

Abstract

The thesis analyses the accuracy and fluency exhibited in the spoken advanced-learner English of Czech students of English philology. It draws its data from a learner corpus comprising fifty 15-minute interviews with these learners and from a parallel native-speaker corpus of forty-nine 15-minute interviews. As regards accuracy, the learner data is analysed using techniques of error analysis. Salient features of advanced learner English are identified and the subsequent quantitative analyses reveal that throughout the entire group of students (which is characterized by what revealed itself to be a wide proficiency span) two groups of error types are found to be much more frequent than any other, namely errors in the use of articles and tenses. For the fluency measurements a small selection of variables has been chosen to describe speed fluency (speech rate) and breakdown fluency (the frequency of unfilled and filled pauses), and the results are compared with those for the parallel native-speaker corpus. The analysed native speakers are found to produce speech at a generally much higher rate than the majority of the learners. There does not appear — at least in the light of the given sample — to be any direct correlation between fluency and the frequency of errors. Moreover, the learners are found to overuse filled and unfilled pauses and to produce shorter speech runs. The study provides the first analysis of such a large sample of Czech advanced learners of English. The conclusion of the thesis offers numerous pedagogical and research implications.

Keywords: accuracy, fluency, error analysis, speech rate, error rate, pausology, advanced language proficiency, spoken language, language production