foot* for *food*. In the area of individual phonemes, she makes a number of mistakes. Her pronunciation of the *th* digraph is not well controlled, whether its pronunciation is /θ/ in *health*, *think*, or /ð/ in *the*, *there*. The same holds for the *ng* digraph in *learning*, *opening*, *English*, which is constantly mispronounced as /nk/ or occasionally /ng/. The grammatical suffix *-s* is difficult for her in *hobbies* and *non-smokers*, as are word-final voiced consonants, which get devoiced, e.g. *made*, *and*, *food*. She pronounces *registration* with /g/. As far as vowels are concerned, it is mainly the use of /e/ instead of /æ/ in *hand-made*, *flat*, *organic*; /e/ instead of /ə/ in *kilometres*, *can*; /o/ instead of /ə / in *kilometres*. Some weak forms of grammatical words are incorrectly pronounced with full vowel quality, e.g. *from*, *for*, *to*, but in other cases her weak forms are variable, e.g. *and*, *was*, *but*. Her rhythm sounds disconnected as she pauses quite a lot to recall linguistic resources in a few places. She produces a number of short utterances but when she produces longer ones, she tries to use intonation to convey meaning.	Kate does not use complicated sentences. Most of her reactions in the dialogues are rather short and she leaves more space to her partner. Nevertheless, she can provide basic information, which is easy to understand. In her sentence structures the influence of L1 is identifiable in the usage of prepositions, and some phrases such as: … *it's good that it's it has low price …* (D1419). If Kate uses subordinate clauses, they are almost 100 per cent finite, mostly object clauses and a few adverbial ones. Mostly, however, her sentences are not complex. The semi-modal *have* is difficult to find in her speech, as well as the polite phrase *would like*. She does not use any aspect verb phrases.

Selected aspects of pragmatic competences				
	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	2	3		
Discussion	3	2	2	2
Task – answering	1	2	3	1
Task – asking	2	2	3	2
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.15			
Holistic assessment	2.5			

The figures from the analytic assessment mostly show average scores and the holistic evaluation of discourse management is similar, with differences between the individual parts. In the monologue and discussion Kate uses sentences of expected and appropriate length and complexity, including the occurrence of DMs (especially *well*) and repeats and repairs, while in the information transfer task, the utterances are much shorter and simpler, with rather a limited range of all the devices of discourse management.

Nicole

She started her formal education in grade 4 of basic school. Because of the extremely frequent turnover of teachers, she perceived the learning of English negatively. Contrary to that, English was an important part of her life outside school. Even before the age of fifteen, she was involved in many autonomous free-time activities daily or weekly.

While at secondary school, thanks to the teachers, she started to like English and learning English. Nicole especially appreciated an NS teacher. Her regular involvement in English-related activities even intensified during her secondary school studies. She was involved in all kinds of activities daily; only reading magazines, listening to radio programmes, and e-mail communication were marginal. Obviously, Nicole's contact with the community of NSs was mediated by ICT. She did not, however, experience the culture of ESCs personally.

In 2014 Nicole passed both the B1 common maturita exam in English and the school maturita exam with grade 1. When entering university education, she self-assessed her level of English as B2. Vocabulary was claimed to be her strength, grammar her weakness.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences			
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences	
Individual phonemes	2.0		
Intonation	2.0		
Rhythm	2.5		
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.17	Analytic assessment (mean)	1.28
Holistic assessment	2.0	Holistic assessment	1.7

Nicole speaks very clearly and makes use of rhythm, stress, and intonation to enhance meaning. Her L1 accent is still evident, but hardly ever causes more than very occasional difficulty, e.g. *intention* for *attention*, *sink* for *sing*. She occasionally, but not consistently, says /d/ in *the*, *there*; /s/ instead of /z/ in *sibling*s. She regularly mispronounces the digraph *ng* in *siblings*, *sing*, *talking interesting*, is not able to pronounce the velar nasal /ŋ/ properly, and sometimes uses /e/ instead of /æ/ in *that's*, *had*. Most weak forms of function words are properly realised. She employs spelling pronunciation in the case of words of foreign origin, e.g. *agency* */ˈʌgensi/, *karaoke* */kʌraoke/. There are some errors of detail, e.g. *dissadvatage* for *disadvantage*, but overall she causes no difficulty in understanding.

Nicole's speech is not very competent in several aspects. It contains many mistakes (agreement, gerunds instead of infinitives, etc.) and she often repeats parts of her sentences, because she tries to correct the mistake she feels that she has just made – not always successfully. Nevertheless, the information given is satisfactory. She uses a lot of existential sentences. Apart from the phrase *would like*, the verb *want* appears quite commonly, which reveals a strong influence of L1. Several relative clauses are included in complex sentences, but sometimes the relativiser is incorrect. The usage of NF verb phrases as objects and complements is satisfactory, but there are no condensed relative or adverbial clauses.

Selected aspects of pragmatic competences				
	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	3	2		
Discussion	3	2	1	2
Task – answering	2	2	2	2
Task – asking	2	2	1	2
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.96			
Holistic assessment	1.5			

Even though Nicole communicated a lot (indicated by the score in the quantity of language), not many instances proved her ability to manage discourse efficiently. When she tries to produce longer and more complex structures, quite often they are either left incomplete or they are anacoluthons. She uses DMs or other utterance launchers very scarcely, which increases the impression of the lack of enough interaction.

Olivia

Olivia was exposed to English in early childhood, though occasionally. Her formal education in English started in grade 3 of basic school. She perceived English and learning English at basic school positively. Olivia also participated in a school trip to London, and she appreciated the chance to experience communication with NSs and learn about the English culture. She also felt motivated to study more. While at basic school, she attended a free-time course aimed at developing speaking. Furthermore, at that time she used English for communication outside school, though it is not reflected in I^{BS} (very low) because of the low frequency of the activities. Repeatedly, she went to summer camps which were organised by a local church. Olivia established friendships with English-speaking friends, which she tried to maintain by e-mail communication. Though the contacts were not as frequent as, for example, listening to English songs, they were important for her.

While at secondary school her attitudes toward learning English at school were negative because of the teaching style of the teacher. Olivia disapproved of the focus of the lessons being on grammar, and she liked neither the teaching nor the testing techniques used by the teacher. The NS teacher whom she encountered did not influence her attitudes for the better. She took part in a school trip to London, which made her more self-confident in communication. On top of that, she was involved in the preparation of the summer camps together with her parents. Thus, she was intensively involved in both face-to-face and email communication with NSs. Additionally, reading books, listening to songs, watching films in English, and browsing the internet were activities she was regularly involved in (I^{SS} average).

Olivia passed the school-leaving exam in 2009, long before the implementation of the new system, with grade 3. Then it took her five years to find the best study programme for her. After four years at different universities and study programmes, she enrolled in a one-year intensive course in English, after which she finally decided to study English. In 2014, on entry to the English language teacher education study programme, she self-assessed her level of English as B2. At that time she considered pronunciation, listening, and speaking to be her strengths, unlike vocabulary, writing, and translation, which she believed to be her weaknesses.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences			
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences	
Individual phonemes	2.0		
Intonation	2.5		
Rhythm	2.0		
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.17	Analytic assessment (mean)	2.06
Holistic assessment	2.5	Holistic assessment	3.0

In general, Olivia is easy to understand and L1 interference never puts a strain on the listener. Her rhythm and intonation are sometimes L1; however, she can mostly use them to convey meaning. She occasionally produces good weak forms, e.g. *her*, *them*, *with*, *and*; nevertheless, in some cases, such as *to music*, she keeps saying /ʊ/ instead of /ə/. Her consonants are mostly good, but she has a problem with the digraph *-ng* in word-final position, e.g. *singing*, *reading*, *asking.* In comparison, in the middle of the word *English*, *ng* is properly pronounced. The digraph *th* is mostly realised correctly, but mispronounced as /t/ in *authors*. She tends to enunciate /e/ instead of /æ/, e.g. in *chat*, *shack*. She often employs word stress appropriately, with some isolated exceptions such as ʹ*kitchenette*, ʹ*mathematics*.

Olivia is one of the best speakers of the group. In all the linguistic competences tested she does well and in several of them she is excellent. The length of her input is impressive and the information given (or questions) is clear and well worded. She uses progressive aspect verb phrases frequently, but never a verb showing perfect aspect. There are several mistakes in prepositions and a straightforward sentence structure, which she tries to correct by repeating and changing it a little. This probably gives evidence of a certain amount of nervousness or not enough experience of live conversation.

Selected aspects of pragmatic competences				
	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	3	1		
Discussion	3	1	2	3
Task – answering	3	1	3	2
Task – asking	3	1	3	2
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.25			
Holistic assessment	3.0			

In Olivia's case the analytic and holistic assessments are absolutely in agreement. Moreover, the figures in the table show the interrelation between quantity, complexity, and interactivity in a naturally built conversation – which we can witness here.

She is far from being at the top as regards language production, but at the same time she interacts very frequently and efficiently (even without the use of common DMs). Interestingly, unlike the others, she uses *OK* very rarely. On the other hand, she uses the two-word DMs *you know, I mean* and also *I think* as a comment clause. Even the very frequent occurrences of repeats and repairs look very natural, which gives us an impression of authentic natural speech and proves that in conversation complexity is not the most valued aspect.

Victor

Victor was occasionally exposed to English when he was a pre-schooler. He started his formal education at basic school in grade 4. While he felt positive about the language, he perceived the school subject negatively. After two years of learning English he started to attend a secondary grammar school with an eight-year study programme. The transition to a different type of school initiated a gradual change for the better in his attitudes. Victor encountered several NS teachers during his formal education in English but he never travelled to an ESC. Nevertheless, he experienced communication in English with speakers of other languages in the context of international projects in which the school was involved. While non-formal learning was not part of his language learning experience, his involvement in informal learning was quite extensive in terms of time – he needed to learn English to play PC games. Nevertheless, I^{BS} is very low because playing PC games was the only activity he did daily while at basic school, albeit for several hours a day. Similarly, while at secondary school playing PC games was Victor's main free-time interest, requiring both the receptive and the productive use of English. In addition, every day he spent time browsing the internet and listening to music, and once a week he watched TV series and films (I^{SS} low).

Victor passed the school maturita exam with grade 1 in 2014. He entered university education in the same year. He self-assessed his level of English as C2. He considered vocabulary, listening, and translation his strengths, pronunciation and speaking his weaknesses.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences			
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences	
Individual phonemes	2.0		
Intonation	1.5		
Rhythm	2.0		
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.83	Analytic assessment (mean)	2.22
Holistic assessment	2.0	Holistic assessment	3.0

Victor's L1 accent is slightly noticeable, but never causes more than very occasional difficulty. He mispronounces *work* as *walk*, and *archery* as *artery*. As far as his consonants are concerned, the digraph *th* is consistently pronounced properly; /w/ is sometimes mispronounced as /v/ in *twenty, questionnaire*. With respect to vowels, he has problems using the schwa in unstressed syllables of content words, e.g. *administrative*; weak forms of function words, e.g. *should, would, could*; he cannot pronounce the ash in *that's all, blank*. Most grammatical words are incorrectly realised in their strong forms, e.g. *of, for, at, but, and, that*. Nevertheless, his rhythm is fairly good. Apart from some occasional good intonation patterns, he sounds rather monotonous throughout the rest of the interview, because of his fairly fast pace.

Victor's performance seems to be the best of all the twenty students. Not only did he get the best marks in most of the grammatical stuctures that were analysed, but his vocabulary is outstanding and his sentences are long and very well formed. There is a whole range of subordinate clauses, some of which are condensed (object, but also adverbial). Even a perfect (past) infinitive after a modal verb is included in his speech: *I nearly would have forgotten …* (T1441B) – one of the few found in the whole corpus of 228 students. Unfortunately, its usage in the given sentence is not the best choice, but at least he was able to structure it well under the stress of conversation. A further example is similarly spectacular – partial inversion in a conditional clause: *And should I choose to apply …* (T441B). The lowest mark for the use of the semi-modal *have* is not disturbing, as he could change the strict obligation in sentences such as: *You are expected to … You should … You will be filling in …*

Selected aspects of pragmatic competences				
	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	2	2		
Discussion	3	2	2	2
Task – answering	3	2	1	3
Task – asking	3	2	2	2
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.19			
Holistic assessment	2.5			

In the area of pragmatic competences, Victor does not demonstrate a high level. Though he produces a lot of language – usually also structured and well-organised, in most parts it gives an impression of a monologue, very loosely connected to the turns of the other interlocutor. Usually, in each part he prefers to use just one or two utterance launchers (if any). There are also almost no traces of other pragmatic competence signals, i.e. expressions of imprecision, doubt, or actuality, or typical features such as repeats and repairs. Only the part where he is seeking information shows a higher level of pragmatic competence and gives an impression of a more natural conversation.

6.2.3 Group 3

Characteristics

The profiles of the students in this group are characterised by the richness of the contexts in which they learnt English: apart from learning in the formal context, they have been involved in non-formal and informal learning. On top of that, George, Cindy, Paul, and Wendy also had a chance to travel to an ESC. Furthermore, George manifested a considerable level of autonomy as a learner. Cindy, drawing on resources coming from outside school, managed to overcome periods of motivational decline. Wendy, on the contrary, finally benefited from the frequent turnover of teachers, which initiated a change in her attitudes to learning English.

Since the richness of their learning contexts is the reason for including students in this group, Harry and Olivia could have been part of it as well. Nevertheless, both of them consider their informal learning the most substantial contribution to their achievement; therefore, they were included in Group 2.

George

In his early childhood his parents enrolled him in an English course in the small town where the family lived. At the moment he began to learn English at the primary stage of basic school George had four years of experience of foreign language instruction. His attitudes to English, both to the language and the school subject, were positive throughout his life. After primary school he studied at a local secondary grammar school with an eight-year programme. He experienced five English teachers in those eight years but no NS teacher. Even after the beginning of his formal English education in grade 4 of basic school he continued learning on various language school courses, which he always enjoyed. Equally, informal learning was also important in his life. Even before the age of fifteen he spent time every day listening to songs, playing computer games, and browsing the internet. Less frequently, once a week, he used internet social networks to communicate in English (both I^{BS} and I^{SS} low). Importantly, he also established personal contacts with several NSs living in his town. Furthermore, he autonomously implemented a specific method for learning languages for about a year. Before reaching the age of eighteen he also visited the United Kingdom and the USA. He stayed in the USA for six weeks and found the stay beneficial for multiple reasons, including progress in English, motivation to study more, and making new friends.

He passed the B1 common maturita exam in English with grade 1. A year later, when entering university, he self-assessed his level of English as being at C1 level.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences			
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences	
Individual phonemes	2.5		
Intonation	2.5		
Rhythm	2.5		
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.5	Analytic assessment (mean)	2.06
Holistic assessment	2.5	Holistic assessment	3.0

Although George's L1 accent may be evident, specifically in the last-but-one part of the interview, he is easily understood without any difficulty and his English sounds natural. He produces most sounds well, and speaks with appropriate stress and intonation which worsens only in the last but one part. The phoneme he mispronounces is the ash in *cannot*, which was enunciated as /e/. Most of his weak forms of grammatical words are realised properly, with the exception of *can*, *to*, *and*. He manages to pronounce most word-final consonants with appropriate voicing, with just a few lapses, e.g. /s/ in *courses*, *crowns*. He mostly uses English stress, rhythm, and intonation patterns efficiently in order to convey and enhance meaning. Some of his spelling pronunciations are *scuba diving* with /u/, *aerobics* with /o/.

George ranks among those members of the group whose evaluation is 3 – the best speakers. His flow of speech is smooth, revealing good grammatical and lexical competences (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 108–111). There are hardly any mistakes; the sentences are complex, but not too long, and thus do not put a strain on the listener. NF VPs are not used only in their nominal positions, but also for the condensation of relative and adverbial clauses. Both perfect and progressive aspect verb phrases are used extensively. He reached high scores in almost all the linguistic features that were tested and are mentioned in Section 6.1.2.2. There are also a few comment clauses. George's noun phrases are truly complex, with multiple pre- and post-modification. His performance gives evidence of his out-of-school language acquisition and contacts with native speakers.

Selected aspects of pragmatic competences				
	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	2	2		
Discussion	2	3	1	3
Task – answering	3	2	2	3
Task – asking	2	2	1	1
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.04			
Holistic assessment	3.0			

Even though the figures for the analytic assessment of George's discourse competence are not much above average, the overall impression of his performance is evaluated very high. He always attempts to use complex and well-structured utterances. Among the discourse management devices, he uses stance adverbials of actuality (*actually, really*) and of imprecision (*like*), and also two-word DMs (*you know, I mean*) which are rarely found in other dialogues. The performance is appropriately interactive, though he has a tendency to produce quite long turns – this is the reason for the low score for interactivity. On the other hand, he uses utterance launchers properly and in a wide range (e.g. *well, OK, so, yeah*), which helps to cement the feeling of a natural, authentic conversation.

Cindy

She had no experience of learning English prior to the compulsory beginning of English language education in grade 4 of basic school. She was ten years old when she started to learn English as an FL. Initially, while at basic school, her attitudes toward English, both toward the language and the school subject, were positive. They turned negative, however, soon after the first teacher was replaced by a new one with a noticeably different teaching style. Her mother and private lessons helped her cope with the challenge.

The situation changed for the better after she enrolled in an eight-year programme at a secondary grammar school in the same town. Throughout her years of formal education in English, none of her teachers was an NS. She also experienced learning in a non-formal context to a considerable extent since her learning experience at school ran parallel with learning in private lessons. Otherwise, the role of English in her everyday life was not very important up to the age of fifteen (I[BS] low). Her contact with English was restricted to listening to music and browsing the internet on a weekly basis. Her exposure to English increased in the following years because of songs, films, videos, and TV series, but it was still low. She started to use internet social networks for communication in the target language; the only opportunity to communicate with NSs in English face to face was available during summer camps, which she went to repeatedly. She considered her participation in the camps fundamental for the development of her communicative competence. Moreover, she briefly visited the United Kingdom before finishing secondary school and the USA after that. The trip to the USA offered more occasions involving communication with NSs.

She passed the school-leaving exam in English with grade 3, which was before the changes to the format of the exam were implemented. Afterwards she took a one-year intensive course in English and then she started to study informatics at university. Having finished the first year, she decided to choose a different field of study, i.e. English and informatics at the Faculty of Education. On entry to the English language study programme she self-assessed her level of English as B1.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences				
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences		
Individual phonemes	1.0			
Intonation	1.5			
Rhythm	1.0			
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.17	Analytic assessment (mean)		1.33
Holistic assessment	1.5	Holistic assessment		1.4

Cindy's L1 accent puts a strain on the listener because of her frequent mispronunciations of English phonemes and staccato and disconnected rhythm, e.g. *'not 'at 'all*. Apart from short phrases, there is virtually no trace of English rhythm and intonation. These errors concern vowels. The ash is mispronounced as /e/ in *math, faculty, thank, flat, highlands, chat, that*, and in most cases of *and*, but occasionally, when it is used as a hesitation filler, it is pronounced correctly with the ash. Instead of the schwa, full vowel pronunciations occur in *would, from, for* and in unstressed syllables in *technology, communicate, especially*, or the Czech /e/ sound in *about*. The neutralisation of voicing in word-final positions is widespread, e.g. /t/ in *good, hundred, thousand, and*, /ts/ in *Highlands, friends*, /s/ in *rooms*, /f/ in *have, five*. Sometimes, though, there is /z/ in *was*. The bilabial /w/ is replaced by the Czech /v/, e.g. *twenty, one, which*; the digraph 'th' is variably mispronounced as /s/ in *with*, /f/ in *thousand, think, thing, thank*, or /d/ in *that*. In most cases the English velar nasal is not enunciated properly, e.g. *language, English, thing*. There are also some word mispronunciations, e.g. **playing* for *planning*, **wars* for *was*, **known* for *know*. However, most utterances can be understood in spite of a very strong L1 accent.

Cindy is not a very skilled speaker and there are so many mistakes in her sentences that her speech is sometimes difficult to understand. She often repeats the same phrases and her vocabulary is rather poor. Even if the assessment of some of the phrases that are tested, such as *would like, there is/are*, or *I think*, is quite good, her overall performance does not reveal skilful communicative language competences. There are only a few complex sentences, mainly with object clauses (non-finite) and some full relative clauses. The absence of the semi-modal *have* is not compensated for by polite phrases *you should, you are supposed to*, as it is the case with good speakers of this group. Also, she has not used any verb phrases marked for aspect.

Selected aspects of pragmatic competences				
	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	1	2		
Discussion	2	2	1	2
Task – answering	2	1	3	1
Task – asking	2	2	2	3
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.88			
Holistic assessment	1.5			

She makes efforts to follow a common schema of interaction; for this purpose she uses mostly *so, OK*. She also tries to produce longer sentences, sometimes with more complex structures, not only connected by *and*. Surprisingly, she uses longer utterances when asking than when answering in the information transfer task. No DMs can be found as utterance launchers and she uses filled pauses (*er*) instead. Her longer lexical repeats in comparison to repeats of pronouns also make her performance rather clumsy.

Wendy

She started to learn English at nursery school and at the same time she also attended private lessons with another child. These private lessons continued, though with different teachers, up to the middle of secondary school. They bridged the gap between her first exposure to English in the pre-school period and the beginning of formal education in grade 3. While her attitudes toward English were positive, her attitudes toward learning English at basic school were negative, which Wendy attributed to the frequent turnover of teachers. She also participated in a school trip to England, which she appreciated because she had a chance to communicate with NSs and to learn about English culture. Her attitudes to learning English turned positive under the influence of two of her teachers, an NNS and an NS. Furthermore, she was also involved in English-related activities outside school. Up to the age of fifteen, she listened to music and played PC games (I^{BS} low). When she grew older, in addition to that she read books, browsed the internet, watched TV series and films, and translated lyrics regularly (I^{SS} average).

Wendy passed the school maturita exam with grade 1 in 2014. The same year she entered university education. She self-assessed her level of English as B2. She marked vocabulary, reading, and listening as her strengths. She indicated only one weakness – speaking.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences			
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences	
Individual phonemes	1.5		
Intonation	2.0		
Rhythm	1.5		
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.66	Analytic assessment (mean)	0.44
Holistic assessment	1.5	Holistic assessment	1.0

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Wendy's L1 accent puts a strain on the listener as a result of her frequent mispronunciations of English phonemes and staccato and disconnected rhythm. However, she sometimes employs intonation to convey her intended meaning. She makes numerous errors as a result of L1 interference. The ash is mispronounced as /e/ in *flat*, *grandfather*, *aerobics*, *at*, *that*, and in most cases of *and*. Instead of the schwa, full vowel pronunciations occur in weak forms of function words, e.g. *would*, *could*, *from*, *for, some, to, must,* and in unstressed syllables in *beautiful*, *idioms*, *information*. Neutralisation of voicing in word-final positions is frequent: /t/ in *grand*, /s/ in *idioms*, /f/ in *have*, *of*. The bilabial /w/ is often replaced with the Czech /v/, e.g. *one*, *which*. In most cases the English velar nasal is not enunciated properly, e.g. *language*, *English*, *thing*. There are also some word mispronunciations, e.g. *courses* /kɔːzis/, *certificate* (n.) /-eɪt/. However, she can be understood in spite of a very strong L1 accent.

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Wendy's performance does not give evidence of any well-built grammatical and lexical competences. Her reactions to her partner in dialogues and also her monologue are extremely short. She does mention speaking as her least-developed skill, but apart from being short, her sentences also reveal some features which attest to a lower level of ability in the English language. She mostly uses the modal verb *must* (unlike other students, who prefer *have to*) and the verb *want* where *would like* might be a better choice. There are no aspect verb phrases included in her speech and there are hardly any subordinate clauses (a few relative and object finite clauses). Her language is unusually simple both in dialogues and in her monologue. The vocabulary is rather unsophisticated and there are mistakes in sentence structures.

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Selected aspects of pragmatic competences				
	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	1	1		
Discussion	1	3	2	2
Task – answering	1	2	2	2
Task – asking	1	3	2	2
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.81			
Holistic assessment	1.0			

She speaks very little and in very short turns. Moreover, her utterances are often dysfluent and sometimes even difficult to understand. She uses neither DMs, nor other means of discourse management. When she uses a longer structure, it is usually repeated several times. The overuse of a filled pause (*er*) is noticeable in all four parts of her performance. In the analytic assessment all the figures (except quantity) indicate an average performance; however, the holistic evaluation is much lower because of the impression of a very low degree of information transfer, disruptive utterances in her turns, and an overall inability to produce messages with the basic features required by pragmatic competences, mainly discourse and functional (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 123–128).

6.2.4 Group 4

Characteristics

Jane's and Eve's English learning biographies are unique in terms of their length of residence in an ESC. Additionally, Jane's encounters with the target culture became an important source of motivation. Eve's profile nicely illustrates the alteration of attitudes toward learning English at school from rather negative to very positive in the course of compulsory school attendance and the positive influence of her stays in the target culture environment on her attitudes.

Jane

Jane's profile is different in that she started with English relatively late and her encounters with the target culture became an important source of motivation. Since Jane studied German as her first FL, she started to learn English as an optional subject in grade 8 of basic school at the age of fourteen. Then she continued at secondary school in a group of beginners. In spite of her late start she managed to pass the B1 state maturita exam in English. Then she continued her studies at a Higher Vocational School of Tourism, where English represented an important part of the curriculum. Her attitudes toward English and to learning English were positive.

While at secondary school Jane started to use English outside school; browsing the internet was a daily activity. Moreover, she watched films and TV series, listened to music, and communicated online every week (I^{BS} very low, I^{SS} average). While at secondary school Jane experienced an NS teacher. She also participated in a school trip to the United Kingdom, during which she found Scotland especially enchanting. She liked the country a lot, and therefore, she returned to Scotland for the summer four times in a row. The stays repeatedly generated motivation to learn, facilitated her progress in English, and brought new friendships.

On entry to university education, Jane self-assessed her level of English as B1, claiming that listening and translation were her strengths, grammar and speaking her weaknesses.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences			
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences	
Individual phonemes	1.5		
Intonation	1.5		
Rhythm	1.5		
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.5	Analytic assessment (mean)	1.56
Holistic assessment	1.5	Holistic assessment	2.0

Jane's L1 accent puts a strain on the listener as she makes numerous errors stemming from L1 interference, but she can still be understood. Her troublesome phonemes are: the velar nasal /ŋ/ is sometimes replaced by /nk/ in *song*, *reading*, *riding*; the ash is often conflated with /e/ in *Harry*, *about*, *badminton*; final voiced consonants sound devoiced. Some weak forms of grammatical words are incorrectly pronounced with full vowel quality, e.g. *but, and, can,* as are vowels in unstressed syllables of content words, e.g. *badminton*, *helpful*, *intermediate*. The digraph *th* is systematically enunciated as /tʰ/ instead of /θ/ in *Thursday*, *think*, *theatre*, *third*. She often produces /v/ instead of /w/ in *what*, *well*. There are also some word mispronunciations, e.g. schedule /ʃedl/, grammatical /ˈɡrʌmʌtɪk/. In a few places she pauses before the end of a sentence or a word and ends very quietly, which makes it sound as if the final syllable or phoneme is missing, e.g. diffic**ult** */dɪfɪkʊl/. Her rhythm worsens in the second part of the interview and she sounds fairly monotonous.

Jane can manage a discussion on various topics, but her language is not free of some morphological and structural mistakes. In spite of that, she is not difficult to understand and the amount of information she provides is satisfactory. The frequent verb *think* is usually followed by NF object clauses and the conjunction *that* is sometimes correctly elided. Condensed object clauses are expressed by both the infinitive and gerund.
There are no perfect aspect verb phrases, but some progressive ones can be found in her speech. Her sentences are not very complex, but there are some examples of full relative clauses. Apart from the sentences with the semi-modal *have* she also uses *need* for obligation or recommendation. On the whole, Jane is not an eloquent speaker, but is able to present information clearly.

Selected aspects of pragmatic competences				
	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	2	1		
Discussion	1	1	3	1
Task – answering	1	1	3	1
Task – asking	2	1	2	2
Analytic assessment (mean)	1.63			
Holistic assessment	2.0			

Jane's performance could be labelled as very economical. She produces quite short and uncomplicated structures. On the other hand, she is able to communicate what is required in a particular task. For taking a turn she often uses a filled pause (*er*) instead of an utterance launcher in the form of a DM or linking adverbial. Additionally, relatively many utterances are left incomplete; however, they do not prevent interaction and understanding.

Eve

She was exposed to English in early childhood, but only occasionally. Her formal education in English started in grade 4. At basic school her attitudes toward learning English were negative, which she attributed to the very frequent turnover of teachers – she experienced five different teachers at basic school, none of whom was an NS. In the first year of secondary school her attitudes to the subject remained unchanged thanks to the teacher, whose methods she disapproved of. Her attitudes were reflected in the bad grades she received. The situation changed abruptly with a new teacher in the second year, who managed to motivate Eve to learn. Neither of her two secondary school teachers was an NS. Apart from learning English at school, she never attended any free-time courses, but she used English outside school with increasing intensity. While at basic school she listened to music or played PC games weekly (I^{BS} low), while at secondary school she was involved in many different autonomous free-time activities daily or weekly (I^{SS} very high). Furthermore, inspired by her sister, Eve visited England twice before the maturita exam. She perceived the stays as being highly beneficial for all kinds of reasons, and therefore, after passing the maturita exam, she left for England again and spent three years there as an au pair.

She passed the maturita exam in English with grade 2, which was before the changes to the format of the exam were implemented. Three years later, on entry to the English language study programme she self-assessed her level of English as C1.

Selected aspects of linguistic competences			
Aspects of phonological competence		Aspects of grammatical and lexical competences	
Individual phonemes	2.5		
Intonation	3.0		
Rhythm	3.0		
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.83	Analytic assessment (mean)	1.89
Holistic assessment	2.5	Holistic assessment	2.5

Overall, Eve's accent is slight and her pronunciation is very good. Her vowels are very accurate, apart from /e/ in *you have to*. There is some rare spelling pronunciation, e.g. /e/ in *museum*, or word mispronunciations, e.g. *enthusiastic* and *residence* with /t/, which rarely cause difficulty. Her consonants show a number of errors of detail, e.g. the velar nasal at the end of words is enunciated as /nk/, e.g. *making*. She sometimes has a problem with some weak forms of grammatical words such as *to, into,* and *us,* while she pronounces all the others correctly as weak. She consistently says /s/ where it should be /z/, e.g. *games, Londoners*. On the other hand, she uses sentence stress to highlight meaning and can vary her rhythm and apply appropriate intonation patterns. In general, she is easy to understand, although her L1 accent is sometimes evident.

Eve's grammatical and lexical competences are good, but not excellent. The influence of her stay in England is revealed in idiomatic phrases, which she uses repeatedly (*I am into …*), in the usage of the verb *get* as a synonym for *have* (not common with other students) and also the colloquial *wanna*. Her usage of perfect aspect verb phrases approximates her language to that of a native speaker. The verb *have*, functioning as a modal auxiliary, is used in all her sentences where obligation is expressed. Subordinate clauses are mainly in their finite forms, non-finite verbs being used as objects or complements. She sounds very polite, because she uses *would* and *would like* extensively and she presents her statements with *I think* at their beginning, allowing her partner to express a different opinion.

Selected aspects of pragmatic competences				
	Qua	Com	Int	Act
Monologue	3	2		
Discussion	3	2	3	2
Task – answering	2	2	2	2
Task – asking	3	2	2	2
Analytic assessment (mean)	2.27			
Holistic assessment	3.0			

She communicates quite a lot, is an active interlocutor, and has a natural way of interacting. She uses quite a wide range of utterance launchers (*oh, and, so, maybe, well*), and also the two-word DM *I mean* and the stance adverbials *actually* and *really*, which is quite exceptional in the CCSSE. Her occasional repeats (e.g. *in a – in a; it's – it's*) and repairs (e.g. *there – here; I can – I have to*) sound like a normal part of a flow of conversation. In general, her performance demonstrates her ability to employ various strategies of pragmatic competence, which makes her communication very efficient, with the impression being given of natural discourse.

6.3 Summary

6.3.1 Summary – selected aspects of phonological competence

Intelligible and comprehensible pronunciation is an essential prerequisite for would-be teachers of English. Table A1 (Appendix 8) shows both the analytic and holistic assessments. The analytic scores for the twenty students are given for three chosen pronunciation features, their mean scores follow, and finally, an overall holistic assessment is provided. Table A2 (Appendix 8) shows the mean distribution of the scores.

As can be seen from the top end of Table A1 (Appendix 8), there are eight students who achieve 2.0 or more points for each aspect of pronunciation. They are high achievers, whose mean scores are higher than the mean (= 1.91), whereas the bottom end of Table A1 (Appendix 8) illustrates the alarming results of three students who score only 1.0 or 1.5 points for each chosen aspect of pronunciation, and of another nine students with scores ranging between 1.0 and 2.0 points. As a result, we have to note that twelve students' mean scores are lower than the mean (1.91) of the mean scores, which is worrying as some of these students are expected to become English teachers who are supposed to provide an appropriate model of English pronunciation for their learners to copy.

The analytic pronunciation scores are one source of information, the other being the students' pronunciation profiles. The verbal report of the profiles is complemented by the holistic score (the last columns in Table A1, Appendix 8).

We have approached the analysis of pronunciation profiles from the point of view of contrastive analysis, and in consensus with Odlin (1989), we search for common and noticeable pronunciation problems stemming from negative transfer caused by differences between the English and Czech sound systems and shared by some students. At the same time, we are aware of the danger of such an approach: "Contrastive analysis, the structural basis for predictions of transfer, normally relies on comparisons of collective, not individual, linguistic behaviour" and it "may frequently give rise to inaccurate predictions of individual performances" (Odlin, 1989, p. 130). That is why, apart from looking for what students have in common in terms of the pronunciation features that were examined, we also examined how the manifestations of transfer vary from one learner to the next as proposed by Odlin (1989). Consequently, we try to pay attention to how individual learners proceed towards different, mostly higher stages of acquisition (Ellis, 1997) of a pronunciation phenomenon in question, although even then we investigate whether some pronunciation features are common to more than one learner.

The data stemming from these profiles seems to reveal interesting trends in the three areas of pronunciation that were examined. At the same time, they seem to display concrete evidence of different kinds of variability at different stages of language development.

Although Ellis (1997) relates this variability to grammatical structures, we are persuaded that these stages might also be applied to the acquisition of pronunciation. Initially, learners begin by acquiring a single form, e.g. a fall tone for wh- questions, and use it for a variety of functions, e.g. asking for information or reassurance. Later, they acquire other forms, e.g. a rise tone for yes/no questions, but at first they employ them interchangeably in free variation, which means that learners might use two or more forms, correct and incorrect ones, in close proximity with similar amounts of planning time (Ellis, 1997, pp. 28–29). Ellis (1997) goes on to propose that free variation may constitute an essential stage in acquisition and believes that the chances are that, at the following stage, learners start using one form in planned or rehearsed discourse and the other one in unplanned discourse fairly systematically. Lastly, at the completion stage, learners start consistently using target language forms like NSs instead of non-target language forms (Ellis, 1997). This process represents a most welcome output. Contrary to this process, we also identify some cases of fossilisation at the moment of recording, which means that some learners keep using non-target pronunciation forms consistently as they do not seem to have reached the completion stage yet.

These pronunciation features seem to be of the utmost importance of distinguishing students' performance at the B2–C1 levels: the employment of appropriate intonation patterns and rhythm to highlight meaning; the appropriate use of weak forms of function words; the conflation of the ash and /e/; the inappropriate devoicing of the word-final consonants /d, z, v, b, g/, and the inability to cope with the production of some weak vowels in unstressed syllables of content words (cf. 6.4.1–6.4.5).

Apart from the above-mentioned aspects of pronunciation, a majority of the students who were surveyed experience difficulty when pronouncing words of foreign origin (36 items); most of these words owe their origin to French, Latin, and/or Greek (Table A3, Appendix 8). Most of the students tend to produce pronunciations that reflect their spelling. To be more specific, there are not many surprises in the type of pronunciation errors identified: there is heavy use of a full vowel suggested in writing instead of a weak vowel, namely the schwa (21 instances), e.g. *agency, system*, *technology*, *semester*, *license*, *frequent*, *confidence*, *residence*, *museum*, *university* /-ver-/, *kilometres*, *poems*, *combine*, *introduce*, *idioms*, *information*, *promoter*, *certificate* /-eɪ-/, *karaoke*; inability to pronounce the ash, predominantly in the first syllable of a word (nine instances), e.g. *faculty*, *math, mathematics, clarinet, salary, camp, *grammatic, contact*; not surprisingly, the placement of primary stress on the first syllable instead of on other syllables (seven instances), e.g. *'education, 'events, 'technology, 'enthusiastic, 'grammatic, 'karaoke, 'mathematics*; mispronunciation of the whole word (three instances), e.g. *schedule* /ʃedl/, *karaoke* /karaoke/, *flute* /fuːt/. In contrast, there are few cases of the mispronunciation of consonants (three instances), e.g. *archery* /t/*, agency* /g/, *centre* /c/; pronunciation of the weak vowel suggested in writing

by the letter *u* instead of a strong vowel /u:/ (2 instances), e.g. s*tudent*, *education*; enunciation of /a/ instead of the diphthong /eə/ (1 instance), e.g. *various*.

6.3.2 Summary – selected aspects of grammatical and lexical competences

If the grammatical and partly lexical components of linguistic competences (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 108–111) of the group of twenty students who were analysed are summarised, there are certain similarities in their performance.

All the students who reached marks from 2 to 3 in their holistic evaluation used aspect verb phrases (more often progressive), but not infrequently they also used perfect aspect, which was not very common in the analysis of the CCSSE. Their use of non-finite verb phrases is more extensive, appearing not only in the nominal positions (S, O, C), but also in the condensation of relative and adverbial clauses. In spite of that, finite relative clauses with or without expressed relativisers and also finite adverbial clauses predominate.

The best students in the group produced well-structured complex nominal phrases. The usage of *must* instead of *have to* and *want* instead of *would like* is typical of those who reached a mark of one at the maximum and indicates a lower level of grammatical and lexical competences in English. Those who reached the highest holistic evaluation had acquired a noticeably better vocabulary which they were able to use in well-structured sentences. A majority of the students used idiomatic expressions and comment clauses.

6.3.3 Summary – selected aspects of pragmatic competence

As regards the level of pragmatic competences, we can offer a few concluding remarks. In the groups of students with different scores some tendencies are revealed.

The mean score in both types of assessment of aspects of pragmatic competences is identical (two points). In the analytic one, eleven students are placed above average; in the holistic one seven students scored above average and five of them just average. Thus the overall numbers are rather similar; however, the combinations of the two assessments of the individual students differ considerably.

If we examine the results in the analytic assessment, it seems that the students with higher scores tend to speak more, but not necessarily that they produce longer utterances. In addition to that, the figures show the interrelation between complexity and interactivity – in most cases, if the performance is more interactive, it is also less complex, which agrees with the findings of the analyses of NSs' conversation and proves that complexity is not of the highest importance in spoken interaction.

In the holistic assessment the overall impression of the performance with respect to the aspects of pragmatic competences (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 123) was taken into consideration, together with the features listed in Section 6.1.2.3. On the basis of the results,

it can be concluded that all the students prove their awareness of the strategies necessary for efficient interaction; however, they do not always have the required command of particular structures used for this purpose. There are significant differences among the range of particular linguistic means they are able to use for this aim, which is reflected in the final score.

Special attention should be paid to the agreement/disagreement of the analytic and holistic assessment scores. The seven students holistically categorised as *above average* are also (with one exception: mean = 1.83) assessed as *above average* in the analytic type. Contrary to that, only three out of the seven students scored as the best in the analytic type, and the others had fewer points (1.5 or 2), which suggests that although they are able to produce a sufficient quantity of language with sufficient complexity, interactivity, and activity, the overall impression of their performance is much lower and there is a deficiency of appropriate structures commonly used in interactive communication.

Not only was there quite a wide dispersion of scores but also there were big differences among the students' abilities to use an appropriate range of discourse markers and other linking structures, phrases expressing stance and hedging, and natural hesitators (except filled and unfilled pauses). However, most of the students showed an acceptable degree of interactivity, even though they had not mastered the proper linguistic means. In such cases they seem to apply compensation strategies – sometimes more efficiently, sometimes less so. For example, they choose just one single DM and they use it for a variety of functions or they combine one hesitator with filled and unfilled pause(s). Another visible tendency is the influence of their mother tongue when they try to apply structures which are common in Czech. One example of this negative transfer is the overuse of the linking adverb *so*.

6.3.4 Comparison of selected aspects of linguistic and pragmatic competences

In this section we draw conclusions concerning the inter-learner and intra-learner variability of the assessments of linguistic and pragmatic competences, which were formulated on the basis of the six scores (both analytic and holistic) each candidate was awarded by three raters.

Regarding the inter-learner variability of the assessments of linguistic and pragmatic competences across the whole group of learners, the results are shown in Table 6.1. The first four descriptive statistics, i.e. the mean, median, mode, and the frequency of mode, provide concise and accurate descriptions of the degree of grouping of the test scores; on average the mean analytic score for selected aspects of lexical and grammatical competences ($\overline{x}$ = 1.46) is much lower than the analytic scores dealing with the selected aspects of phonological competence ($\overline{x}$ = 1.91) or pragmatic competences ($\overline{x}$ = 2.00). This might be due to the fact that a 7–point scale was applied (0–3 points), unlike the 5–point scale in the instances of assessing chosen aspects of pragmatic and phonological competences

(Cf. Sections 6.1.2.2 with 6.1.2.1, 6.1.2.3). It might also signal, however, learners' urgent language needs for remedial teaching in the area of selected aspects of lexical and grammatical competences. On the contrary, the mean holistic scores for the selected aspects of all competences range between 2.03 and 2.08 (Appendix 16).

Table 6.1

Descriptive statistics for selected aspects of linguistic and pragmatic competences (n = 20)

Competences	Assessment type	Mean	Median	Mode	Frequency of mode	Min.	Max.	Range	Standard deviation
Selected aspects of phonological competence	analytic	1.91	1.83	1.83	4	1.17	2.83	1.66	0.489
	holistic	2.05	2.00	2.00	7	1.50	3.00	1.50	0.444
Selected aspects of lexical and grammatical competences	analytic	1.46	1.50	1.33	3	0.44	2.22	1.78	0.478
	holistic	2.08	2.00	3.00	5	1.00	3.00	2.00	0.680
Selected aspects of pragmatic competence	analytic	2.00	2.05	1.81	2	1.44	2.42	0.98	0.240
	holistic	2.03	2.00	3.00	5	1.00	3.00	2.00	0.733

Descriptive statistics for selected aspects of linguistic and pragmatic competences (Table 6.1) indicated that the chosen aspects of pragmatic and phonological competences were assessed more leniently than the selected aspects of lexical and grammatical competences, which is suggested, in particular, by the mean (1.46), median (1.50), and mode (1.33) of the analytic scores. We have to be aware, however, that the three assessors measured "different areas of language ability" and the seemingly harsher one used a "different scale of measurement" (Bachman, 2004, pp. 296–297), i.e. 0–3. The descriptive statistics are based on raw scores "in terms of criterion levels of ability, as defined in rating scales (the selected aspects of lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic competences) or band descriptors (the selected aspects of phonological competence)" (Bachman, 2004, p. 301). While the descriptive statistics for the selected aspects of linguistic and pragmatic competences (Table 6.1) indicated variability in scores across the whole group of learners, individuals' variability in scores related to different competences was also investigated.

The intra-learner variability in terms of linguistic and pragmatic competences in the case of individual learners may be considered systematic to a certain extent; there is great coherence among the scores in the case of five students (Olivia, George, Jane, Frances, and Cindy) (cf. Table 6.2). On the other hand, individual learners display considerable variability in the spread of their scores over the four score categories in the case of five students (Kate, Tess, David, Rose, and Wendy) and even across five categories in the case of one student (Paul). The group in between consists of nine students whose scores range across three successive score categories.

The astonishingly high differences between individual students' highest and lowest scores, i.e. a difference of one or more points, are identified in the cases of nine students (the 17 scores highlighted in bold in the table in Appendix 16). This concerns the analytic assessment (one instance) as well as the holistic one (three instances) of the chosen aspects of pragmatic competences, the analytic assessment (eight instances) and the holistic one (four instances) of the aspects of lexical and grammatical competences, and one instance that relates to the holistic score and three instances that concern the analytic scores of selected features of phonological competence. Furthermore, there are three students (Paul, Rose, and Wendy) who received once each an unusually low score (<1.00) for lexical and grammatical competences.

The assessments obtained for phonological competence are treated separately on purpose. There does not seem to be any positive relationship between the lowest scores for phonological competence (Victor, Alice, and David) in comparison with those for pragmatic, lexical, and grammatical competences. On the contrary, their low scores for phonological competence contrast with the frequency of high scores (2.00–3.00) for the remaining competences (Victor – 4, Alice – 3, David – 2). These three students seem to have noticeable strengths and weaknesses. On the other hand, there are many positive relationships. The lowest differences between two scores, i.e. a difference of .5, or score equality, in the case of phonological competence compared with pragmatic competence, are as follows: 13 pairs of scores for analytic assessment and 16 pairs of scores for holistic assessment. Comparing the lowest differences between the two scores for analytic and holistic assessment of phonological competence with those for lexical and grammatical competences, we arrived at these results: 12 pairs of scores for analytic assessment and 13 pairs of scores for holistic assessment.

The sample of twenty learners can be grouped according to noticeable similarities with regard to the holistic and analytic assessment of linguistic and pragmatic competences. If we take into account both types of scores for the three competences presented in Appendix 16, we can group the students into five groups (Table 6.2). Patterns of variation became the organising principle for the grouping of the students.

Table 6.2

Groups of students according to the frequency of scores attained for the competences

Students' names/ Score range	Frequency of score distribution					
	2.5–3.0	2.0–2.49	1.5–1.99	1.0–1.49	0.5–0.99	0–0.49
George, Eve, Simon	4/4/4	2/1/1	-/1/1	-	-	-
Olivia	3	3	-	-	-	-
Victor, Harry, Alice	2/2/2	3/2/1	1/2/3	-	-	-
Irene	1	3	2	-	-	-
Kate, Tess,	1/1	2/2	2/2	1/1	-	-
Paul, David	1/1	2/1	-/3	2/1	1/-	
Lara, Jane, Nicole	-	3/2/2	2/4/3	1/-/1	-	-
Rose, Bill	-	2/1	1/3	2/2	1/-	-
Frances, Cindy	-	-	3/3	3/3	-	-
Wendy	-	-	3	2	-	1

The students were placed in the first group if they obtained at least three scores between 2.5 and 3.00. This criterion was fulfilled by four students: George, Eve, Simon, and Olivia. The students could be included in the second group under the following conditions: (a) they obtained at least one score between 2.5 and 3.00; (b) all their scores were higher than 1.5. As a result, Victor, Harry, Alice, and Irene were placed in the second group. The criteria for inclusion in the third group were as follows: (a) they obtained at least one score between 2.5 and 3.00; (b) at least one score was below 1.5. Consequently, Kate, Tess, Paul, and David appeared in the third group. Placement in the fourth group was conditioned by two criteria: (a) no score between 2.5 and 3.00; (b) at least one score between 2.0 and 2.49. Thus, five students were included in this group: Lara, Jane, Nicole, Rose, and Bill. Lastly, only those students who did not obtain a single score in the two highest categories, i.e. Frances, Cindy, and Wendy, were placed in the fifth group.

6.4 Conclusions – routes and destinations

In the previous section the findings regarding the selected aspects of linguistic and pragmatic competences were summarised, which resulted in the students being divided into five groups. In this section we aim to interrelate the students' scores with their learning histories, in order to find out potential links between the routes the students followed and the destinations they reached till the moment they entered university. In other words, we will also discuss the shared characteristics of students within individual groups in qualitative terms. We start with the group of students obtaining the highest scores.

6.4.1 George, Eve, Simon, Olivia

In the group with the highest scores (George, Eve, Simon, Olivia), all the students not only learned English at school but experienced a wide variety of educational contexts. What they have in common is their proactive approach to using English; not only were they exposed to the language extensively outside school but they were also involved in interaction with NSs or NNSs of English. Another shared characteristic is that all of them were exposed to some English in early childhood. Unlike the pro-active approach to using English, this does not seem to be a distinctive feature, since the students who experienced English as pre-schoolers are distributed across the groups, including the bottom group. With the exception of Eve, all the students in this group maintained positive attitudes toward English throughout their whole learning histories. Furthermore, Simon and George were always positive about learning English as well. Olivia managed to overcome her negative attitudes to learning English at school because she liked the language and was able to use it effectively in communication with NSs outside the school setting. Eve's attitudes changed at secondary school as a consequence of the coming of a new teacher and the positive impact of her stay in England.

The students' proactive approach to using English in all possible ways reflects positively in their level of phonological performance. They achieved 2.0 or more points for each aspect of pronunciation and 2.5 or more points for holistic assessment, and their mean scores are higher than the mean (= 1.91). There is a growing tendency among them to employ appropriate intonation patterns and rhythm to highlight meaning. So they might be at the completion stage for intonation and rhythm from the point of view of stages in the acquisition of target structures (Ellis, 1997, p. 29). To a certain extent, these learners have also become successful in the appropriate use of some weak forms, although there is still considerable variation in their use, so the system of their weak forms has not yet appeared in a fully stable condition. For example, Simon's use of weak forms is correct in the case of ***that***, *from*, ***and***, *at*, *of*; however, ***have***/***has*** is mostly appropriately used, but in the same contexts he sometimes mispronounces both words with /e/ instead of the schwa; in all probability this is an instance of free variation. For George, only the weak forms of *can*, *to*, ***and*** appear to be difficult; the weak forms of ***to***, *into*, ***us*** are not realised appropriately by Eve. Nearly all Olivia's weak forms are correctly pronounced, with the exception of "***to music***". Their inventory of RP vowels is very good; however, they all consistently mispronounce the ash as /e/, they sometimes inappropriately devoice the word-final consonants /d, z, v, b, g/, and occasionally they do not produce weak vowels in the unstressed syllables of content words.

In the area of grammatical and lexical competences, all the speakers are assessed very high; most of them showed that they have mastered a wide range of grammatical structures

and lexical items, most of them used verb forms of various aspects (not only simple forms), and they were also able to form sentences according to diverse patterns. Moreover, Olivia, George and Simon made hardly any mistakes, which was quite exceptional. Eve, on the other hand, proved her ability to use common colloquial expressions and idiomatic structures, undeniably the result of her long stay in an ESC and the opportunity to communicate with NSs.

As regards pragmatic competences, their holistic assessment is at the top and Simon, Eve, and Olivia are also the first three in the analytic assessment. Their performances were highly interactive and they were able to use a wide variety of DMs, including two-word DMs (*you know, I mean*). Their strategies for gaining time are also closer to natural authentic conversation as they used repeats and repairs quite frequently. Extra-school contexts thus seem quite important for gaining the ability to communicate and interact efficiently, and to structure discourse in English appropriately. Another environment that possibly helps to achieve a desirable level of pragmatic competences is a longer stay in an ESC (Eve).

6.4.2 Victor, Harry, Alice, Irene

The second group of students is rather heterogeneous in several aspects: in terms of lifelong attitudes to English and learning English; the extent to which they learnt English in an informal context, and pre-school exposure. While Harry's attitudes were positive all the time, Victor's, Alice's, and Irene's attitudes, especially to learning English at school, were modified from negative to positive. As concerns informal learning, Harry and Victor used English extensively in the context of various kinds of PC games, which was a powerful driving force in improvjng their English. They differ, however, in their overall involvement in informal learning: considering the secondary school period, Harry's involvement was high, i.e. both frequent and varied, whereas Victor's use of English outside school was low, reflecting his narrow focus on playing PC games. Contrary to Harry's and Victor's experience, Irene's and Alice's learning was predominantly linked to the formal context; it was only towards the end of secondary school that they started to use English outside school quite actively, though receptively. Unlike Irene and Alice, Harry and Victor were involved in interaction with NSs and NNSs of English both face-to-face and in the online environment before the maturita exam. Regarding pre-school exposure, Harry and Victor went through such an experience; however, Irene and Alice did not. In spite of some differences, Harry's and Victor's learning histories reveal many similarities, as do Irene's and Alice's, whose paths, however, followed different directions after the maturita exam: Alice entered university, whereas Irene enrolled in an intensive course of English, which later turned out to be the most significant event in her life, especially as regards opportunities to interact with NSs.

As regards aspects of phonological competence, Harry and Victor try to employ rhythm and sometimes intonation to enhance meaning. In Harry's case, the proper acquisition of intonation patterns concerns only formulaic language and learnt chunks of English. He seems to proceed through interim stages of intonation use before he masters the target intonation patterns, i.e. from contexts in which he can use "learned" chunks of target language to the use of "unplanned FL" in other contexts (Ellis, 1997, p. 29). Victor's intonation patterns are much better in the first part of the interview; in the second part he sounds a little monotonous, partly as a result of his fairly fast pace of speech. He pronounces most function words incorrectly as strong forms. On the other hand, Alice and Irene's performances are unstable in many aspects of pronunciation. Alice sounds Czenglish mainly as a result of her mispronunciations of /ð/, /ŋ/, /æ/, the schwa, and word-final voiced consonants, and her syllable-timed rhythm, which might be attributed to a lack of interaction in English. Although she is aware of her inadequate spoken English, she does not seem to look for communication activities proactively. This is what she has in common with Irene. Irene's negative attitude towards learning English is reflected in her pronunciation performance as well (mean score for analytic assessment = 1.66), because she shows lapses in rhythm and intonation in particular, which might be attributed to a lack of exposure to NSs' English.

The scores of the students in this group were quite high in terms of the assessment of their grammatical and lexical competences. Especially Harry and Victor used well-formed sentences, extensive vocabulary, and also a number of structures which would not be expected at this level of SLA. These features seem to be in accordance with their learning histories, since they used English in informal contexts productively – they had a chance to communicate both with NSs and NNSs quite extensively. Even though Alice's and Irene's performances were not so excellent, neither of them made many mistakes, they structured sentences well so that they were easy to understand, they used verb phrases in various aspects, and their speech was structurally polite (e.g. the use of *would like*).

In the area of pragmatic competences, the students show strengths and weaknesses. They are aware of the necessity to apply certain strategies to keep up interactive communication and they try to produce an appropriate amount of language; however, the range of structures used for this function is rather limited. Surprisingly, Alice and Irene are much better than Victor and Harry in terms of adopting the level of interactivity to the demands of the type of dialogue. Even with a rather limited inventory of discourse management devices, they are able to produce a smooth, natural conversation. On the contrary, Harry and Victor do not display a very high level of pragmatic competences. Even though both of them produce quite a lot of language and their utterances are structured and well-arranged, interactional and transactional aspects are missing. It is reflected in lower scores for interactivity, and the holistic assessment also uncovered a rather limited variety of DMs and their performances at several moments give the impression of a monologue. It is rather unexpected that Alice

and Irene, who acquired English almost exclusively in formal environments, are able to communicate more naturally and interactively than Harry and Victor, who had a chance to interact with NSs and NNSs in authentic environments.

6.4.3 Kate, Tess, Paul, David

The students in this group, with the exception of Paul, were considerably involved in informal learning, though in a slightly different way for each of them. Tess was involved in many different activities regularly; she interacted with NSs of English both face-to-face and online. David was rather focused on a narrow scope of activities; playing PC games extensively was later complemented by ICT-mediated interaction with NSs and NNSs of English. Unlike Tess and David, Kate's engagement in informal learning was mostly receptive but was massive for about two years. Even though Paul did not use English in autonomous activities outside school, his exposure to the target language was quite high in the formal context since he studied at a Czech-English grammar school. In a way this relates him to the rest of the group. Importantly, all the students in this group had a chance to interact with NSs or with other speakers of English. While Tess and Paul experienced face-to-face encounters with NSs, David and Kate interacted in English, though in the online environment only. Another characteristic they share is that nobody in this group ever attended a free-time language course or private lessons till the end of secondary school. Otherwise, the group appears heterogeneous in terms of attitudes: three students in this group, excluding Tess, experienced the alteration of their attitudes to English or to learning English at school. The group is also dissimilar from the perspective of pre-school exposure to English: Tess, Paul, and Kate were in contact with English before the age of six, but David did not experience such exposure.

Thus the most distinctive characteristic of this group seems to be the essential role of informal learning in the lives of the students, as well as negative attitudes to English or to learning English, which the students, excluding Tess, developed in a certain phase of their lives. Apparently, Tess does not fit into the group at all. Interestingly, her characteristics match those of the best group perfectly, but the quality of her performance, specifically in terms of pragmatic, lexical, and grammatical competences, does not.

Kate (only holistic score), Tess, and Paul's scores were very good (2.0–2.5), which might be explained by their early (childhood) start in learning English, which may have positively influenced their pronunciation. Although they make quite good use of stress, intonation, and sometimes rhythm to express meaning, they have a number of problematic pronunciations of segmental features, in particular /ð/, /ŋ/, /æ/, the schwa, and word-final voiced consonants. On top of that, Paul conflates /v/ with w/. All of them pronounce most weak forms of function words with full vowels. Kate's mean analytic score (= 1.83)

was lower, mainly because of her faulty realisations of segmentals: the *th* digraph is not well controlled, whether its pronunciation is /f/ in hea*lth*, *th*ink, or /d/ in *th*e, *th*ere; the *ng* digraph is constantly mispronounced as /nk/; the word-final voiced consonants get devoiced, and she mispronounced many words: *horse* for *hours* in *opening hours*, *mate* for *made*, *foot* for *food*.

But David does not seem to fit into this group from the pronunciation point of view. His scores are very low (analytic = 1.17, holistic = 1.5). David's L1 accent puts a strain on the listener as a result of his frequent mispronunciations of English phonemes, syllable-timed and disconnected rhythm, and numerous spelling pronunciations such as *club*, *culture* with /ʊ/, *events* /e/, *other* /o/, *frequently* /e/, *ballroom* and *hall* /aː/. It may be explained by his negative attitude to learning English at basic school. David too did not stay in an ESC, but playing online computer games made him improve his English in other domains than phonological competence. Nevertheless, he considers pronunciation in English his Achilles heel.

In the area of selected aspects of grammatical and lexical competences, David is the best member of this group. He uses complex and well-structured sentences, verb phrases in various aspects, and he has also mastered a relatively wide range of vocabulary. Both Tess and Kate create sentences which are not very long or complex, but they are able to provide basic information in an understandable way. Paul too is not difficult to understand; however, he makes many morphological and structural mistakes and his vocabulary is very limited. In spite of that he goes on speaking and mostly speaks more than the other interlocutor. It can be concluded that even though the inventories of grammatical and lexical items of the students in this group differ significantly, all of them are able to produce speech which is easy to understand, regardless of the number of mistakes. We can speculate whether this can be a positive result of their experience of authentic interaction with NSs or NNSs.

The pragmatic competences of these students, assessed analytically, are about average. However, the overall impressions their performances create differ considerably and thus the holistic scores are also different. David and Kate are better than the other two members of the group. Even though they have not mastered a wide range of structures serving the successful management of discourse, they are able to maintain interaction efficiently. Tess's score is rather lower as a result of her passive role in interaction and also her great number of very short and simple sentences. Paul's performance is assessed with the lowest score since he does not apply appropriate interactive strategies (the points in the analytic assessment of interaction are also the lowest) and uses almost no DMs and other discourse management devices. The speculation that the low level of Paul's pragmatic competences may be caused by a lack of opportunities to use English in authentic communicative contexts outside school is slightly challenged by the fact that he experienced NS teachers in school. It seems, however, that his opportunities to interact with NSs were insufficient

to impact on his English more substantially. Since they were linked to school lessons in English, we do not know how actively Paul participated in those lessons. He may have been predominantly a receiver of input; during the interview he mentioned several times how much he enjoyed listening to NS teachers' speech.

6.4.4 Lara, Jane, Nicole, Rose, Bill

This group is the most heterogeneous of all the groups. The five students share only one characteristic: none of them attended a language course in their free time. Nevertheless, they differed in their attitudes. While Jane, Rose, and Bill were always positive about English and learning English, Nicole and Lara maintained negative attitudes while at basic school. Bill was the only person who was exposed to English at a pre-school age. Regarding the use of English outside school, Bill, Jane, and Nicole were involved in autonomous English-related activities regularly while at secondary school; interestingly, their overall involvement in informal learning was at the same level (average). Contrary to that, Rose and Lara did not use English much. Similarly, Bill, Jane, and Nicole experienced interaction face-to-face with NS teachers, while Rose and Lara did not. Additionally, Jane had a chance to communicate with NSs in the target culture context, since she spent altogether nearly half a year in Scotland.

The students' attainment in pronunciation divides them into two groups: Jane with lower scores (1–1.5) for analytic and holistic assessment, and the remaining four students with higher scores (1.66–2.00) (the table in Appendix 16, Table A1 in Appendix 8). In spite of the fact that Jane spent time in an ESC repeatedly, she is a low achiever. This might reflect the fact that she started learning English late, at the end of basic school. Then the question is how to interpret Jane's long-term stays in Scotland. The interview implies that the length of her stay in itself tells us nothing about Jane's interaction with NSs; she repeatedly mentioned her appreciation of the Scottish countryside rather than of contacts with NSs. She also mentioned that she learnt to speak some Polish to make herself understood by her co-workers. In spite of her long stay in an ESC, her interaction with NSs was probably not extensive. The literature states that some aspects of competences or competences as a whole might be acquired earlier and better than others or somebody might not have "an ear" for foreign languages, specifically an "aptitude for phonetic mimicry" (Odlin, 1989, p. 132), and Jane does not seem to be able to mimic most English sounds. Odlin (1989) concludes that "individuals with little aptitude for mimicry are likely to show the effects of phonetic and phonological influence from their native languages" (p. 132), which seems to apply wholly to David's poor pronunciation performance in Group Three as well. She sounds syllable-timed and monotonous, and sometimes produces spelling pronunciations of English words in the same way as Rose does, but her L1 accent is not so evident. Rose did

not prove to be proactive in her learning of English and she experienced only the context of a formal educational setting. Lara, Nicole, and Bill have quite noticeable L1 accents, but can occasionally employ rhythm and/or intonation, at least in one part of the interview, and only exceptionally pronounce weak forms of function words appropriately. For example, Bill scored two points for both rhythm and intonation. We can think of several reasons why it is so. He proactively endeavoured to use English outside class time, experienced NSs, and started learning English early.

As regards the grammatical and lexical competences, even though generally the performances could be assessed as below average/average, there are quite noticeable differences among the members of the group. The best one is Jane, both of whose scores are above average, and the holistic assessment appreciates her ability to manage a discussion on various topics. Despite her not very complex sentences and some structural mistakes, she is easy to understand. It seems that in her case the positive influence of repeated stays in an ESC is undeniable. The next three members can be grouped together (Lara, Nicole, Bill). Their analytic assessment scores are just below average, their holistic assessment scores just above average/average.

What they have in common is quite a high frequency of mistakes and the fact that they use structures that are not very complex or diverse, but still they are able to communicate the core information. At the other end of the evaluation we can find Rose, with very low scores for these competences. She used hardly any of the selected structures representing grammatical competence and her vocabulary is also very limited, which explains her very low score in the analytic assessment; however, she is able to provide some simple information. There is a possible explanation: although she was always positive in her attitudes to English, she was never exposed to it extensively, she did not learn it in an informal environment, and she did not look for opportunities to use it in communicative situations outside school.

When we compare the scores of the assessment of the pragmatic competences of the members of this group, there are some apparent differences. Lara and Jane score higher than the others for holistic assessment. Even though they have mastered a limited range of structures for discourse management, they are able to produce natural speech which does not prevent interaction and understanding. The apparent influence of a long stay in an ESC on Jane's acquisition of English has been mentioned above; concerning Lara, we can explain her ability to prove a certain level of pragmatic competences by the change in her attitudes to English when she decided to change secondary school and found an inspiring teacher, which brought her to English-oriented free-time activities. Bill's and Nicole's performances are quite similar: holistically assessed as too dysfluent or incomplete. The analytic assessment scores are different in individual categories: while Nicole speaks a lot, with a few signals of interaction, Bill is very passive, and his quantity and complexity are very low. Rose's scores for the assessment of her pragmatic competences seem to be the most controversial.

The overall analytic figure is influenced by the high score for interactivity, which in fact cannot be perceived positively because, although they represent a high frequency of turn taking, the turns are very short and simple and do not convey the appropriate information. Similarly to the previous assessment of her lexical and grammatical competences, this can be explained by the lack of any experience of interaction in English outside school.

6.4.5 Frances, Cindy, Wendy

As concerns the characteristics of these three students' learning experience, there is one that all of them share: having been involved in non-formal learning. Cindy and Wendy experienced years of learning in afternoon courses or private lessons, Frances attended a language school relatively briefly. Those extra lessons helped Cindy to regain her self-confidence and motivation to learn, while for Wendy they represented a source of enjoyment; Frances wanted to be well prepared for her university entrance exams. While Frances maintained positive attitudes to English and learning English, Cindy and Wendy had negative attitudes to English (Cindy) or to learning English while at basic school (both). Furthermore, Wendy was the only member of this group who was exposed to English as a pre-schooler and who used English outside school. Wendy and Cindy experienced face-to-face interaction with NSs both in the Czech Republic and in ESCs, albeit short-term; Frances did not have such a chance. Moreover, she was not active in using English outside school, which was true of Cindy as well.

Their performance in pronunciation is very poor, with the exception of Wendy's intonation patterns, which are quite good. We need to bring two points to the reader's attention. First, the occurrences of pronunciation errors in individual phonemes are high and there is a wide variety, which appears to correspond with their analytic scores for individual phonemes (Table A1, Appendix 8). These three students use non-target realisations of individual phonemes consistently in both linguistically familiar and less familiar contexts; consequently, their incorrect use of some individual phonemes has fossilised, e.g. the ash pronounced as /e/, as well as the schwa in weak forms of function words as the vowel in strong forms; all final consonants are enunciated as devoiced even if it is not justified context-wise; the velar nasal in words ending in *-ing* is mispronounced, and the digraph *th* is often realised as /d/ or /f/. Second, Cindy and Frances are not able consistently to employ rhythm and intonation to enhance and/or convey meaning. This mostly concerns situations in which they have to recall less familiar linguistic resources and/or unplanned discourse, while occasionally they are more successful in the case of rehearsed phrases. The students seem to be just beyond the free variation stage as discussed above. This is reflected in the analytic scoring for intonation and rhythm. Needless to say, they are comprehensible, with some difficulties on the side of the listener.

It is difficult to find an explanation for their pronunciation problems. Frances has always had a positive attitude to English and learning English, but learnt English in a formal educational context and the use of English outside English classes did not play a significant role in her life. On the contrary, Cindy had negative attitudes to English and, like Wendy, did not like learning English at basic school, but later on started actively looking for opportunities to improve her English.

The common features of this group, as regards their grammatical and lexical competences, are a very limited range of structures, the use of quite simple sentences, and many mistakes, so that on the whole they produce sentences that are not very well formed. Moreover, in cases where the students were able to prove the miminal use of selected structures associated with grammatical and lexical competences, they quite frequently misused them.

One thing the three students have in common is that their analytic scores are higher than their holistic scores for selected aspects of pragmatic competences. It means that the overall impression of their performances is worse than the measures of particular aspects. The under-average scores in the analytic assessment of Wendy and Frances are mostly due to the low points for quantity of language, i.e. they do not speak much. Thus it is also quite difficult to assess their performances holistically when the amount of language they produce is rather limited. Generally, all of them are holistically assessed as substandard, with a very limited range of structures used in navigating their discourse.

What is most surprising is the fact that Cindy and Wendy not only learned English in school but experienced rich non-formal contexts where they had a chance to learn it. It seems that without any other motivation, the multiple learning contexts (extra classes, private lessons, etc.) cannot bring positive effects. Another important factor which could have influenced the outcomes is that their attidudes to English/learning English/usefulness of English changed during their school attendance.

6.4.5 Concluding remarks

The multiple case study was designed to investigate the possible contributions of various learning contexts to the overall development of selected communicative language competences. In other words, we were primarily concerned with the social aspects of SLA, more specifically with the social setting of L2 learning. In Chapter 2 learning contexts relevant for Czech learners of English were defined: the formal, non-formal, informal, and target culture contexts. Consistently with Batstone (2002) and Collentine and Freed (2004), we believe that it is not possible to make direct links between a particular context and a type of interaction, since, for example, every non-formal learning situation represents a unique mixture of learning and communicative contexts (Batstone, 2002) – language school courses versus English camps facilitated by NSs. Nevertheless, we may hypothesise

that the prevailing type of learning in the formal context will be explicit, whereas in an informal context implicit learning will predominate.

Naturally, we cannot expect that one particular learning context will guarantee a certain level of acquisition of communicative competences. It is apparent that informal contexts may differ significantly and various activities contribute to the development of various communicative language competences. Therefore their level is dependent on the character of the activities the students experienced in their lives.

Being aware that the number of students is limited (n = 20), we can propose some tentative conclusions concerning the tendencies revealed. Formal educational contexts seem still to rely on ways of teaching language on the basis of its written form, which does not develop students' pragmatic competences that are relevant for spoken interaction adequately and is mostly negatively reflected in the level of phonological competence that is achieved as the orthography of English seems to lead to spelling pronounciations in the case of Czech learners.

Informal and rich contexts of learning influence the level of competences acquired, depending on the particular activities and also students' attitudes. The results underscore the importance of interaction in the target language; mere exposure is insufficient. Furthermore, though ICT-mediated interaction helps, quite extensive involvement in face-to-face interaction with NSs differentiated the students in the top group from those in the second-best group. This is consistent with the conclusions formulated by Ellis (2015) that in the long run implicit learning wins out. Thus, the limited amount of interaction may be one of the reasons why some students scored relatively low even if they learnt in a variety of contexts very similar to the best students. What seems to matter most, however, is the learner's proactive attitude to their own improvement. A longer stay in a target language country proved to help students improve their performance in the area of pragmatic competences, as well as the other competences, provided the student was exposed to a large amount of spoken English and was made to and/or wanted to participate in the interaction with NNSs and NSs, in particular. Once again, the type of stay and active involvement in the interaction with speakers of English must be sought for proactively by the student. The student's tremendous inner drive to learn English and sound native-like in spite of the adverse conditions of the formal educational context seems to be as powerful or even more influential than their positive attitude to English and/or learning English, having an excellent teacher of English, or a longer stay in an ESC.

Among the students with the lowest scores (1.0–1.5) for the holistic assessment of phonological, grammatical, lexical, and pragmatic competences, most of them learned English only at school. It is in accordance with the findings of studies which proved that even if we are aware of the difference between written and spoken language, the instruction in schools is persistently based on the grammar of written language only (Hellermann

& Vergun, 2006; Timmis, 2005; Trillo, 2002; Wray, 2000). It is also consistent with the finding of Goh and Burns (2012), who propose that it is often the case that teachers provide space for speaking in lessons, but relevant feedback, including the specifics of spoken grammar, is still missing. On top of that, students are hardly ever assessed orally as marks based on written tests are the main source of evidence of learners' performance in English. Thus we may hope for a possible positive backwash effect of the common maturita exam, which introduced criteria for assessing speaking; hopefully, the use of the criteria will not remain restricted to the assessment of the maturita performance but they will also be referred to in teachers' continuous assessment of speaking. Further, classes vary tremendously in the extent to which teachers provide target language input (Najvar et al., 2013) and also even nowadays in some classes of English there is limited exposure to spoken English, even if there are recordings on CDs and DVDs accompanying each textbook and online sound files in English are readily available. McCarthy and Carter (2001) even claim that "there can be little hope for a natural spoken output on the part of language learners if the input is stubbornly rooted in models that owe their origin and shape to the written language" (p. 51).

To conclude, learning in a variety of contexts supports achieving a higher level of communicative language competences if a learner is proactive in searching for opportunities to interact with other speakers of English and to improve. Several tendencies were reported but inter-learner variability is impossible to explain solely in terms of learning contexts without considering, for example, cognitive determinants. Moreover, a larger-scale research study would be essential for finding a causal link between students' learning experience and the level of their communicative language competences.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

This chapter presents conclusions of the studies into individual learning histories and the level of selected communicative language competences acquired by the sample of Czech first-year university students who were studied in relation to the aims specified in the individual chapters.

7.1 Implications for educational practice

The project focused on novice trainee teachers' subject matter knowledge and the influence of various learning contexts on their achievement. Since learning at school represents the main context of learning for the majority of learners in the Czech Republic, implications for teaching and learning English at basic and secondary schools will be formulated first. Subsequently, suggestions for English language teacher education will be articulated, reflecting the research results.

7.1.1 Implications for teaching and learning English at basic and secondary schools

Considering the findings of the studies conducted within the project framework, we may formulate implications for teaching and learning English at basic and secondary schools.

Both the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the individual learning histories confirmed the importance of *positive attitudes* to English and learning English. Therefore, especially in the initial phases of formal education in English, affective aims seem to be more important than cognitive ones. Enhancing learners' positive attitudes is a priority, since it has a long-term impact on their learning of English. Furthermore, the learners with positive attitudes to English and to learning English are those who use English for communication in a variety of situations occurring outside school. And those learners who are extensively involved in informal learning are likely to achieve a high level of communicative language competences (Chapter 6). There are many factors which determine attitudes toward English and learning English (Chapter 2 and Chapter 3), which teachers can build on or influence, the most powerful being related to the features of the English language and satisfaction

with learning English. In the light of the research results we may summarise the teacher-related factors which appeared to influence learners' attitudes positively:

– being sensitive to *learner needs*, including *special educational needs*;
– being able to plan *varied and challenging lessons reflecting learner needs* and deploying *interesting teaching techniques without total dependence on the textbook*;
– having *expertise* in the subject of English;
– being able to *explain the subject matter* comprehensibly to their learners;
– focusing on *all aspects of English*, i.e. language systems and skills;
– being able to deal with a heterogeneous class, especially by applying the principles of *internal differentiation*;
– being able to construct *tests with positive backwash*;
– creating opportunities to *interact* in English with NSs or NNSs face to face or online.

Attitudes are closely related to *motivation* to learn an FL. It may seem obvious why it is important to learn English in the contemporary globalised world. However, it may not necessarily be that obvious to FL learners, especially to schoolchildren who are at the beginning of a long route to proficiency in English. At this stage they do not know yet what their occupation will be one day, where they will live, etc. Therefore, telling children, no matter how often, that English is important for their future life is ineffective. Initially, especially young learners have to be motivated by incentives available here and now, i.e. those coming from their lessons of English, be they related to the teacher, teaching techniques, or the language. The findings of both the quantitative and qualitative studies suggest that it is much more effective to help children find personally relevant reasons for learning English. In other words, it means implementing certain motivational strategies in lessons, for example, by making the curriculum and the teaching materials more relevant to learner needs. This presupposes that teachers know about what their learners are interested in, what they like to do in their free time, whether they are in contact with English outside school, what experience of English they gained outside school, etc. The results presented in Chapter 2 and 3 showed that the students started to use English in their life for some reason even while at basic school. It opens an opportunity to relate learning English at school to the everyday real-life experience and backgrounds of the students. Thus, consistently with the lifelong learning paradigm, the outcomes of learning from other contexts would also be acknowledged. In order to synergise learning in various contexts, various tools might be deployed, for example, a language portfolio.

The research also suggested that some aspects of English tended to be prioritised, namely grammar and vocabulary, especially at basic school. Speaking and pronunciation seem to be marginalised; at secondary school more space is devoted to the teaching of speaking in relation to the preparation for the maturita exam. In the area of *teaching speaking*, it

is important to harmonise the criteria used for assessment (especially of dialogues) and the type of feedback provided to the learners (Goh & Burns, 2012) with the expected types of spoken interaction outside school. In particular, taking into consideration the typical features of authentic conversation is crucial, as dysfluency, false starts, repetition, and self-correction are integral parts of spoken performance (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 148). Moreover, it is necessary to equip learners with an adequate inventory of tools for discourse management so that they can concentrate more on the content while interacting in conversation (Clark & Krych, 2004). This is coupled with the need to increase the amount of exposure to NSs' input to provide learners with models of authentic use of English. In order to provide relevant feedback, however, not only should the teacher be aware of the typical features of authentic conversation, they should also be able to analyse learners' spoken performance in a valid and reliable way, employing appropriate criteria for both analytic and holistic assessment.

Furthermore, it is crucial to stimulate learners' responsibility for their own improvement of the level of English they have achieved by (a) making them aware of their strengths and weaknesses in the aspects of linguistic and pragmatic competences under examination; (b) setting realistic and attainable short-term and long-term targets in English; (c) relating the subject matter dealt with in English lessons as much as possible to their learning English in informal contexts; (d) inviting learners to be *active* contributors to lessons, and (e) making them able to reflect on their own achievements in English.

The findings also raised questions directed to teaching materials, specifically to textbooks and their role in teaching and learning English. The type of textbook is not related to the learners' attitudes to learning English in a statistically significant way. What matters considerably is how the textbook is used in lessons. Textbooks nowadays include various activities targeted at all the aspects of English (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, and skills). Nevertheless, they may differ in terms of the emphasis their authors put on individual aspects. Textbooks are complemented by audio files, some of them even by special interactive whiteboard software. This does not mean, as the research suggested, that teachers always fully exploit the potential of the materials or use it in accordance with the authors' underlying assumptions. Thus it is not guaranteed that even the "best" textbooks promoted by renowned publishing houses will automatically stimulate learners' interest and motivation to learn. Consequently, investments into new textbooks should always be coupled with the training of teachers. The quest for the "best" textbook should be replaced by the quest for the most effective way of using a textbook for specific cohorts of learners.

Lastly, another important finding emphasises the temporal dimension of the learning process. Even non-achievers at basic school may find personally relevant motivation to learn English later in their life and they may become competent users of the target language. Therefore, a window of opportunity should never close too early for any learner.

7.1.2 Implications for teacher education

Implications for teacher education go hand in hand with what the findings of the research project imply for teaching and learning English at basic and secondary schools. The issues which emerged as significant should also be given prominence in the curriculum of English language teacher education study programmes.

Teachers' *content knowledge*, being closely related to pedagogical content knowledge, is of the utmost importance. It includes both their ability to use English in communication and knowledge about the language, i.e. contemporary educational linguistics (Crystal, 1995, p. 191). Regarding future teachers' *communicative language competences*, the research suggested that attention should be paid, among other issues, to the aspects of linguistic and pragmatic competences outlined below.

7.1.2.1 Phonological competence

With regard to phonological competence, we identified the following pronunciation features as being worthy of remedial teaching in the course of phonetics and phonology as a result of their incorrect pronunciation. First, the incorrectly realised pronunciation features elicited from the 228 Czech first-year university students by means of the two reading aloud tasks are dealt with in Section 1.2.1.1 (b). Afterwards, the results stemming from the analysis of a different set of pronunciation features elicited from 20 learners selected from the cohort of 228 learners by means of the diagnostic speaking test (Section 1.2.1.1 (a)) reveal several areas of pronunciation in need of improvement at the B2 level.

Two reading aloud tasks in the pronunciation test

Coloured by awareness of the inevitable interference of orthographic and orthoepic competences in the reading aloud tasks, the following conclusions are formulated. With respect to the correctness of the production of the pronunciation features that were inspected, the results in terms of the difficulty indices (see Table 5.7 in Section 5.3.7) show this order from the most to the least difficult pronunciation features: the schwa, velar nasal, front open ash, voiced dental fricative, the word-final voiced consonants /d/ and /g/, the bilabial approximant /w/, and the voiceless dental fricative. The statistical results in terms of difficulty indices are related to the qualitative insights stemming from research into the relevant literature and examining the linguistic neighbourhood of a phoneme. Thus the inappropriate pronunciations of the velar nasal (Sections 5.3.7.3, 5.3.9), the word-final voiced consonants (Sections 5.3.7.6, 5.3.9), and the voiceless dental fricative (Section 5.3.7.8), do not seem to matter as much as is the case for the other pronunciation features that are examined.

The difficulty indices that were identified for the pronunciation features examined with respect to varying linguistic contexts proved that there was considerable variability in the degree of acceptable pronunciation of the schwa, the ash, the word-final voiced consonants /d, g/ (Section 5.3.8(b)), the velar nasal /ŋ/ (Section 5.3.7.3), and the bilabial approximant /w/ (Section 5.3.7.7).

Most of the Czech learners' substitutions (altogether 35: 9 for vowels and 26 for consonants) for the eight phonemes that were examined are predictable, but some are very divergent indeed (Table 5.17 in Section 5.3.7.9). The RP phonemes with a wide range of replacements (5–9) by other RP phonemes or their nearest Czech equivalents are the schwa and the ash among vowels and word-final /d/, the velar nasal /ŋ/, the voiced dental fricative, and the voiceless dental fricative among consonants. There was only one substitute for the bilabial approximant /w/ and the word-final /g/.

In relation to the two different reading aloud tasks, the hypothesis that the difficulty indices for individual pronunciation features would be higher in the case of reading a list of words aloud than in the case of reading a text was confirmed in all but two pronunciation features, since the students who were examined produced the velar nasal /ŋ/ (by 11.73%) and word-final consonants /g, d/ (by 11.45%) correctly more frequently when reading the text aloud.

Diagnostic speaking test

Intelligible and comprehensible pronunciation is an essential prerequisite for would-be teachers of English. The scores of the twenty students for the three chosen pronunciation features, the individual phonemes, intonation, and rhythm, are provided in Table A1 (Appendix 8). The overall mean for all three features is 1.91.

The data stemming from written profiles reveals insightful trends in the three areas of pronunciation that were examined. At the same time, they seem to display concrete evidence of different kinds of variability at different stages of language development. On one hand, there is a growing tendency among high-achieving students to employ appropriate intonation patterns and rhythm to highlight meaning, although in some individual cases, the proper acquisition of intonation patterns concerns only formulaic language and learnt chunks of English. The majority of these learners become successful in the appropriate use of some weak forms, although there is still considerable variation in their use. In the other areas of pronunciation, these difficulties occur even in the case of the most successful students: the ash pronounced as /e/, inappropriate devoicing of the word-final consonants /d, z, v, b, g/, and the incorrect production of weak vowels in unstressed syllables of content words and in function words. These three pronunciation phenomena seem to belong among the high-order errors that occur even among high-achieving students at and beyond the B1–B2 levels.

On the other hand, as we move along the continuum to low-achieving students, there are these problems. First, both the number and the range of pronunciation errors in individual phonemes are astonishingly high and wide, which appears to correspond with their analytic scores (Table A1, Appendix 8) for individual phonemes in both linguistically familiar and less familiar contexts. Apart from the segmental features such as the schwa, velar nasal, front open ash, voiced dental fricative, the word-final voiced consonants /d/ and /g/, the bilabial approximant /w/, and the voiceless dental fricative, they also mispronounce some diphthongs. Second, most of these students are not consistently able to employ rhythm and intonation to enhance meaning, which seems to be reflected in their analytic scores for intonation and rhythm, in particular when they have to recall less familiar linguistic resources and/or find themselves in unplanned situations. Third, there is a number of spelling pronunciations. Fourth, these students tend to pronounce individual words and not to link words together in a meaningful way; as a result they produce syllable-timed rhythm. Finally, they have difficulty with the pronunciation of consonantal clusters, e.g. *months*, *throw*, etc.

There is a group of average students in between who use the above-mentioned pronunciation features in approximately equal measure.

However, all the students have the tendency to mispronounce the words of foreign origin (36 items); most of these words owe their origin to French, Latin, and/or Greek (Table A3, Appendix 8, Section 6.3.1), and most of the students tend to produce spelling pronunciations typified by the heavy use of a full vowel suggested in writing instead of a weak vowel and the misplacement of the primary stress on the first syllable of a word.

7.1.2.2 Grammatical and lexical competences

On the basis of the analyses presented in Chapters 4 and 6, we can summarise several tendencies which were observed in the Czech students' spoken performances. Naturally, only a selected set of grammatical and lexical competences could be explored because of the limited extent of the study. The structures under inspection were chosen in relation to the corpus findings that are typical of conversation presented in the LGSWE (Biber et al., 1999).

Since spoken language, mainly conversation, is in focus (most of the CCSSE being dialogues), one of the areas at the centre of our interest was the structure of verb phrases used by Czech students. The results of preliminary studies carried by the authors of this research (Hornová, 2015a, b) delimited the particular features of the verb phrase that we paid attention to. First, a classification of finite verb phrases was carried out, with a major focus on the verbs *have* and *be* functioning as primary auxiliaries or lexical verbs. The results of this research helped us find typical features and the frequency of these verbs.

The two verbs functioning as primary auxiliaries occurred infrequently, the result of which was a very low number of verb phrases expressing aspect – both progressive and perfect (Chapter 4, Section 4.4.1). The verb *be* was used prevalently as a linking verb (copula) and its complementation was lexically rather unimaginative, which supported one of our general conclusions – the unsatisfactory level of the students' vocabulary.

The overall low occurrence of verb phrases in progressive and perfect aspect forms may also be caused by the differences between the systems of Czech and English. The Czech equivalents of the English aspect verb phrases (especially perfect ones) do not always refer to the same time context as in English and are formed inflectionally (Štícha et al., 2013). Thus at this level of their linguistic competences the students do not yet seem to be well prepared for using the appropriate forms in speech when they mostly concentrate on the content of the utterance.

The overall occurrence and variety of finite lexical verbs in the CCSSE was assessed as one part of the students' lexical competence. Their frequency was compared with the corpus results of the LGSWE (Biber et al., 1999) and the conclusion was that their range is not extensive or satisfactory and should be substantially enlarged in their further language acquisition (Chapter 4, Section 4.4.1).

Minor results connected with lexical verbs include remarks concerning, for example, the very common verb *get*, **which was not** used in the whole variety of its possible meanings. On the other hand, the high frequency of the verb *think* should be mentioned among the positive features of the students' communicative competences, because it is evidence of their ability to express opinions or produce tentative statements.

The verb *have* occurred with a high frequency as a semi-modal expressing obligation in a majority of the students who were tested, which is a positive outcome. Those who preferred *must* in their performance as a direct translation from their L1 commonly belong among the students whose language competences were low in many other aspects (Chapter 6, Section 6.3.2).

Another positive feature in the students' performances is a great number of correctly formed existential sentences and sentences with extraposed subjects. The latter are most probably influenced by similarly structured (mostly evaluative) sentences in the students' L1 and thus the reason for their frequent usage is more a matter of transfer than active knowledge of the rules for extraposition in English (Chapter 4, Section 4.4.1)

The frequency of non-finite verb phrases in various syntactic functions was summarised and commented on as a final consideration patterned on the previous research (Chapter 4, Section 4.4.4)

Generally, the occurrence of non-finite verb forms is not very high. The only cases where the students used these structures quite frequently are infinitives functioning as objects (which is definitely facilitated by the similarity to Czech) and gerunds in the

pre-modification of nouns (which is rather surprising as such structures do not exist in Czech and these are commonly admitted to be quite difficult for Czech NSs) (Chapter 4, Section 4.4.5.2). There are also examples of prepositional gerunds in post-modification, which is proof of good knowledge and skill in the field of this NF verb form.

On the other hand, post-modification of head nouns is hardly ever expressed by -ing and -ed participles functioning as condensed relative clauses. These are commonly used in the whole CCSSE, but in their finite forms, apparently influenced by the verbal character of the students' L1. The same is true of adverbial clauses, which are hardly ever condensed. It will be necessary to pay attention to the condensing force of NF verb phrases in the future, on the basis of explaining typological differences of English and Czech in this field of grammar.

Complex noun phrases are not rare in the whole corpus, with pre- and post-modifying elements including nouns and adjectives (pre-modification) and mainly prepositional phrases in post-modification (Chapter 4, Section 4.4.5.3).

The more detailed analysis of spoken performance of the twenty selected students described in detail in Chapter 6 showed diversity in the ability of individuals to use structures that demonstrate the level of their grammatical and lexical competences. Most of the trends that are valid for structuring their language performances specified above were confirmed. On top of that, however, relationships between their learning histories and their communicative competences were identified and evaluated.

7.1.2.3 Pragmatic competences

As spoken language differs significantly from the written variety in certain aspects, mostly as a result of the determinants of spoken communication taking place in real time (shared physical context, interactivity, and spontaneity), selected means of discourse management were analysed. The choice of particular structures was directed by the studies of NSs' conversation. Three interrelated principles (*keeping talking, limited planning ahead, qualification of what has been said*) influence the nature of spoken discourse and make the grammar of speech quite dynamic. That is why a set of typical spoken structures was selected with the aim of assessing the students' level of all three components of their pragmatic competences (discourse, functional, and design) (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 123–130). They include one-word discourse markers (*well, right, now, OK/okay, oh*), multiple-word discourse markers (*you know, I mean, you see, I think*), stance adverbials (*actually, really, probably, maybe*), linking adverbials (*so, then, though, anyway*), expressions of imprecision (*sort of, kind of, like*), and filled and unfilled pauses.

First, the students' ability to use discourse markers effectively seems to be rather limited. The prevailing structure used is *OK/okay* (56.4% of the one-word DMs), followed by *well* (34.7%), while the other ones are very rare. Among the two-word DMs, *you know* and

I think are identified as almost the only ones. Even though *I think* is not determined as DM in NSs' discourse, we added it to the analysis since it seems that it serves as a compensation strategy for students who are aware they should use some means of hedging but have not mastered the appropriate structures.

Linking adverbials could be used in a similar way to DMs. In the CCSSE the students use *so* almost exclusively, which is naturally evidence of the influence of L1. The analysis of the use of three types of stance adverbials revealed the following strategies used by the students. In order to express doubt they primarily use *maybe*; nevertheless, the overall frequency of stance adverbials is rather low and it can be observed that for hedging students prefer the use of modal verbs (mostly *can*). Structures expressing imprecision are very rare in the whole corpus, their use mostly being limited to *like*. Stance adverbials expressing actuality are also infrequent, the prevailing one being *really*. To sum up, the students proved to have a rather low level of pragmatic competences, which is reflected in a limited inventory of DMs and other discourse management strategies.

In Chapter 4 comments are also made on the distribution of hesitators. It is apparent that the overuse of filled pauses (er) is a consequence of their inability to use other forms to gain time in a conversation.

To conclude, the students' spoken performances are relatively satisfactory as regards the level of discourse competence (the ability to produce utterances which are organised, structured, and arranged), functional competence (the ability to perform appropriate communicative functions), and design competence (the ability to sequence their turns according to interactional and transactional schemata) (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 123); however, their repertoire of specific spoken structures is quite limited. The findings are in accordance with the claims that most of the teaching methods and materials are based on the grammar of written language and yet students lack the appropriate input for learning typical spoken features. The findings also revealed that if there is a significant difference in the use of particular structures between British and American English, students tend to use the AmE variety more frequently.

On the basis of the analysis presented in Chapter 4, the performances of twenty students are described in Chapter 6 and interrelated with their individual learning histories with the aim of revealing possible influences on the level of pragmatic competences acquired. As mentioned in 7.1.2.3, no relationship between attitudes to English/learning English and participation in free-time activities was identified, and similarly there seems to be no relationship between participation in free-time activities and the level of linguistic and pragmatic competences acquired. A more significant link is the one between the motivation stemming from the necessity to use English in informal contexts and the level of the above-mentioned competences.

7.1.2.4 Suggested modifications to the TEFL curriculum

Traditionally, the curriculum of TEFL study programmes in the Czech Republic comprises courses in all the linguistic disciplines (phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicology, discourse analysis, and pragmatics).

"It is […] important for English language teachers to realise not only the overwhelming importance of English around the world but also that English has different status for speakers from different countries," (Brown, 1991, pp. 7–8) because this unquestionably unique position of English among other foreign languages has had direct consequences for the education of English teachers. First, their learners will have to be prepared to communicate with NSs who are fewer in number than NNSs. Second, they will be expected to use the English language in virtually every corner of the globe, and third, they will be using more sophisticated ways of communication with their learners. Fourth, in-service teacher trainees are faced with the question of models for learners from non-native English-speaking countries.

Seemingly, it is relatively simple to choose Standard English, the model for vocabulary and grammar for a university ELT programme, which is challenged nowadays by the results of corpus linguistics because a well-constructed general corpus such as the LSWE (Biber et al., 1999) enables investigating researchers "to make more objective and confident descriptions of usage than would be possible through introspection" (Crystal, 1995, p. 438). Would-be teachers of English should also be made aware of the fact that the issue of correctness is treated differently in Standard English and in Standard Czech. In the Czech Republic it has been a traditional practice of the Institute of the Czech Language of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic to issue a codification of the Czech language that is a prescriptive approach to language correctness. Corpus linguistics contributes substantially to a descriptive approach to language use, which has always been widespread in English-speaking countries. For pronunciation, the choice of such a model is a relatively more difficult decision. For teaching EFL to some groups of learners, English as a lingua franca, with its recommendations for teaching a somewhat simplified English pronunciation core (Jenkins, 2007), might be useful to some extent; however, for teaching would-be teachers of English we believe that the pronunciation aim should be to keep trying to promote the acquisition of a native model as fully as possible (cf. Section 5.3.3). Although it might be an unattainable target for many would-be teachers of English, they should be improving their pronunciation with this target in mind. Thus they should be made aware of the responsibility they have for the impact of their phonological control in English on several generations of learners of EFL.

Phonology

The research findings stemming from the studies embarked on in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 suggest that the following principles should be followed in the course and the syllabus of Phonetics and Phonology in a TEFL programme.

In the present study (Chapter 5, Chapter 6), the students were not entirely consistent within one reference accent and each correct pronunciation of the feature in question was accepted, no matter whether within the concept of an RP or GA accent. We hold that the students' choice of the appropriate pronunciation model is of the utmost importance. Due attention should be paid to the two interrelated issues, personal consistency of the use of one reference accent, be it RP or GA, for productive purposes, and its correspondence with the choice of the pronunciation model for productive and comprehension purposes respectively in the teaching materials that are in use. There should not be a mismatch between the (would-be) teacher's accent and the accent presented in the textbook package because this might confuse learners, in particular at the basic school level.

At the age of 18+, most of the students who experienced problems with their pronunciation either were not aware of their pronunciation shortcomings as they had become fully fossilised and/or were cognizant of them or some of them, but did not know how to remedy them. The chances are that during the course the students may try to get rid of those faulty pronunciations in a number of different ways: (a) being provided with theoretical knowledge in terms of phonetics and phonology which may enhance their understanding of the pronunciation features in question and hopefully lead to their improving; (b) contrasting the English system with the Czech one or that of any other foreign language may shed light on interlingual transfer from the point of view of contrastive analysis (Odlin, 1989); (c) uncovering some processes in current English pronunciation may explain intralingual transfer, e.g. the pronunciation of *bush* in the same way as in *bus* is caused by overgeneralisation from the perspective of error analysis (Richards & Smith, 1974); (d) the university teacher can diagnose the student's mispronunciation which arose from a faulty way of teaching it, thus inducing an error, from the point of view of transfer of training (Odlin, 1989, p. 18), e.g. not distinguishing different intonation patterns used by their basic school teacher(s) in the case of various question types; (e) the systematisation of the knowledge they have gained so far about English phonetics and phonology and the pronunciation features they have gained so far may appear useful because the relationships among the parts of the system have not been emphasised or dealt with (Richards & Smith, 1974). The pronunciation syllabus should be carefully selected, graded, and staged, which enables the students to acquire or remedy pronunciation features gradually (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996); (f) the remedying of the learners' fossilised mispronunciations should proceed from contextualised and controlled or awareness-raising activities to semi-controlled ones,

and then to free spontaneous speaking activities, since the employment of entirely fluency-based activities might result in pronunciation error fossilisation (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996).

In the area of suprasegmental features the research findings stemming from Chapter 6 reveal that students should primarily practise the pronunciation of function words, which applies to a greater or lesser extent to all twenty students. Most importantly, the students need to be able to pronounce function words with respect to the neighbouring linguistic context. Further on, they should be made aware of the effects of their inappropriate use of intonation and rhythmical patterns on NSs of English, which was the case with the low-achieving students in the study in Chapter 6, because to some extent they divorced the meaning from the sound. Then they should practise the proper placement of the primary stress in polysyllabic words, particularly in words of foreign origin, and study the impact of lexical affixes on the placement of the word stress in English words. Similarly, the students should be equipped with the rules concerning the pronunciation of the grammatical suffixes *-ed*, *-s* and be made to use them in their speech.

With respect to segmental features, there should be more work on relevant pronunciation features such as the schwa, the ash, the diphthongs /eə, ʊə/; the front open ash, the voiced dental fricative, the word-final voiced consonants /d/ and /g/, the bilabial approximant /w/, and the voiceless dental fricative. The statistical results in terms of difficulty indices are related to the qualitative insights stemming from the research on relevant literature and examining the linguistic neighbourhood of a phoneme. Thus the inappropriate pronunciations of the velar nasal (Sections 5.3.7.3, 5.3.9), the word-final voiced consonants (Sections 5.3.7.6, 5.3.9), and the voiceless dental fricative (Section 5.3.7.8) do not seem to matter as much as the other pronunciation features that are examined.

The course should also reflect the latest research findings in the field of phonetics and phonology. For example, the devoicing of the RP voiced consonants /b, d, g/ is determined (a) by their final position in a word, and it can be complete or partial, and across word boundaries (b) by follow-up silence, or (c) by the absence of a voiced obstruent at the beginning of the following word. In teaching English pronunciation and assessing Czech learners, the teachers should turn students' attention to the post-boundary context, which may require full or partial voicing of the preceding word-final plosive if a voiced phoneme follows, e.g. *had gone*; the teachers should accept at least partial devoicing of the word-final plosive if a voiceless phoneme follows, e.g. *had planned*.

In the syllabus, space should be devoted to practising the pronunciation of words of foreign origin, which may be influenced by their pronunciation in the learners' mother tongue.

In relation to written-spoken correspondence in English, it might be useful to develop the learners' ability to make informed guesses that are as correct and accurate as possible about the pronunciation of either newly encountered words or less frequent ones on the

basis of their spelling (Dickerson, 1987). Dickerson exemplifies it with the non-existent word *smathe*. As there seems to be a silent *e* at the end of the word, Dickerson (1987) holds that students might recognise a familiar spelling pattern, that is, a vowel grapheme followed by the digraph *th*, and the final *e* grapheme predicts /ð/ pronunciation. Similarly, when there is the necessity to activate a passive wordstock, many English words provide spelling clues to their approximate pronunciations and learners need not be endlessly doing battle with their mobile phone dictionaries. For example, **act** might prompt the pronunciation of the ash in **activate**, and similarly *land* in *stranded*.

Would-be teachers of English should be provided with training in reading texts aloud with comprehension, in actively using phonemic transcription as a means of supporting an aural memory of the sound form of English, and in developing peer correction and self-correction, as the whole cohort of 228 students provided us with transcriptions of the whole interviews and were instructed to indicate all the parts which needed remedial work, which revealed that the students were mostly able to self-correct their lexical or grammatical errors, but hardly ever their pronunciation ones.

Most importantly, improving one's own pronunciation is every student's responsibility and it is a never-ending process. Keeping a pronunciation portfolio with one's own targets, "favourite" mistakes, successful pronunciation strategies, etc. may enhance this process.

Other linguistic disciplines

The findings summarised in Sections 7.1.2.2 and 7.1.2.3 brought us to the following suggested modifications to the courses of morphology, syntax, lexicology, discourse analysis, and pragmatics.

The overall aim is to teach students the theoretical knowledge of linguistic systems. The objective of explaining details of pragmatic competences should primarily be to make students aware of the fundamental differences between spoken and written discourse, and also between Czech and English. Such theoretical knowledge could help them both apply it in their own performances and, together with EFL didactics, help them mediate the pedagogical content knowledge to their pupils. It is essential not only to offer students the results of the latest research in this field but also to lead them to grasp the current usage of particular structures in spoken communication in EFL (Farr, 2010). This approach should be supported by the analyses of examples of authentic English discourse that are focused especially on identifying individual pragmatic functions.

Similarly, lexical and grammatical competences should be developed both in theory and in practice. The importance of a contrastive approach to the theoretical knowledge of grammatical systems (e.g. the category of aspect and the structure of a noun phrase and verb phrase) is undeniable. It is very important to make students realise all the fundamental features in order to give them an opportunity to acquire them actively and also to teach

them later. In all their linguistic courses students should be led to the systematic comparison of the occurrence of particular structures in spoken and written discourse, to awareness of the variability of combinations between form and function, and to an understanding of the fact that an identical real-life situation can be communicated by different means in two typologically different linguistic systems such as English and Czech.

Apart from the above-mentioned findings formulated in terms of *content knowledge*, conclusions regarding *pedagogical content knowledge* will be drawn in the following section.

Foreign language didactics

The findings of the research project confirmed the crucial role of the field of didactics, more specifically foreign language didactics, in English language teacher education, since foreign language didactics is responsible for the development of trainee teachers' pedagogical content knowledge.

The qualitative analysis of individual learning histories (Chapter 3) suggested a lack of pedagogical content knowledge on the part of teachers; in particular, the following issues appeared to be critical: low awareness of learner needs; inability to explain the subject matter comprehensibly; lack of learner-centredness; limited internal differentiation in classes, and shortcomings in evaluating learners' progress.

Subsequently, courses in foreign language didactics should reflect all the findings, which were presented in this book. We believe that they actually impact on many areas of foreign language didactics, especially:

– choice of content and its didactic transformation according to learner needs;
– designing varied learning activities that respect learner needs;
– textbook evaluation and the role of the textbook in teaching and learning English;
– teaching pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and speaking;
– evaluating learners' progress in learning English, especially the construction of valid and reliable assessment tools with positive backwash, especially for spoken production;
– learner-centredness and autonomy in learning English;
– teaching English to heterogeneous classes;
– attitudes and motivation in learning English.

With reference to the results of the research project regarding phonological competence, guidelines for teaching pronunciation were formulated. Would-be teachers of English should be able to set appropriate targets for mainstream learners of English at the A1–B1 levels, not aiming at native-like pronunciation, but at an intelligible and comprehensible English pronunciation. With respect to teaching materials, would-be teachers should be able to: (a) diagnose the relevant pronunciation input, in particular that with a high functional load, with a high frequency of occurrence of the pronunciation feature in English, and

in comparison with the learners' mother tongue; (b) supplement materials with adequate pronunciation activities that respect learners' needs; (c) increase the amount of exposure to NS input by means of all possible educational media; (d) teach a covert pronunciation syllabus at the A1 level as well as overtly presented pronunciation input at the A2 to B1 levels, and (e) integrate pronunciation teaching with all other aspects of language and language skills. In relation to learners, would-be teachers should invest energy into developing the learners' pronunciation strategies.

Obviously, there is a considerable overlap with general didactics, educational sciences. and psychology, because trainee teachers need to know general principles of differentiation, for example, before they learn to implement them specifically in teaching and learning English.

Teacher educators should respond to the findings by suggesting appropriate modifications to the content of English language teacher education. Changes in the respective syllabuses will probably necessitate appropriate changes in methods and techniques, since it is irrelevant to give lectures on something that trainee teachers need to experience, for example, learner-centredness. Consequently, we may conclude by proposing that the conclusions confirm the central and integrative role of the field didactics in teacher education.

Language courses

On the basis of the summary of findings articulated in Sections 7.1.2.1–7.1.2.3, we would also suggest the changes that are seen as desirable in the courses aimed at the development of students' own communicative competences in English, specifically their speaking skills. The implications concern both pragmatic and linguistic competences. Modifications should be made to these courses so as to expose students to such input so that they could acquire a desirable level of pragmatic competences, i.e. within discourse competence to teach them to arrange and structure their utterances efficiently according to the purpose of interaction, within functional competence to teach them strategies to perform appropriate communicative functions, and within design competence to teach them strategies for sequencing turns in a dialogue while using an adequate inventory of structures. Then they can raise their level of these competences and may be more aware that the cohesion of the message is essential (Götz & Schilk, 2011, p. 98).

Within linguistic competences, appropriate attention should be paid to all the areas (phonological, grammatical, and lexical), with the aim being to prepare proficient EFL speakers aware of specific features of spoken discourse. Then the graduates of TEFL study programmes will be able to serve as an appropriate model for their pupils in schools.

7.2 Concluding remarks

This section offers a summary of the strengths of the research project, as well as its limitations.

The research presented in this volume is unique in several ways: the focus on spoken discourse, the multiple analysis of the CCSSE, the number of students examined, the use of students from three different universities, the use of mixed methods research with a strong emphasis on qualitative analysis, and interrelating the outcomes of four individual studies (Chapter 6).

The last-mentioned outcome is perceived as exceptionally valuable because, first, it focuses on areas which are marginalised in SLA, especially on the holistic description of an individual's learning experience (biographical research) and on phonological and pragmatic competences, and, second, it is the result of both quantitative and, mainly, qualitative analysis. The emphasis is laid on the sample of twenty students whose individual learning histories were related to a more in-depth analysis of selected features of linguistic and pragmatic competences, which were accompanied by written profiles based on the set of chosen categories of phonological competence, lexical and grammatical competences, and pragmatic competences. The written profiles, also referred to as portraits, are a source of qualitative data and deal with a wide range of pragmatic, lexical, grammatical, and phonological categories which are of immediate concern to practitioners and aim to see an individual learner in a wider perspective (Section 6.2). The individual learning histories provided explanations of students' needs, difficulties, achievements, and motives for learning English.

As regards the limitations of the research, the most substantial will be mentioned. The first is the inevitable selectiveness of the research focus of individual studies conditioned by human resources. Within the project abundant data was obtained, which was a strength of the project. On the other hand the issues investigated, i.e. learners' spoken performance and individual learning histories, were too complex, with endless opportunities for analysis. Second, in terms of methodology, unfortunately, each analysis was conducted by a single researcher, though measures were taken to increase the overall reliability of the research. The procedures included, for example, involving a second researcher in the pilot phase of the qualitative analysis of learning biographies and assessing the phonological competence of randomly selected respondents repetitively with the second assessment delayed in time.

Third, in the instances of the examination of some pronunciation features, low-rate replay together with spectrographic analysis should be used for (a) the word-final suffix -ed in order to differentiate the partial from complete devoicing of the final phoneme and (b) the word-final velar nasal in order to differentiate the various informants' realisations of /ŋ/.

Fourth, regarding the construction of the CCSSE and its analysis, we should primarily mention the constraint of the format of the corpus. For the reasons explained in detail

in Section 1.3 it is not tagged for any prosodic, grammatical, discourse, and pragmatic features. It means that even though the size of the CCSSE is quite considerable, certain corpus linguistics tools cannot be employed. Thus, for all the directions of further research a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses is recommended, as it is similarly applied in a number of other studies (e.g. McEnery, Xiao, & Tono, 2007; Timmis, 2015).

7.3 Further research

The research conducted within the framework of the project generated a huge amount of data. As mentioned above, researchers needed to be selective when deciding about the focus of their analyses. The main research outcomes are collated in this book; however, there are many future directions to follow. Needless to say, several studies are in progress.

One of the studies which is in progress investigates the relationship between the learners' engagement in using English outside school and their pronunciation, more specifically their ability to produce individual sounds in English. The preliminary results suggest the importance of the temporal dimension in pronunciation learning and seem to support the critical period hypothesis. Recently, the data has been subjected to multidimensional regression analysis to uncover the significance of individual variables.

Regarding individual learning histories, further qualitative analysis may be conducted, for example, the analysis of individual biographies from the point of view of motivational transformation episodes. A pilot study (Černá, 2015b) yielded interesting results, which need to be verified with a larger number of respondents. Furthermore, continuation of the longitudinal study may be planned – following the respondents in the course of their lives and focusing attention on investigating the effects of teacher education.

With respect to phonological control, we have attempted to identify the most promising directions for future empirical research which should be of relevance to practitioners. There are many questions worth investigating. First of all, there seem to be numerous cases of intra-reader variability in the students' Czenglish. For instance, an investigation could be performed of whether the low difficulty index of a certain phoneme can predict low difficulty indices of another phoneme, or other phonemes. Second, inter-reader variability is another sphere worth examining in detail, as has already been done in the case of 112 students (Černá & Ivanová, 2016). Next, for example, Table 5.15, as it stands at present, is incomplete. The original plan of the researcher was also to provide the proportion of each substitute as a percentage and separately for both reading aloud formats; however, under the given circumstances, i.e. the pressure of time and number of researchers, it was too ambitious, so it might be the target of further research. Further on, it might be worth subdividing the aims of a future study with respect to different weak forms of function words. In the present study most of the subjects pronounced the schwa correctly in the

weak forms of function words such as *a*, *an*, and *the*, if the last one was not followed by a word whose pronunciation started with a vowel sound (the words were not the focus of this study), although they experienced enormous problems in the pronunciation of the weak forms discussed above, e.g. *had*, *that*. Furthermore, with respect to content words, it is worth examining whether there is any difference in the realisation of the schwa in word-initial, medial, or final position by Czech learners. For instance, Gonet et al. (2010, in Waniek-Klimczak, 2010) found out in a study of 60 Polish university students' reading aloud of 30 diagnostic sentences that "inter-consonantal schwas are generally easier for the subjects to pronounce than schwas not flanked by consonants at word boundaries" (p. 298), both word-initially and word-finally, in the latter case realised as /a/, and their subjects experienced fewer problems with the pronunciation of the word-medial schwa. This might help to focus remedial teaching of the realisation of the schwa in content words. Research into the partial or complete loss of voicing at the word boundary in English as a consequence of the regressive assimilation of voiced consonants should also be carried out in order to compare NSs' pronunciation of the feature in question with Czech learners' pronunciation of the same feature. Finally, in the case of the ash vowel /æ/, which is commonly replaced by many a Czech learner with the mid front vowel /e/ or the open front centralised /a/, the closest Czech equivalents, the focus of the study may be on the influence of the pronunciation of borrowings from English into Czech on their pronunciation in English, e.g. *rapper*, *champion*, *piano*.

The whole CCSSE was the source of the analyses presented in Chapter 4; however, it represents just one partial outcome. Since the CCSSE is available in electronic form, it gives an opportunity to continue the research in all areas of pragmatic, lexical, and grammatical competences. On the basis of the findings described in Chapters 4 and 6, one of the proposed directions is to carry out more thorough research concerning the differences between the three types of spoken discourse (i.e. monologue, information transfer task, and discussion). As stated by Nesselhauf (2014), the work with learner corpora has an enormous potential compared to experimental data since it makes more comprehensive studies possible and it is an analysis of real production data (pp. 130–131). On the other hand, there are natural limitations of such sources thus we are aware of the necessity to use the method of a combination of corpus and qualitative analyses (Nesselhauf, 2004, p. 132). In Chapter 6 there is just an introduction to lexical analysis (the distribution of lexical verbs), but the research may be focused on the whole scope of the richness of vocabulary. Another interesting issue for inspection would be the influence of the topic on the choice of particular grammatical structures (e.g. the use of modal verbs or the aspect of a verb phrase). A more detailed exploration of a wider range of typically spoken features would open another door to further studies.

Summary

The book titled *Routes and Destinations – Learning histories of Czech speakers of English and their achievement in selected communicative language competences* introduces research outcomes of the project *Aspects of English Language Acquisition of Czech Learners at the Onset of Teacher Education*, which was supported by the Czech Science Foundation.

The project contributes to the research in SLA especially in the following ways: (a) by its focus not only on morphosyntactic aspects of English language acquisition, but also on phonological and pragmatic aspects; (b) by investigating differences between individual learners; (c) by the use of concordancing tools for examining the properties of learner language; (d) by deploying both quantitative and qualitative methodologies; (e) by providing a holistic description of the language learning experience; and (f) by adopting an interdisciplinary approach.

The content of the book is divided into eight sections: besides the introductory and concluding parts, there are six chapters.

Chapter 1 presents the research project and its aims, as well as the research methodology. First of all, the rationale of the research is introduced, then the development of all the research instruments is described; special attention is paid to the pilot stage because its results initiated the necessary modifications either of the tools or the process of their administration.

Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 together represent a mixed methods study of individual learning histories; however, each of them provides a different perspective. Chapter 2, the quantitative part, reveals the role of various contexts of learning English in individuals' biographies, as well as common tendencies. On top of that the relationships between selected variables, e.g. attitudes toward English and learning English on the one hand and characteristics of learning contexts on the other, are investigated. The qualitative part is introduced in Chapter 3, where the lifelong experience of learning English is explored through the voices of selected respondents; the focus is on the significance of events in the individuals' lives. Then the results of both studies are interrelated; depending on the issues discussed, the results of both studies converge in some cases or diverge in some others. The contribution

of the qualitative study lies in providing possible explanations of existing or non-existing statistically significant relationships which are reported in the quantitative study. While Chapters 2 and 3 focus on the routes which the students followed when learning English, the subsequent two chapters concentrate on the destinations the students reached up to the beginning of their university education.

Chapter 4, *Learner corpus analyses: grammar & discourse*, as the title suggests, collates the outcomes of multiple analyses of the CCSSE from the perspectives of certain grammatical and discourse features. For the research, certain structures representing particular aspects of pragmatic and linguistic competences are selected and in accordance with that the students' performances are assessed. The findings are quantitatively summarised, discussed in the context of SLA, and compared to the results of the studies of NSs' use of these features, which are mainly presented in the LGSWE.

Chapter 5, *Selected pronunciation features in focus*, first deals with the chosen pronunciation features from the point of view of theory, contrasting relevant aspects of pronunciation in Czech and English. Then it introduces findings stemming from the analysis of students' reading aloud elicited by two different tasks. The chosen pronunciation features are assessed in terms of difficulty indices and further qualitatively from the point of view of functional load, their frequency of occurrence, and error analysis.

Chapter 6 brings the reader to the intersection of the research findings. Through the format of a multiple case study, the researchers interrelate the outcomes of the investigation of the individual learning histories and selected communicative language competences, more specifically linguistic (phonological, grammatical, and lexical) and pragmatic ones.

The concluding part summarises the research findings and offers implications for educational practice, including the teaching and learning of English at basic and secondary schools and English language teacher education. In addition, it debates the limitations of the current study and suggests possible directions for further research.

The individual chapters are complemented by 17 appendices, which contain information about the research tools and assessment procedures, and detailed results of the analyses presented in Chapter 2 and Chapter 6.

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Appendix 1

Prompts for monologues

Describe your experience of learning English. You may talk e.g. about your classes at the secondary or primary school, what you did, whether you liked it or not, whether you have been to an English-speaking country etc.

Other prompts:

What activities did you do during your English lessons?

What did you mostly focus on (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, speaking, writing, listening etc.)?

Did you enjoy learning English? Why?

What about your English teacher (how many, native, non-native)?

Have you been to an English-speaking country? Describe your experience. Would you like to go and where/why?

Do you use English outside the classroom? What for, why, and how often?

Why did you decide to study English (teaching)?

Why did you choose our university? What aspects did you consider (information about the study programme, location etc.)?

What do you expect from studying here?

Appendix 2

Scenarios for dialogues

1. Cambridge Advanced Certificate

You would like to study at a university abroad. In order to be accepted, you need to pass an international language exam – Cambridge Advanced English. Find out all the necessary information about the exam (the level of English, the structure of the exam, the process of registration, the price and dates of the exam, and how to prepare for it).

2. An English course

You and your friend are planning a trip abroad. In order to improve your level of English, you want to start a language course. Ask your friend for the information about the available courses (e.g. type and focus of the course, level of English, schedule, price, study materials, discounts, and benefits).

3. What to do in xxx?

You are new in the town and you would like to get to know where and how you can go for some entertaining events. Ask your friend which events are planned for November and December and where you can go for sports events, culture, and others according to your interests and preferences.

4. The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) at our university

You have recently become a student of the university. You are not sure whether to apply for the International Student Card (ISIC), which is also valid at the university. Ask your partner what you have to do to obtain this card and find out what benefits and services suitable for you are available in xxx.

5. How to register for a Reader's Pass at the British Library

You have come up with an interesting topic for your bachelor's paper. But you need very special materials that are available from the British Library in London. This is not a problem

for you since you are planning a trip to London in the summer next year. But you do not know whether it is possible for a short-time visitor from abroad to register for the Library. Try to find out details regarding the registration (if, how, when) by asking your partner.

6. Looking for a new type of accommodation

You are not satisfied with your current accommodation; you would like to change it and rent a flat with your brother/sister. Ask your friend about the possibilities in xxx now (types of flats available, price, location, other conditions).

7. I would like to apply for an Erasmus study visit

You would like to study abroad for a semester in the second year. One of the possibilities is to apply for an Erasmus scholarship. Ask your friend about the procedure, requirements, and places where you could go.

8. Sports events at the university

You have recently become a student of the university. In addition to regular courses the Department of Physical Education and Sports organises various sports events and specialised courses throughout the year. Ask your partner about what kinds of events the department offers and when and where they take place.

9. Summer camp in the USA (CCUSA)

You would like to work with children at a summer camp in the USA and then spend some time travelling. You decided to use the service offered by the Camp Counsellors USA Program (CCUSA). Find out all the necessary information about the camp (e.g. camp types, your duties, times and locations, salary and costs, insurance, visa, the application process, and the possibility of travelling).

10. Part-time job

While studying at the university, you would like to make some extra money and are looking for a part-time job. Ask a friend for all the necessary information (e.g. work description, requirements, salary and benefits, working hours).

11. I would like to join the Buddy System

You have heard that there is a Buddy System at the university, in which Czech students help the foreign students. You would like to join it, but you do not know how. Ask your friend about the procedure, rules, and activities.

Appendix 3

Topics for discussions

1. Discuss with your partner any aspects related to the teaching profession (e.g. duties, knowledge and abilities, benefits, salary, the role of the teacher, social importance, and prestige).

2. Discuss with your partner the topic of a university tuition fee (e.g. its possible benefits for students/teachers, the idea of free education for everybody, the possibility of bank loans, student scholarships; possible negatives).

3. Discuss with your partner the role of the internet as a source of information (e.g. purpose of use, e.g. work, entertainment, shopping, or education; free or limited access to information, quantity of information, quality and accuracy of information; misuse of information).

4. Discuss with your partner the idea of working while studying (e.g. financial independence, work experience, time to study and enjoy student life).

5. Discuss with your partner the idea of studying abroad (e.g. language, experience of different systems of education, learning to live independently, learning about a new culture, making new friends, isolation from friends and family, compatibility of student programmes).

6. There are professional agencies which offer ready-made seminar papers or bachelor's papers for sale. There are students who buy those papers and are ready to cheat. Discuss with your partner who is to blame – the agencies or the students?

7. Discuss with your partner the role of internet social networks in your life (e.g. sense of community, shared experience, source of help and support, anonymity, virtual vs. real world, time factor).

8. Discuss with your partner your experience of the school leaving exam (e.g. advantages and disadvantages of the state 'maturita' exam, objective/subjective scoring, expectations, the issue of fairness, the role of luck).

9. Discuss with your partner the ways of healthy eating (e.g. compare food in the university dining hall and other possibilities – fast food, organic food, and others; what you prefer and why, what the advantages and disadvantages are).

10. Discuss with your partner the pros and cons of studying in your home town (living independently or staying with your family, higher costs, organisational issues).

11. Discuss with your partner the advantages and disadvantages of living in university halls of residence/a dormitory or renting a flat (staying in the student community, money, distance to the lecture halls).

Appendix 4

Diagnostic text

Practice silently reading the text below. After about one minute, read the text aloud.

He picked up the *lamp* and walked out of the room, *locking* the door behind him. As he walked down the stairs he *thought that* he heard what sounded like cries of pain. He stopped several times, and *waited*. No, *everything* was still.

When he reached the library, he saw the *bag* and coat in the corner. They must be hidden *away* somewhere. He unlocked a secret cupboard and *threw* them in. He could easily burn them later. Then he pulled out his *watch*. It was *twenty* minutes to two.

He sat down and began to think. Basil Hallward *had* left the house at eleven. No one *had* seen him come in *again*. The servants were in *bed* ... Paris! Yes, it was to Paris *that* Basil *had* gone. And by the midnight train as he *had planned*. It would be months before anyone *suspected* anything. Months! He could destroy *everything long* before *then*.

The extract was taken from Wilde, O. (2008). *The Picture of Dorian Gray. Penguin Readers*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Appendix 5

Word list

Read the words on the list one by one, <u>including the numbers at the beginning of lines</u>.

1. lamp, watch, times
2. waited, locking, away
3. planned, long, that
4. bag, everything, again
5. cries, suspected, threw
6. away, twenty, thought
7. planned, waited, they
8. stairs, heard, again
9. everything, suspected, then

Appendix 6

Statistical data for questions B1 – B24

Statistically significant relationships are presented in highlighted grey cells; additionally, very strong relationships are in bold.

B1. Is there a relationship between the pre-school exposure to English and the educational status of the parents?

	Pre-school exposure to English – education of mothers	Pre-school exposure to English – education of fathers	Pre-school exposure to English – education of mothers & fathers
n_1	78	75	75
n_2	146	146	144
$\bar{x}_1$	2.294872	2.346667	4.64
$\bar{x}_2$	2.178082	2.232877	4.416667
s_1	0.486412	0.532544	0.832450
s_2	0.401462	0.424119	0.663747
p	0.071651	0.110593	0.046193

sample 1 – pre-school exposure to English

sample 2 – no pre-school exposure to English

n – sample size

$\bar{x}$ – sample mean

s – sample standard deviation

p – p-value for t-test

B2. Is there a relationship between the pre-school exposure to English and the parents'
communicative competence in foreign languages?

	Pre-school exposure to English – knowledge of FLs (mothers)	Pre-school exposure to English – knowledge of FLs (fathers)	Pre-school exposure to English – knowledge of FLs (mothers & fathers)
n_1	79	79	79
n_2	149	149	149
$\bar{x}_1$	1.531646	1.35443	2.886076
$\bar{x}_2$	1.234899	1.114094	2.348993
s_1	0.903490	0.847893	1.386633
s_2	0.903367	0.948186	1.580823
p	0.019118	0.060352	0.011610

sample 1 – pre-school exposure to English

sample 2 – no pre-school exposure to English

n – sample size

$\bar{x}$ – sample mean

s – sample standard deviation

p – p-value for t-test

B3. Is there a relationship between the pre-school exposure to English and the learners'
attitudes to English while at basic school?

n_1	77
n_2	147
$\bar{x}_1$	1.545455
$\bar{x}_2$	1.523810
s_1	0.679502
s_2	0.685799
p	0.822137

sample 1 – pre-school exposure to English

sample 2 – no pre-school exposure to English

n – sample size

$\bar{x}$ – sample mean

s – sample standard deviation

p – p-value for t-test

B4. Is there a correlation between the attitudes to English (BS)
and the attitudes to LE (BS)?

n	224
r	0.637132087
t	12.31657118
p	**<0.0001**

n – sample size

r – correlation coefficient

t – t statistic

p – p-value

B5. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (BS)
and the number of teachers (BS)?

a) Attitudes treated as a numerical variable:

	Attitudes to English (BS) – number of NNS teachers	Attitudes to English (BS) – number of NS teachers	Attitudes to English (BS) – number of NNS & NS teachers
n	223	214	224
r	0.062305	-0.035370	0.045690
t	0.928029	-0.515250	0.681476
p	0.354405	0.606914	0.496281

n – sample size

r – correlation coefficient

t – t statistic

p – p-value

b) Attitudes treated as a categorical variable:

	Attitudes to English (BS) – number of NNS teachers	Attitudes to English (BS) – number of NS teachers	Attitudes to English (BS) – number of NNS & NS teachers
n_1	203	194	204
n_2	20	20	20
$\bar{x}_1$	2.645320	0.097938	2.725490
$\bar{x}_2$	2.7	0.05	2.75
s_1	1.259544	0.346254	1.317984
s_2	1.688974	0.223607	1.712954
p	0.889226	0.397564	0.938594

sample 1 – positive attitudes

sample 2 – negative attitudes

n – sample size

$\bar{x}$ – sample mean

s – sample standard deviation

p – p-value for t-test

B6. Is there a correlation between the attitudes to LE (BS) and the number of teachers (BS)?

a) Attitudes treated as a numerical variable:

	Attitudes to LE (BS) – number of NNS teachers	Attitudes to LE (BS) – number of NS teachers	Attitudes to LE (BS) – number of NNS & NS teachers
n	221	212	222
r	0.132442	-0.030260	0.117289
t	1.977382	-0.438710	1.751763
p	0.049253	0.661320	0.081208

n – sample size

r – correlation coefficient

t – t statistic

p – p-value

b) Attitudes treated as a categorical variable:

	Attitudes to LE (BS) – number of NNS teachers	Attitudes to LE (BS) – number of NS teachers	Attitudes to LE (BS) – number of NNS & NS teachers
n_1	177	170	178
n_2	44	42	44
$\bar{x}_1$	2.598870	0.100000	2.679775
$\bar{x}_2$	2.886364	0.071429	2.954545
s_1	1.266975	0.355015	1.325003
s_2	1.434069	0.260661	1.477813
p	0.191123	0.557966	0.230128

sample 1 – positive attitudes

sample 2 – negative attitudes

n – sample size

$\bar{x}$ – sample mean

s – sample standard deviation

p – p-value for t-test

B7. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to LE (BS)
and the type of textbook used?

n_1	137
n_2	45
$\bar{x}_1$	1.802920
$\bar{x}_2$	1.622222
s_1	0.856115
s_2	0.716332
p	0.203566

sample 1 – bilingual textbook

sample 2 – monolingual (English) textbook

n – sample size

$\bar{x}$ – sample mean

s – sample standard deviation

p – p-value for t-test

B8. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (BS)
and the participation in free-time activities?

	Attitudes to English (BS) – language courses	Attitudes to English (BS) – private lessons
n_1	46	30
n_2	178	194
$\bar{x}_1$	1.434783	1.666667
$\bar{x}_2$	1.556180	1.510309
s_1	0.543739	0.802296
s_2	0.712829	0.661602
p	0.210928	0.243558

sample 1 – attended English courses; attended private lessons

sample 2 – did not attend English courses; did not attend private lessons

n – sample size

$\bar{x}$ – sample mean

s – sample standard deviation

p – p-value for t-test

B9. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (BS) and stays abroad?

n_1	56
n_2	161
$\bar{x}_1$	1.553571
$\bar{x}_2$	1.527950
s_1	0.630141
s_2	0.698768
p	0.808856

sample 1 – visited an English-speaking country

sample 2 – did not visit an English-speaking country

n – sample size

$\bar{x}$ – sample mean

s – sample standard deviation

p – p-value for t-test

B10. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to LE (BS) and stays abroad?

n_1	56
n_2	159
$\bar{x}_1$	1.714286
$\bar{x}_2$	1.817610
s_1	0.824936
s_2	0.810183
p	0.414927

sample 1 – visited an English-speaking country

sample 2 – did not visit an English-speaking country

n – sample size

$\bar{x}$ – sample mean

s – sample standard deviation

p – p-value for t-test

B11. Does the participation in free-time activities (BS) correlate with the engagement in autonomous English-related activities (BS)?

a) Clusters of free-time activities correlated with I^{BS}:

	Language courses & private lessons & stays abroad (BS) – I^{BS}	Language courses & private lessons (BS) – I^{BS}
n	227	227
r	0.076851	-0.012440
t	1.156180	-0.186680
p	0.248834	0.852077

n – sample size

r – correlation coefficient

t – t statistic

p – p-value

b) Individual free-time activities in relation to I^{BS}:

	Language courses (BS) – I^{BS}	Private lessons (BS) – I^{BS}	Stays abroad (BS) – I^{BS}
n_1	46	30	56
n_2	181	197	164
$\bar{x}_1$	0.230435	0.244444	0.245238
$\bar{x}_2$	0.227993	0.226058	0.227642
s_1	0.123893	0.117878	0.129088
s_2	0.141604	0.140851	0.139900
p	0.914894	0.497628	0.408401

sample 1 – attended English courses; attended private lessons; stayed in an ESC

sample 2 – did not attend English courses; did not attend private lessons; did not stay in an ESC

n – sample size

$\bar{x}$ – sample mean

s – sample standard deviation

p – p-value for t-test

B12. Does the participation in free-time activities (BS) correlate with the educational status of the parents?

a) Clusters of free-time activities correlated with the education of mothers, education of fathers and education of mothers and fathers:

	Language courses & private lessons & stays abroad (BS) – education of mothers	Language courses & private lessons & stays abroad (BS) – education of fathers	Language courses & private lessons & stays abroad (BS) – education of mothers & fathers	Language courses & private lessons (BS) - education of mothers	Language courses & private lessons (BS) - education of fathers	Language courses & private lessons (BS) - education of mothers & fathers
n	223	220	218	223	220	218
r	0.195076	0.139797	0.210147	0.191076	0.141508	0.206913
t	2.956815	2.084548	3.159063	2.893875	2.110585	3.108253
p	0.003446	0.038275	**0.001809**	**0.004186**	0.035948	**0.002135**

n – sample size

r – correlation coefficient

t – t statistic

p – p-value

b) Individual free-time activities correlated with the education of mothers, education of fathers and education of mothers and fathers:

	Language courses (BS) – education of mothers	Language courses (BS) – education of fathers	Language courses (BS) – education of mothers and fathers	Private lessons (BS) - education of mothers	Private lessons (BS) - education of fathers	Private lessons (BS) - education of mothers and fathers	Stays abroad (BS) - education of mothers	Stays abroad (BS) - education of fathers	Stays abroad (BS) - education of mothers and fathers
n_1	45	46	45	30	30	30	56	54	54
n_2	178	174	173	193	190	188	161	159	158
$\bar{x}_1$	2.355556	2.326087	4.688889	2.366667	2.466667	4.833333	2.303571	2.333333	4.648148
$\bar{x}_2$	2.185393	2.258621	4.445087	2.196891	2.242105	4.441489	2.192547	2.251572	4.443038
s_1	0.484090	0.473960	0.792643	0.490133	0.507416	0.791478	0.463961	0.475831	0.756292
s_2	0.417702	0.464721	0.710095	0.424007	0.453459	0.710338	0.425963	0.463456	0.718222
p	0.019037	0.384138	0.046515	0.047084	0.013916	**0.006251**	0.102178	0.267177	0.075328

sample 1 – attended English courses; attended private lessons; stayed in an ESC
sample 2 – did not attend English courses; did not attend private lessons; did not stay in an ESC
n – sample size
$\bar{x}$ – sample mean
s – sample standard deviation
p – p-value for t-test

B13. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (BS) and the engagement in autonomous English-related activities (I^{BS})?

n_1	204
n_2	20
$\bar{x}_1$	0.233987
$\bar{x}_2$	0.18
s_1	0.141381
s_2	0.086788
p	0.019061

sample 1 – positive attitudes
sample 2 – negative attitudes
n – sample size
$\bar{x}$ – sample mean
s – sample standard deviation
p – p-value for t-test

B14. Is there a correlation between the attitudes to English (SS)
and the attitudes to LE (SS)?

n	228
r	0.414580399
t	6.848816616
p	**<0.0001**

n – sample size

r – correlation coefficient

t – t statistic

p – p-value

B15. Is there a correlation between the attitudes to English (SS)
and the number of teachers (SS)?

Because of zero variability in the second sample of the second column (number of students with negative attitudes), attitudes are treated as a numerical variable.

	Attitudes to English (SS) – number of NNS teachers	Attitudes to English (SS) – number of NS teachers	Attitudes to English (SS) – number of NNS & NS teachers
n	228	222	228
r	0.053602	-0.006570	0.033787
t	0.806980	-0.097390	0.508226
p	0.420526	0.922503	0.611790

n – sample size

r – correlation coefficient

t – t statistic

p – p-value

B16. Is there a correlation between the attitudes to LE (SS) and the number of teachers (SS)?

	Attitudes to LE (SS) – number of NNS teachers	Attitudes to LE (SS) – number of NS teachers	Attitudes to LE (SS) – number of NNS & NS teachers
n_1	199	195	199
n_2	29	27	29
$\bar{x}_1$	2.175879	0.579487	2.743719
$\bar{x}_2$	2.103448	0.370370	2.448276
s_1	1.156545	0.866079	1.582623
s_2	0.976321	0.687702	1.152209
p	0.748626	0.230500	0.227723

sample 1 – positive attitudes

sample 2 – negative attitudes

n – sample size

$\bar{x}$ – sample mean

s – sample standard deviation

p – p-value for t-test

B17. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to LE (SS) and the type of textbook used?

n_1	35
n_2	180
$\bar{x}_1$	1.6
$\bar{x}_2$	1.677778
s_1	0.735647
s_2	0.795627
p	0.592926

sample 1 – bilingual textbook

sample 2 – monolingual (English) textbook

n – sample size

$\bar{x}$ – sample mean

s – sample standard deviation

p – p-value for t-test

B18. Is there a correlation between the attitudes to English (BS)
and the attitudes to English (SS)?

n	224
r	0.284668958
t	4.424533097
p	**<0.0001**

n – sample size

r – correlation coefficient

t – t statistic

p – p-value

B19. Is there a correlation between the attitudes to LE (BS)
and the attitudes to LE (SS)?

n	222
r	0.162966
t	2.449924
p	0.01507

n – sample size

r – correlation coefficient

t – t statistic

p – p-value

B20. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (SS)
and the participation in free-time activities (SS)?

	Attitudes to English (SS) – language courses	Attitudes to English (SS) – private lessons
n_1	31	31
n_2	195	196
$\bar{x}_1$	1.193548	1.225806
$\bar{x}_2$	1.210256	1.219388
s_1	0.401610	0.616964
s_2	0.456225	0.461693
p	0.847662	0.956036

sample 1 – attended English courses; attended private lessons

sample 2 – did not attend English courses; did not attend private lessons

n – sample size

$\bar{x}$ – sample mean

s – sample standard deviation

p – p-value for t-test

B21. Does the participation in free-time activities (SS) correlate with the engagement in
autonomous English-related activities (I^{SS})?

a) Clusters of free-time activities correlated with I^{SS}:

	Language courses & private lessons & stays abroad (SS) – I^{SS}	Language courses & private lessons (SS) – I^{SS}
n	228	228
r	-0.015950	-0.009380
t	-0.239740	-0.140950
p	0.810746	0.888036

n – sample size

r – correlation coefficient

t – t statistic

p – p-value

b) Individual free-time activities in relation to I^{SS}:

	Language courses (SS) – I^{SS}	Private lessons (SS) – I^{SS}	Stays abroad (SS) – I^{SS}
n_1	31	31	83
n_2	195	196	144
$\bar{x}_1$	0.397849	0.395699	1.2409639
$\bar{x}_2$	0.401709	0.400680	1.2013889
s_1	0.137150	0.149998	0.4577347
s_2	0.164200	0.164549	0.4958550
p	0.901335	0.874272	0.5521822

sample 1 – attended English courses; attended private lessons; stayed in an ESC

sample 2 – did not attend English courses; did not attend private lessons; did not stay in an ESC

n – sample size

$\bar{x}$ – sample mean

s – sample standard deviation

p – p-value for t-test

B22. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (SS) and stays abroad?

n_1	83
n_2	144
$\bar{x}_1$	1.2409639
$\bar{x}_2$	1.2013889
s_1	0.4577347
s_2	0.4958550
p	0.5521822

sample 1 – visited an English-speaking country

sample 2 – did not visit an English-speaking country

n – sample size

$\bar{x}$ – sample mean

s – sample standard deviation

p – p-value for t-test

B23. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to LE (SS) and stays abroad?

n_1	83
n_2	144
$\bar{x}_1$	1.650602
$\bar{x}_2$	1.687500
s_1	0.739706
s_2	0.831788
p	0.738016

sample 1 – visited an English-speaking country

sample 2 – did not visit an English-speaking country

n – sample size

$\bar{x}$ – sample mean

s – sample standard deviation

p – p-value for t-test

B24. Is there a relationship between the attitudes to English (SS) and the engagement in autonomous English-related activities (I^{SS})?

n_1	225
n_2	3
$\bar{x}_1$	0.403259
$\bar{x}_2$	0.133333
s_1	0.158644
s_2	0.230940
p	0.003937

sample 1 – positive attitudes

sample 2 – negative attitudes

n – sample size

$\bar{x}$ – sample mean

s – sample standard deviation

p – p-value for t-test

Appendix 7

Statistical data for questions B25 – B27

B25. Are there correlations between pairs of autonomous English-related activities while at basic school?

BS	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l
(a) Reading magazines												
(b) Reading books	0,0167											
(c) Watching TV series, films, etc.	0,0002	<0.0001										
(d) Listening to songs in English	0,0141	0,0921	<0.0001									
(e) Listening to radio programmes	0,0015	0,0023	<0.0001	0,0532								
(f) Playing PC games	0,8462	0,2181	<0.0001	0,0276	0,8667							
(g) Browsing the internet	0,1007	0,1194	<0.0001	<0.0001	0,0066	<0.0001						
(h) Communication via social networks	0,0078	0,0004	<0.0001	0,0015	<0.0001	0,0017	<0.0001					
(i) E-mail communication	0,0012	0,0013	0,0162	0,4463	0,0001	0,5218	<0.0001	<0.0001				
(j) F2F com. in English with friends	0,0089	0,1241	0,0103	0,5732	0,0576	0,7111	0,0173	<0.0001	<0.0001			
(k) Skype conversations in English	0,2147	0,0045	0,0013	0,1716	0,0431	0,0002	0,0004	<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001		
(l) Translating (e.g. lyrics)	0,0154	0,0592	<0.0001	0,0001	<0.0001	0,3444	0,0020	0,0002	0,0221	0,0253	0,0004	
(m) Self-study	0,0060	<0.0001	0,0023	0,0045	0,0005	0,8640	0,0178	0,0027	0,0268	0,0049	0,0026	<0.0001

Positive relationships: grey cells

Negative relationships: darker grey and figures in bold

B26. Are there correlations between pairs of autonomous English-related activities while at secondary school?

SS	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l
(a) Reading magazines												
(b) Reading books	0,0930											
(c) Watching TV series, films, etc.	0,2063	0,0029										
(d) Listening to songs in English	0,1726	0,4124	<0.0001									
(e) Listening to radio programmes	<0.0001	0,0002	0,7531	0,3012								
(f) Playing PC games	**0,0450**	0,2266	0,0113	0,4126	0,7383							
(g) Browsing the internet	0,5012	0,0033	<0.0001	0,0078	0,1458	0,0001						
(h) Communication via social networks	0,0002	<0.0001	0,0118	0,1446	<0.0001	0,0510	<0.0001					
(i) E-mail communication	<0.0001	0,0666	0,2502	0,9456	0,0009	0,2979	0,0020	<0.0001				
(j) F2F com. in English with friends	<0.0001	0,2734	0,5070	0,3202	0,0008	0,5806	0,0140	<0.0001	<0.0001			
(k) Skype conversations in English	0,0190	0,0084	0,7603	0,5573	0,0023	0,0030	0,0203	<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001		
(l) Translating (e.g. lyrics)	0,0447	0,0144	0,0001	0,0001	0,1649	0,8187	0,1473	0,0397	0,4288	0,1084	0,4731	
(m) Self-study	<0.0001	<0.0001	0,0767	0,0921	0,0001	**0,0010**	0,1937	0,0181	0,0028	0,0396	0,0110	<0.0001

Positive relationships: grey cells

Negative relationships: darker grey and figures in bold

B27. Is there a correlation between the engagement in individual autonomous English-related activities while at basic school (I^{BS}) and while at secondary school (I^{SS})?

SS \ BS	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m
(a) Reading magazines	<0,0001	0,6112	0,7542	0,4479	0,0582	0,0986	0,5892	0,1268	0,0005	0,0006	0,1686	0,1909	0,0005
(b) Reading books	0,0052	<0,0001	0,0475	0,2759	0,0233	0,7445	0,1768	0,0179	0,0782	0,1139	0,1548	0,0944	<0,0001
(c) Watching TV series, films, etc.	0,3789	0,4323	<0,0001	<0,0001	0,9711	0,0005	0,0013	0,1672	0,1369	0,9705	0,9141	0,0302	0,1346
(d) Listening to songs in English	0,1822	0,7699	0,0358	<0,0001	0,7647	0,1503	0,0001	0,0584	0,4088	0,4657	0,5836	0,0377	0,5111
(e) Listening to radio programmes	0,0001	0,4640	0,3805	0,6971	<0,0001	0,6959	0,6590	0,0965	0,0030	0,0523	0,2115	0,2526	0,0401
(f) Playing PC games	0,4423	0,0178	0,0009	0,0265	0,4330	<0,0001	<0,0001	0,0651	0,9215	0,5523	0,0022	0,6588	0,1501
(g) Browsing the internet	0,1062	0,1532	0,0001	<0,0001	0,2534	<0,0001	<0,0001	0,0007	0,0621	0,0096	0,0436	0,8600	0,0492
(h) Communication via social networks	0,0060	0,0012	0,0021	0,0745	0,0002	0,0120	0,0023	<0,0001	<0,0001	<0,0001	<0,0001	0,6854	0,0400
(i) E-mail communication	<0,0001	0,0981	0,1076	0,7878	0,0886	0,7132	0,1739	<0,0001	<0,0001	<0,0001	0,0003	0,9106	0,4202
(j) F2F com. in English with friends	0,0116	0,1919	0,3093	0,9812	0,3156	0,8976	0,0735	<0,0001	<0,0001	<0,0001	<0,0001	0,8952	0,8734
(k) Skype conversations in English	0,5681	0,0098	0,5664	0,3101	0,0048	0,1461	0,1023	<0,0001	<0,0001	<0,0001	<0,0001	0,9019	0,1248
(l) Translating (e.g. lyrics)	0,0107	0,1535	<0,0001	0,0082	0,0571	0,9625	0,4278	0,0647	0,5428	0,1249	0,0644	<0,0001	0,0008
(m) Self-study	0,0007	0,3357	0,1836	0,2509	0,0401	0,0503	0,7886	0,2448	0,0287	0,0099	0,2631	0,0563	<0,0001

Positive relationships: grey cells
Negative relationships: darker grey and figures in bold

Appendix 8

Analytic scoring of chosen aspects of learners' phonological control

	Individual phonemes	Intonation	Rhythm	Total score /9	Mean score /3
Eve	2.5	3.0	3.0	8.5	2.83
Simon	2.5	3.0	3.0	8.5	2.83
George	2.5	2.5	2.5	7.5	2.50
Tess	2.0	2.5	2.5	7.0	2.33
Harry	2.5	2.5	2	7.0	2.33
Nicole	2.0	2.0	2.5	6.5	2.17
Olivia	2.0	2.5	2	6.5	2.17
Paul	2.0	2.0	2.5	6.5	2.17
Victor	2.0	1.5	2.0	5.5	1.83
Lara	2.0	1.5	2.0	5.5	1.83
Bill	1.5	2.0	2.0	5.5	1.83
Kate	1.5	2.0	2.0	5.5	1.83
Rose	1.5	2.0	1.5	5.0	1.66
Wendy	1.5	2.0	1.5	5.0	1.66
Irene	2.0	1.5	1.5	5.0	1.66
Alice	1.0	2.0	1.5	4.5	1.50
Jane	1.5	1.5	1.5	4.5	1.50
Cindy	1.0	1.5	1.0	3.5	1.17
David	1.5	1.0	1.0	3.5	1.17
Frances	1.5	1.0	1.0	3.5	1.17

Appendix 9

Analytic scale of criteria for individual phonemes, intonation, and rhythm at B2 level

Score 1=minimum 3=maximum	Individual phonemes	Intonation	Rhythm
1	S/he produces some individual sounds well, however, hardly ever reduces the quality of vowels in unstressed syllables. This puts a strain on the listener and might lead to occasional loss of intelligibility.	S/he only sometimes employs intonation, including sentence stress, to convey intended meaning. Overall, s/he sounds quite monotonous. Monotony prevails especially when s/he experiences deficiency in linguistic resources as they are not part of their repertoire.	Word stress is appropriately placed in most frequent content words. However, s/he has numerous problems with weak forms of function words. In a few places, rhythm is disconnected or sounds syllable-timed, namely since s/he reads isolated words.
2	S/he produces most individual sounds well with some problems in the area of weak vowels. This may cause occasional difficulty to the listener, which, however, does not affect the speaker's intelligibility.	S/he often employs intonation, including sentence stress, to convey intended meaning. Overall, s/he sounds monotonous only in cases where s/he experiences deficiency in recalling linguistic resources because s/he has not developed yet efficient compensation strategies.	Word stress is generally accurately placed. S/he has problems with some weak forms of function words, while s/he can employ most of them with respect to varied linguistic contexts. S/he is mostly able to link words together in meaningful chunks. Rhythm is only occasionally disconnected.
3	S/he produces nearly all individual sounds well. Although L1 accent may be evident, s/he is fully comprehensible and intelligible.	S/he mostly employs appropriate intonation and sentence stress to convey intended meaning. Overall, s/he hardly ever sounds monotonous because s/he has started using efficient compensation strategies when recalling linguistic resources to deal sufficiently well with the tasks.	Word stress is accurately placed even in polysyllabic words. Most weak forms of function words are nearly always employed properly with respect to varied linguistic contexts. S/he is able to link words together in meaningful chunks. Overall, rhythm sounds fairly/quite stress-timed.

Appendix 10

Band descriptors for phonological control at B2 level

Levels	Band descriptors
Level 1	L1 accent puts a strain on the listener and might lead to occasional loss of intelligibility. Produces some individual sounds well, however, hardly ever reduces the quality of vowels in unstressed syllables. Only sometimes can employ intonation and stress to convey intended meaning. Word stress is appropriately placed in most frequent words, however, has occasional problems with sentence stress.
Level 2	L1 accent may cause occasional difficulty, which does not affect intelligibility. Produces individual sounds well with some problems in the area of weak vowels. Uses prosodic features sufficiently well to be understood. Word stress is generally accurately placed.
Level 3	Although L1 accent may be evident, utterances are fully comprehensible and never affect intelligibility. Produces individual sounds well and can employ appropriate intonation and stress to convey intended meaning. Word stress is accurately placed even in polysyllabic words.

Appendix 11

Aspects of the students´ grammatical and lexical competences

Table B1

Analytic criteria

Number of assigned points	Number of occurrences of correctly used language samples for each category								
	Aspect		Non-finite verb phrases			*have to*	*would like*	*there*	*think*
	progress	perfect	S, O, C	Modifier N + Adj	Condensed clauses: relative + adverbial				
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	2	2	2–3	2–3	2	2	2	2–3	2
1.5	3	3	4–6	4–6	3–4	3–4	3–4	4–6	3–5
2	4	4	7–8	7–8	5	5	5	7–8	6
2.5	5	5	9	9	6	6	6	9	7
3	6+	6+	10+	10+	7+	7+	7+	10+	8+

Table B2

Assessment

Student	Aspect		Non-finite verb phrases			*have to*	*would like*	*there*	*think*	Analytic assessment (mean)	Holistic assessment
	progress	perfect	S, O, C	Modifier N + Adj	Condensed clauses: relative + adverbial						
Alice	1.5	2.5	2.5	2	1	2	2	2	2	1.94	2.5
Bill	1	1	2	2	1.5	2	0.5	2	0.5	1.39	1.5
Cindy	0	0	1	2	1	0	3	2.5	2.5	1.33	1.4
David	3	0.5	3	2.5	1.5	0	1	2.5	1	1.67	2.5
Eve	1	2	2	1	1	3	3	2	2	1.89	2.5
Frances	1	0	2	1	0	1	3	1	3	1.33	1.8
George	1.5	2.5	2	2	2.5	2	2	2	2	2.06	3.0
Harry	1	0	2.5	1.5	1.5	3	2.5	1.5	2.5	1.78	3.0
Irene	1	2	2.5	1	0	2.5	2	2	2	1.67	2.4
Jane	1	0	2	2.5	1	2	2	1	2.5	1.56	2.0
Kate	1	0	1	1	1.5	1	1	0.5	2.5	1.06	1.5
Lara	1	0	2	2	1	1	1.5	2	2.5	1.44	1.8
Nicole	1	0	1	2	0	1.5	1.5	2.5	2	1.28	1.7
Olivia	3	0	2	2.5	1	3	2.5	2	2.5	2.06	3.0
Paul	0	0	1	0.5	0	0.5	2	0	2.5	0.72	1.0
Rose	0	0	0.5	1	0	0	1.5	0.5	1.5	0.56	1.0
Simon	1.5	0	2.5	2.5	0	1.5	2.5	0.5	2.5	1.55	3.0
Tess	0	2	2	1	0	2	2	1	2	1.33	2.0
Victor	3	1.5	2	2.5	1	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.22	3.0
Wendy	0	0	0.5	1	0	0	1	0	1.5	0.44	1.0

Appendix 12

The students' pragmatic competences: Quantity of language in terms of the four different parts of their performance

Monologue

Nick-name	N of words	Sc
Olivia	295	3
Tess	228	3
Nicole	218	3
Eve	202	3
Simon	175	2
George	169	2
Frances	165	2
Irene	165	2
Victor	156	2
Alice	153	2
Bill	151	2
Lara	141	2
Paul	138	2
Jane	131	2
Rose	122	2
Kate	120	2
Wendy	104	1
Cindy	99	1
Harry	95	1
David	87	1

Discussion

Nick-name	N of words	Sc
Kate	303	3
Olivia	263	3
Eve	183	3
Victor	178	3
Nicole	176	3
Paul	169	2
Lara	158	2
George	152	2
Alice	151	2
Harry	150	2
Irene	143	2
Simon	136	2
Cindy	134	2
Rose	113	2
David	109	2
Tess	106	2
Jane	89	1
Wendy	89	1
Bill	77	1
Frances	65	1

* adjusted scores are highlighted in grey
Sc = score

Task – answer

Nick-name	N of words	Sc
George	362	3
Olivia	324	3
Victor	303	3
Paul	267	3
Alice	264	3
Irene	236	2
Nicole	228	2
Eve	216	2
David	205	2
Simon	194	2
Lara	185	2
Cindy	168	2
Rose	166	2
Bill	152	2
Tess	141	2
Harry	141	2
Jane	109	1
Kate	95	1
Frances	87	1
Wendy	67	1

Task – ask

Nick-name	N of words	Sc
Olivia	228	3
Alice	206	3
Paul	197	3
Irene	172	3
Victor	168	3
Eve	166	3
Simon	151	2
George	150	2
Jane	146	2
Cindy	133	2
Harry	133	2
Rose	131	2
Nicole	118	2
Kate	86	2
Tess	85	2
Frances	75	1
Lara	62	1
David	53	1
Bill	46	1
Wendy	45	1

* adjusted scores are highlighted in grey
Sc = score

Appendix 13

The students' pragmatic competences:
Complexity of utterances

Monologue

Nick-name	N wds/sent	Sc
Kate	30.00	3
Simon	29.17	3
Lara	28.20	3
Eve	20.20	2
Irene	18.33	2
Nicole	18.17	2
Victor	17.33	2
George	15.36	2
Paul	15.33	2
David	14.50	2
Alice	13.91	2
Harry	13.57	2
Frances	12.69	2
Cindy	12.38	2
Rose	12.20	2
Olivia	11.80	1
Wendy	11.56	1
Tess	10.36	1
Bill	10.07	1
Jane	9.36	1

Discussion

Nick-name	N wds/sent	Sc
Simon	27.20	3
Wendy	22.25	3
Harry	21.43	3
George	19.00	3
David	18.17	3
Victor	17.80	2
Lara	17.56	2
Frances	16.25	2
Nicole	16.00	2
Kate	15.95	2
Tess	15.14	2
Paul	14.08	2
Cindy	13.40	2
Alice	12.58	2
Eve	12.20	2
Olivia	11.95	1
Rose	11.30	1
Bill	11.00	1
Irene	9.53	1
Jane	8.90	1

* adjusted scores are highlighted in grey
N wds/sent = number of words per sentence
Sc = score

Task – answer

Nick-name	N wds/sent	Sc
Lara	30.83	3
Paul	26.70	3
David	22.78	3
Simon	21.56	3
Rose	20.75	3
Victor	18.94	2
Harry	17.63	2
Frances	17.40	2
Wendy	16.75	2
Irene	15.73	2
Nicole	15.20	2
Tess	14.10	2
Eve	12.71	2
George	12.48	2
Bill	11.69	2
Kate	10.56	2
Alice	8.52	1
Jane	8.38	1
Olivia	7.90	1
Cindy	7.64	1

Task – ask

Nick-name	N wds/sent	Sc
Wendy	15.00	3
Tess	14.17	3
Simon	13.73	3
Harry	13.30	3
David	10.60	2
Eve	10.38	2
Cindy	10.23	2
Nicole	9.83	2
Irene	9.56	2
Paul	8.95	2
Lara	8.86	2
Rose	8.73	2
Kate	8.60	2
Victor	8.40	2
George	8.33	2
Jane	7.68	1
Alice	6.87	1
Frances	5.36	1
Bill	5.11	1
Olivia	4.56	1

* adjusted scores are highlighted in grey
N wds/sent = number of words per sentence
Sc = score

Appendix 14

The students' pragmatic competences: Interactivity in dialogues

Discussion			Task – answer			Task – ask		
Nick-name	N turns/100 wds	Sc	Nick-name	N turns/100 wds	Sc	Nick-name	N turns/100 wds	Sc
Rose	6.10	3	Jane	9.32	3	Frances	10.38	3
Eve	5.58	3	Cindy	7.18	3	Olivia	10.20	3
Irene	5.50	3	Kate	6.80	3	Alice	8.82	3
Jane	5.30	3	Olivia	6.76	3	Irene	7.78	3
Kate	4.79	2	Alice	6.74	3	Rose	7.37	3
Bill	4.53	2	Irene	6.41	2	Kate	7.19	3
Wendy	4.11	2	Frances	5.99	2	Jane	6.50	2
Alice	3.95	2	Eve	5.83	2	Simon	6.32	2
Simon	3.88	2	Wendy	5.50	2	Eve	5.56	2
Tess	3.67	2	Bill	5.06	2	Lara	5.21	2
David	3.46	2	Nicole	5.06	2	Wendy	5.21	2
Frances	3.21	2	Simon	4.93	2	Bill	4.59	2
Olivia	2.98	2	Tess	4.83	2	Victor	4.51	2
Victor	2.81	2	Rose	4.78	2	Cindy	4.33	2
Lara	2.79	2	Lara	4.15	2	David	4.24	2
Harry	2.59	1	George	4.09	2	Nicole	4.05	1
Paul	2.58	1	Victor	3.01	1	George	3.97	1
Nicole	2.29	1	Paul	2.88	1	Tess	3.82	1
Cindy	2.18	1	David	2.88	1	Paul	3.67	1
George	1.84	1	Harry	2.83	1	Harry	2.80	1

* adjusted scores are highlighted in grey
N turns/100 wds = number of turns per 100 words
Sc = score

Appendix 15

The students' pragmatic competences:
Activity of a speaker

Discussion

Nick-name	Spkr wds/ all wds	Sc
George	70.05%	3
Olivia	60.32%	3
Simon	58.62%	3
Harry	55.56%	3
Paul	54.52%	3
Irene	49.14%	2
Lara	48.92%	2
Kate	46.83%	2
Rose	45.93%	2
Alice	45.90%	2
Nicole	44.78%	2
Eve	42.56%	2
Cindy	41.74%	2
Victor	41.69%	2
Frances	41.67%	2
Wendy	40.64%	2
David	34.28%	1
Tess	29.94%	1
Jane	29.47%	1
Bill	23.26%	1

Task – answer

Nick-name	Spkr wds/ all wds	Sc
David	84.36%	3
George	77.85%	3
Paul	76.95%	3
Victor	75.94%	3
Lara	69.81%	2
Nicole	67.86%	2
Irene	65.74%	2
Olivia	64.41%	2
Simon	63.82%	2
Wendy	61.47%	2
Eve	60.00%	2
Alice	55.58%	2
Tess	52.42%	2
Frances	52.10%	2
Rose	46.63%	1
Cindy	46.41%	1
Jane	46.19%	1
Harry	44.34%	1
Kate	38.00%	1
Bill	36.63%	1

Task – ask

Nick-name	Spkr wds/ all wds	Sc
Simon	56.13%	3
Cindy	52.36%	3
Irene	51.50%	3
Wendy	46.88%	2
Paul	45.18%	2
Victor	44.56%	2
Alice	44.30%	2
Eve	41.92%	2
Frances	40.98%	2
Jane	39.57%	2
Olivia	38.13%	2
Rose	37.11%	2
Lara	32.29%	2
Nicole	31.89%	2
Kate	30.94%	2
Harry	28.60%	1
George	28.36%	1
Tess	27.07%	1
David	22.46%	1
Bill	16.25%	1

* adjusted scores are highlighted in grey
spkr wds/all wds = number of speaker's words vs. all words in a dialogue
Sc = score

Appendix 16

Analytic and holistic assessment of linguistic and pragmatic competences

Competences	Name/ Assessment	Linguistic competences				Pragmatic competences		Mean for all 6 scores
		Phonological competence		Lexical and grammatical c.				
		analytic	holistic	analytic	holistic	analytic	holistic	
1	Simon	2.83	3.00	**1.55**	3.00	2.42	3.00	**2.63**
2	George	2.50	2.50	2.06	3.00	2.04	3.00	**2.52**
3	Eve	2.83	2.50	1.89	2.50	2. 27	3.00	**2.50**
4	Olivia	2.17	2.50	2.06	3.00	2.25	3.00	**2.50**
5	Victor	**1.83**	2.00	2.22	3.00	2.19	2.50	**2.29**
6	Harry	2.33	2.50	**1.78**	3.00	**1.73**	2.00	**2.22**
7	Alice	**1.50**	1.50	**1.94**	2.50	2.17	3.00	**2.10**
8	Irene	1.66	2.00	1.67	2.40	2.25	2.50	**2.08**
9	Tess	2.33	2.50	**1.33**	2.00	1. 81	**1.50**	**1.91**
10	Kate	1.83	2.00	**1.06**	**1.50**	2.15	2.50	**1.84**
11	David	**1.17**	**1.50**	1.67	2.50	1.83	2.00	**1.78**
12	Paul	2.17	2.50	**0.72**	**1.00**	2.10	**1.00**	**1.58**
13	Lara	1.83	2.00	1.44	1.80	2.06	2.00	**1.86**
14	Nicole	2.17	2.00	1.28	1.70	1.96	1.50	**1.77**
15	Jane	1.50	1.50	1.56	2.00	1.63	2.00	**1.70**
16	Bill	1.83	2.00	1.39	1.50	1.44	1.50	**1.61**
17	Rose	1.66	2.00	**0.56**	**1.00**	2.08	**1.00**	**1.38**
18	Frances	1.17	1.50	1.33	1.80	1.83	1.00	**1.44**
19	Cindy	1.17	1.50	1.33	**1.40**	1.88	1.50	**1.46**
20	Wendy	1.66	1.50	**0.44**	1.00	1.81	1.00	**1.24**
Mean for an./ hol. scores for Cs		**1.91**	**2.05**	**1.46**	**2.08**	**2.00**	**2.03**	**1.92**

Mean for an./hol. scores for Cs = mean for either analytic or holistic score of an individual competence
*mean score equal or higher than 1 point in comparison to the other scores highlighted in bold

Appendix 17

ELT and English as a Lingua Franca pronunciation targets: core and non-core features

	Core features	
	ELT target Traditional syllabus	English as a Lingua Franca Lingua Franca Core

1 The consonantal inventory	• all sounds close RP/GA
	• RP non-rhotic /r/
	   GA rhotic /r/
	• RP intervocalic /t/
	   GA intervocalic /ɾ/
		• all sounds except /ð/, /θ/ but approximations of all others acceptable
		• rhotic /r/ only
		• intervocalic /t/ only

2 Phonetic requirements	• rarely specified	• aspiration after /p/, /t/, /k/ • appropriate vowel length before fortis/lenis consonants
3 Consonant clusters	• all word positions	• word initially word medially
4 Vowel quantity	• long-short contrast	• long-short contrast
5 Tonic (nuclear) stress	• important	• critical
	The non-core features	
	ELT target Traditional syllabus	English as a Lingua Franca Lingua Franca Core
1 Vowel quality	• close to RP/GA	• L2 (consistent) regional qualities
2 Weak forms	• essential	• unhelpful to intelligibility
3 Features of connected speech	• all	• inconsequential and may be unhelpful
4 Stress-timed rhythm	• important	• unnecessary
5 Word stress	• critical	• can reduce flexibility/unteachable
6 Pitch movement	• essential for indicating attitudes and grammar	• unnecessary/unteachable

(adapted from Jenkins, 2007, p. 23-24)

Index

Routes and Destinations

Learning histories of Czech speakers of English
and their achievement in selected communicative language competences

Monika Černá, Libuše Hornová, Jaroslava Ivanová, Šárka Ježková