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BACHELOR THESIS

Academic English as a Lingua Franca in the Czech Republic

Akademická angličtina jako lingua franca v České republice

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I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis “Academic English as a Lingua Franca in the Czech Republic” is my original work and no other sources than those listed on the Works Cited page were used in its compilation. I also declare that this thesis was not used to obtain another or the same university degree.

Prague, 14th July 2017

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ANOTACE

Tato práce se zaměřuje na angličtinu jako lingua franca v akademickém prostředí. Práce shrnuje dosavadní poznatky výzkumu v této oblasti a dále se soustředí na angličtinu jako vyučovací jazyk a s ní spojené komplikace a nároky, které jsou kladeny jak na vyučující tak na studenty.

Praktická část obsahuje vyhodnocení dotazníku postojů studentů k nerodilé a rodilé angličtině na univerzitách v České republice, konkrétně na pražských univerzitách.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

angličtina jako lingua franca, akademická angličtina, angličtina jako vyučovací jazyk, angličtina nerodilých mluvčí

ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on English as a lingua franca in academia. The thesis summarizes findings in this area of study and further concentrates on English as a medium of instruction and the related difficulties and requirements which affect the teachers as well as students.

The practical part contains the interpretation of a study conducted through a questionnaire which focuses on attitudes of students towards non-native and native English at universities in the Czech Republic, more specifically at universities in Prague.

KEYWORDS

English as a lingua franca, academic English, English as a medium of instruction, non-native speakers' English

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations

CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CLIL	content and language integrated learning
ČVUT	Czech Technical University in Prague
ČZU	Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
ELF	English as a lingua franca
ELFA	Academic English as a lingua franca
ELFA project	1 million word corpus of transcribed spoken academic ELF
EMI	English as a Medium of Instruction (English-medium Instruction)
EOP	English for Occupational Purposes
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
EU	the European Union
L1	first language/mother tongue
MICASE	corpus of native academic speech recorded in the United States
PVŠPS	Prague College of Psychosocial Studies
SELF	Studying in English as a lingua franca
T2K-SWAL	corpus of native academic speech recorded in the United States
UK	Charles University
US	the United States
VŠE	the University of Economics in Prague[1]
WrELFA	written academic ELF corpus

[1] The abbreviations for the Czech universities are in Czech because those are the most commonly used. Additionally, some of the institutions do not even have an English abbreviation or they are not commonly used.

INTRODUCTION

The English language is the present topmost choice of all the people who wish to learn a foreign language. The gradual rise in the numbers of non-native speakers of English started to attract more attention of language researches at the end of the 20th century and even more so in the new millennium. English as a lingua franca offers a broad scope for research and it is also the case with academic English as a lingua franca.

The focus in this research is on how non-native speakers with different lingual and cultural backgrounds communicate; in particular, what the prerequisites for successful communication are. Another goal of the research into English as a lingua franca is to uplift non-native speakers as users of the language in their own right as opposed to incompetent language users. As non-native speakers' English might sometimes be wrongly connected with negative sentiments, they should benefit from this approach because it accentuates some of their needs which were previously overlooked.

This thesis aims to cover the concept of English as a lingua franca theoretically, both in general and specifically in the higher education. Furthermore, the aim is to investigate the attitudes towards non-native and native speech as perceived by the students in the English-medium Instruction programmes at Czech universities.

The thesis is divided into a theoretical part and a practical part which are further divided into separate chapters. The first chapter characterizes the term English as a lingua franca in general and provides an overview of research findings in this area. The second chapter deals with Academic English as a lingua franca and English as a medium of instruction at universities. The third chapter summarizes the position of English in the Czech Republic as well as the research into the domains described in previous chapters done in the Czech environment. In the practical part, a small-scale study done through a questionnaire is introduced.

In the practical part, 66 responses from non-native speakers studying in English-medium Instruction programmes in the Czech Republic in Prague were collected. Most of the participants are students from the University of Economics or from Charles University. The participants come from 27 different countries. Their attitude to non-native English and native English at university is examined together with their ability to understand it. Furthermore, the main causes of misunderstanding are listed and compared. Also, their preferences to emulate native speech are scrutinized.

THEORETICAL PART

1 English as a lingua franca

1.1 The current position of English

English is presently spoken and used by many people all over the world. For many it is either their mother tongue, second language, or a foreign language that they have learned in order to communicate successfully with people of different linguacultural backgrounds. The unprecedented global spread of English affects international communication and, conversely, the language itself is influenced by these changes.

The international success of a language is connected to economic, technological, and cultural power in both its rise and fall. The traditional reason for a language to become international has been namely political and military power. To maintain this position economic power is needed. In recent years, science and technology have become more internationally interdependent creating a high demand for a common international language for which English has proven to be the best candidate (Crystal *Global* 7-10).

Interestingly, when it comes to the number of native-speakers, English is not the first. According to the source from 1998 used by the authors Flowerdew and Peacock, English was the fourth language in the number of native-speakers. It was preceded by Mandarin, Hindi, and Spanish. A newer source (2015) suggests that English is on the third place regarding its native speakers, preceded by Mandarin and Spanish (Flowerdew and Peacock 8-9, Ydenberg).

This shows that the number of native speakers alone does not automatically correspond to the importance of the language, particularly on the global scale. Nevertheless, English is frequently learned as a second or a foreign language. The important factors which influence that are certainly economic power and also progress in science and technology, but, on the other hand, these are not the only factors. Other contributing factors are that English is widespread on the internet; it is the language of pop culture and it is frequently used in business or diplomacy (Flowerdew and Peacock 9-11).

Over 50% of the content found on the internet is written in English. On the other hand, the availability of the information in one's mother tongue is valuable especially for customers searching for a specific product and as the translation is becoming easier and more automatized, the content on the internet in English will most likely gradually decrease (Unbabel).

The global status of English has influenced the growth in numbers of non-native speakers of English; this is so huge that they outnumber native speakers several times. According to

Gagliardi and Maley, non-native speakers of English outnumber the native ones three to one. English is used for various communicative situations and serves a broad spectrum of purposes. Similarly, the lingual and cultural background of English language users displays great variety. The number of non-native speakers together with the frequency of English use are factors that influence the way English is looked at from the point of language researchers who investigate the changing reality (Gagliardi and Maley 10, Björkman et al. 1-2).

The changing reality of the English language was captured in Kachru's three concentric circles representing the types of spread, the patterns of acquisition, and the functional domains in which English is used across cultures. With these three circles he differentiates the status that the English language has in a country. He describes different English users with three main parts: the Inner Circle to describe native speakers, the Outer Circle to describe second language users (English has this status in former colonies), and the Expanding Circle where English is taught as a foreign language (Seidlhofer *Controversies* 8-9).

Although Kachru's description might no longer reflect the current dynamics of the usage of English today, especially because the reality is much more complex, it provides a simple and understandable overview which has brought different users of English into focus and emphasizes different roles that the English language has assumed. Kachru's model is one of the cornerstones for shifting the perspective from the Inner Circle to the Outer and Expanding Circles. Many authors have used his terminology to mark the dynamics of change and bring the non-native speakers into focus (Björkman et al. 4-5).

As a global language serving a multitude of purposes, English has been examined from several related perspectives. Fields such as "English as an International language" (EIL), "World Englishes" (WE/WEs), English as a lingua franca (ELF) describe the manifold roles that the English language assumes in the world. Quinn Novotná scrutinizes various use of this terminology which has experienced development in recent years. She emphasizes that these terms are often used interchangeably and the different uses of different authors are sometimes problematic (Seidlhofer *Journal* 339, Quinn Novotná *World Englishes* 23-30).

The term EIL emphasizes "diversity and complexity of the process of using English internationally" (Gagliardi and Maley 2011). The term seems to be involve native as well as non-native speakers and cross-cultural communication between speakers from one country or from different countries (Quinn Novotná *World Englishes* 24-25). Jenkins characterizes EIL through 'ownership': "English, then, is an international language owned by all who use it and in this connection the terminology issue is one of great import" (Jenkins 11). The most inclusive or general term is World English(es), which was originally associated with the Outer

Circle English. Recently, the term has become more versatile and subsumes all varieties (Quinn Novotná *World Englishes* 24-25).

Nevertheless, what these terms represent are the diverse roles of English for native speakers, second language users, and those who use English as a foreign language. In this thesis mainly the term English as a lingua franca will be described from the point of view of different authors. However, the term English as a lingua franca often overlaps with the above mentioned domains as well (Quinn Novotná *World Englishes* 23-30).

1.2 English as a lingua franca

English has been used as a lingua franca for several centuries; however, its global character is quite recent. UNESCO defines the term "lingua franca" as "a language which is used habitually by people whose mother tongues are different in order to facilitate communication between them" (UNESCO 46). Seidlhofer presents the term 'English as a lingua franca' as "communication in English between speakers of different first languages". She further emphasizes that although the native speakers can be present at such occasions; English as a lingua franca is used mostly by non-native speakers who do not share a language or a culture (Seidlhofer *Journal* 339).

Although the effort is made to investigate how English as a lingua franca is used, Anna Mauranen describes the use of any lingua franca as "uncharted territory" because there is still much that needs to be discovered. Cogo and Dewey claim that with the spread of English used by non-native speakers, there remains a lack of investigation into this sociolinguistic reality; especially compared to that analysing the situation from the native speakers' perspective. Despite the progress being made in recent years, it is not universally accepted that English used as a lingua franca should be an important domain of research (Mauranen *Exploring* 1, Cogo and Dewey 21-23).

Learning a common language, or lingua franca, helps those who often engage in communication with people of other language backgrounds, another option being teams of translators and interpreters used. Many areas of communication (business, academia, international meetings, and meeting people while travelling) need a common language and English is currently the best candidate for this position. However, this does not mean that the present status of English is permanent, as the number of its speakers is not the reason why English is a lingua franca, but rather a result of it being a lingua franca, in other words being a prevailing language. Should the present dominance and influence of the US be undermined,

other candidates could take over the position which is presently held by English (Crystal *Works* 423, Crystal *Global* 123-191).

What makes English different from other lingua francas used in the past, such as Sanskrit, Arabic, Aramaic, Latin, and Greek, is the scale of its use. There is a considerably wider range of social situations and activities in which English is employed than it was with other lingua francas in the past or coexisting lingua francas today. This is connected to the modern options for communication, travelling, and commerce and it is in line with globalisation and its consequences (Mauranen *Exploring* 17).

As the number of non-native users of English is growing, there has been a heated debate in academia to which extent the non-native speakers should shape the English language regarding the norms and accepted varieties. The growing number of non-native speakers has already triggered changes in which the non-native speakers and their interactions are viewed. Although non-standard use by non-native speakers does not need to create problems with mutual intelligibility, if it should be accepted as a standard variety providing that it creates no problems with mutual understanding is a question that yet needs to be answered. However, research into English as a lingua franca (ELF) has already provided useful information about the English language users which can be applied either in the real-life interactions or in a classroom environment (see Seidlhofer *Controversies* 7-21, Jenkins 124-162, Mauranen *Exploring* 234-251).

In ELF research the focus is being shifted to non-native speakers with native speakers being only marginally present, which represents a shift that helps to unravel the previously overlooked domain. Cogo and Dewey emphasize that the shift of perspective is useful: "Adopting an ELF perspective means extending our acceptance of language variation and change as a naturally occurring phenomenon to including expanding circle contexts." They bring into focus the communicative needs of non-native speakers together with functions of identification (18-19).

The frequency of the use of English as a lingua franca has drawn interest into the changing paradigm viewing non-native speakers of English as speakers in their own right as opposed to incompetent speakers of English. This has been closely studied by what is known as the ELF movement. In line with this movement, 'multilingual speakers of English' are viewed as 'language users pursuing their diverse communication goals in English'. Therefore, there is a diversity of goals of the non-native speakers for learning English and for using English (Smit 18).

In fact, what these motivations often have in common is that achieving a reasonable proficiency in the English language is for many a question of success, meaning that without learning English their career or study options would be considerably more limited. In the age of globalisation it is difficult or almost impossible to ignore such development (Johnson 131-135).

The trend towards acceptance of localized varieties of English is on the rise, but the acceptance does not prompt the acknowledgement of the role non-Inner Circle countries have had in the global shaping of the English language, at least not automatically. However, with the acknowledgment of World Englishes and the research into ELF the notion of native speakers and their role of a language authority have been increasingly challenged (Dewey 338, Hackert 1-32).

One of the important goals of the ELF approach is to stress and perhaps redefine international intelligibility. Jenkins accentuates the fact that international intelligibility can be no longer measured solely against the native speaker model, given that many of the English language users are non-native speakers. Furthermore, she suggests that there should be "minimum standards of mutual intelligibility" that would not be based on native the speaker model (Jenkins 11; 69).

The authors dealing with intercultural communication differentiate between *intelligibility*, *comprehensibility*, and *interpretability*. All these terms are related to understanding, which is an essential part of any communication. *Intelligibility* has been defined "as the speaker's ability to recognize and understand words and utterances that are part of interlocutor's intended message" (Gagliardi and Maley 208). *Comprehensibility* is "the speaker's ability to understand the contextual meaning of the word or utterance" (Ibid). Finally, *interpretability* is "the speaker's ability to understand interlocutor's intentions" (Ibid).

1.3 Research into English as a lingua franca

With the acknowledgement of the rise of non-native speakers and their importance, research into ELF is crucial to determine what ELF actually represents. The most important characteristics to define are: which features and regularities reoccur in ELF, what the communicative goals are, how ELF speakers interact with each other, and possibly what the consequences for English language learning are.

The research into ELF involves different linguistic disciplines such as phonology, lexicology, grammar, and pragmatics. The dominant part of the research has been the naturally occurring speech, as that is considered the most authentic. Although originally the

studies consisted of classroom simulations, the current effort is to investigate an un-elicited lingua franca talk. The dominance of research based on spoken corpora is driven by the fact that writing is usually influenced by editing commonly done by proficient speakers or native speakers and, arguably, no longer representative (Cogo and Dewey 2).

ELF as the domain of research has started with the new millennium. Although there were some publications before the year 2000, it was a novelty then. Since then researchers such as Jenkins, Seidlhofer and Mauranen have conducted larger scale research and have been working on defining common or salient features of ELF use. Other larger scale projects include Asian Corpus of English led by Kirpatrick at The Hong Kong Institute of Education. Apart from these studies also smaller projects have been run. An increased interest regarding this field of studies translated into annual meetings that were established in 2008 in Helsinki and take place annually with the location being changed each year. Starting in 2011 Gruyter Mouton publishes a journal dedicated to the ELF *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca* (Bayyurt and Sumru 1, Cogo and Dewey 2-3).

The most interesting study regarding ELF phonology is that of Jenkins. Jenkins has been exploring relevant features related to phonology described as Lingua Franca Core. Her research has been empirically based and she focuses on interactional speech data which she herself has collected. When describing the salient features, the international intelligibility is the decisive factor whether a feature belongs to the Lingua Franca Core (LFC) (Jenkins 131-162).

The LFC features are mainly segmental features, but some suprasegmental features are vital as well. For the segmental features all the consonant sounds are important with the exception of /θ/ and /ð/, for which substitutions are possible with the best substitution being /f/ and /v/. Aspiration of /p/ /t/ /k/ in the stressed syllable is also crucial. LFC has opted for rhotic variety; therefore, /r/ should be pronounced as in General American English. Preservation of the consonant cluster is also crucial for international intelligibility, mainly in the initial consonant clusters (Jenkins 136-143).

When it comes to vowels, the quantity is more important than quality; provided that the users of English are not altering the vowel quality that they opted for. The vowel quantity is important regarding the fortis/lenis distinction and being consistent in pre-fortis shortening. The quantity of diphthongs must be preserved, but the quality is not that crucial provided that the speaker does not alter it. Finally, the mid-central vowel / ː/ must be pronounced accurately because its substitution for /ɑː/ tends to create problems with intelligibility (Jenkins 144-146).

Regarding the suprasegmental features, Jenkins argues that weak forms are quite unimportant or even redundant for international intelligibility. In fact, the non-native speakers often opt for strong forms deliberately, as they want to make sure that their interlocutors will grasp the intended meaning. Also other features of connected speech such as assimilation, elision, linking, or intrusion are not that important because not implementing them does not hinder intelligibility. Additionally, they are a feature of a faster speech and most of the non-native speakers do not acquire such speed. On the other hand, the most important suprasegmental feature for LFC is nuclear stress, which should be preserved. It helps the listener to distinguish the speaker's aim and is crucial for international intelligibility. Finally, while the suprasegmental features, with the exception of nuclear stress, are not important for LFC; it does not mean that they are not important for English pedagogy, as the learners should also be ready, at least receptively, to understand features of native speech (Jenkins 146-156).

A crucial factor characterized by Jenkins is the Communication Accommodation Theory, according to which, one can adjust their speech either in the direction of their interlocutors (convergence) or away from that of their interlocutors (divergence). In order to achieve successful communication, convergence needs to be present. This is true especially when a second or a foreign language is the medium of communication. Firstly, the speakers need to adjust to make their speech comprehensible to their interlocutors. Secondly, it suggests that the listeners should try to accept differences from the standard form, as long as they are understandable (Jenkins 21).

Seidlhofer is the founding director of VOICE, which is a structured collection of language data of different speech events. The native speakers constitute up to 7 percent of all the speech data, the rest is composed of ELF users. The primary focus of VOICE is on Europe; therefore, the majority of speakers' first languages are European, but it is not exclusively so (Universität Wien).

The outcomes of a VOICE corpora research led by Seidlhofer are aimed at morpho-syntactic features in ELF. Among the most discussed features are: not using –s in the third person present tense; using relative pronouns *wh*o and *which* interchangeably; omitting articles where they are obligatory in Standard English or inserting them where they do not occur; pluralizing nouns that do not have a plural form in English (Seidlhofer *Oxford* R92).

A similar project is conducted by Mauranen, who is a project director of an ELFA project - spoken data of academic English used as lingua franca. In the situations which are being examined, ELF is used as a contact language, not as a subject of studies. The percentage of

native speakers included in the data is relatively low – only 5% of the data collected. As the project is conducted in Finland, a higher percentage of Finnish native speakers is included which amounts up to 28.5% of the data collected. The ELFA project is further described in a separate section "Research into Academic English as a lingua franca" (University of Helsinki).

Although the research interest into this field has been growing in recent years, there have been some problematic points which sparkle academic debate regarding terminology, classification, and importance of the field. Besides these, there has been an ongoing debate to what extent the changing reality should actually be reflected in the English language teaching where norms and models have to be provided (Cogo and Dewey 6-7).

1.4 Terminological battles in ELF

Even though ELF is a domain which has produced many research papers and studies, there are still terminological obscurities or rather disagreements. One of the important issues is how deviations from Standard English of non-native speakers should be treated. What further divides the opinion of researches is whether ELF should be considered a variety or a set of varieties. Finally, some researchers undermine the findings of the current ELF research and their major objections will be described below.

Another complication constitutes the learner-user problem especially because the users might be learners of the English language as well. When describing ELF conversation, Mauranen explicates that the people using ELF are not learners, but users. She differentiates between second language use (SLU) and second language acquisition (SLA). In other words once the learners walk out of the classroom and use their English in everyday communication they are users. It might be difficult to differentiate between learners and users because these roles might change (Gagliardi and Maley 29-30, Mauranen *Exploring* 4-5).

The heterogeneity of ELF interactions applies not only to different first-language backgrounds but also different levels of proficiency from expert users to not very proficient users or learners. This results in high variety which is problematic to scrutinize and the possibility for ELF to become a standardized variety of English is rather low. Berns and some other researchers argue that calling ELF a variety would be wrong, as ELF is a way language is used, not the use itself (Ferguson 121-122, Berns 192-193).

As far as critique is concerned, an interesting point is made by O'Regan which helps to understand objections against the ELF movement. He suggests that the use of terminology regarding the research into ELF is wrong and misleading because, according to him, non-

native speakers of English "are displaying the types of variant forms which are common in acquisition of any second language" rather than using linguistic resources in a systematic way in which regularities can be found and possibly assigned to a variety of a language as the supporters of ELF movement are trying to argue (O'Regan "Critique" 1-17).

Furthermore, he objects to the studies into ELF being made as they, using the examples of the above mentioned corpora VOICE and ELFA, comprise of a very specific language users who often belong to bilingual elites. At this point, O'Regan's critique could be considered relevant because it is true that the research into ELF was so far made mainly in the business sphere and academia which might be viewed as elitist and should be considered in the light of present findings (O'Regan "Critique" 1-17, Mauranen "Features" 6).

On the other hand, it is necessary to acknowledge that ELFA corpora cannot escape elitism as it investigates the English language being used at university which is necessarily limited to knowledge in a specific field and the level of English of the students and teachers must be respectively high. However, there are many environments in which ELF could be investigated, some of those are not as specific as the university environment is. Therefore, an investigation in a not exclusively elitist background could be an aim of future research.

In other viewpoint, in his lecture O'Regan admits that it is the theoretical background in ELF research that he mainly opposes and that he finds specific findings useful such as Lingua Franca Core by Jenkins. Similarly, he does not object to the acknowledgement of ELF English users as users in their own right, but he objects that Standard English is much more prestigious and, in fact, is what the non-native speakers want (O'Regan *YouTube* 1:21:00-1:23:00).

Similarly to Berns, the main objection that O'Regan raises against ELF research is that its supporters say, write, or imply that ELF is a variety of English. His main reasons for his opposition are fluidity and heterogeneity of interactions between non-native speakers of English. Ferenčík for example would like to treat ELF as a user-related variety or functional register as he sees a similar problem with there being no stable community of speakers which would allow a distinct homogenous variety to emerge. This view is supported by Mollin who sees that ELF is not structurally coherent precisely for the reasons mentioned above and therefore, ELF is a phenomenon regarding the language function (O'Regan *YouTube* 00:00:00-1:30:00, Ferenčík 113, Mollin 50-51).

To conclude, whether ELF can or cannot become a variety is a question of further research and also acknowledgement. As O'Regan points out, it is difficult to establish a variety (or set of varieties) if its users, in this case non-native speakers of English, would not like to adhere

to it and would rather learn English according to the native speaker norms only. The attitudes to native and non-native English and its norms are further analyzed in the practical part of this thesis.

2 Academic English as a lingua franca

As the cooperation in the academic field has always been desirable, in order to exchange information, there has always been a demand for a lingua franca in academia. Mainly in the European context, this position was for a long time held by Latin until the seventeenth century. In the nineteenth century French, English, and German were used as scientific languages for international publication. This situation changed in the mid twentieth century when English started to considerably dominate as a language of science and technology (Björkman et al. 8-13).

With this in mind, the current options and needs for communication highlight the importance of a common language in this field. In fact, students and scholars who are able to adapt themselves to these changes have more chances for international success as their work is linguistically available for other researchers and students as well (Thompson and Diani 198).

The English language is the means of communication in many scientific domains, especially in those with lively international cooperation. Furthermore, the increasing presence of English in academia is acknowledged even by those who do not favour this development. Nevertheless, the current development provides opportunities as well as challenges which were not previously available to as large groups as there are today (Björkman 80-81).

As a part of globalisation the mobility of students has increased and so has the number of linguistically and culturally heterogeneous study groups. The international reputation of European tertiary educational institutions together with the Bologna process and financial resources support attract foreign students to international study programmes. The instruction and communication in such programmes is done either in the language of the country or in English (Smit 16-17).

When explaining her choice to write about the ELF use in academia, Mauranen states that the choice is relevant because academia is “inherently international” and English is the current prevailing language. She further explains that the communication in the academic sphere is verbally demanding, thus different from other more spontaneous lingua franca exchanges. Additionally, the growing global demand for higher education is enhancing the demand for a

common language; therefore, currently reinforcing the position of English (Mauranen *Exploring* 1).

Academic ELF is also specific because it is usually field-related, either to research or to fields of study. Therefore, even the non-native speakers need to be well equipped in terms of their proficiency and the field-related vocabulary. To help the non-native speakers to adapt to their fields, research and courses, related to the specific demands of the students, have been established.

Students' and teachers' perspective towards the English language used as a lingua franca in academia represents the major interest of this thesis.

2.1 EAP versus ELF

English has been used as a medium in academia for a longer time and therefore, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is an established field of research. The aim of this research is to provide support to the learners at higher education institutions and to help them to apply proper linguistic resources according to the context or situation in which they need them. Therefore, the specific needs of learners have to be considered (Leung at al. 56, Flowerdew and Peacock 10-11).

Generally, EAP is viewed as one of the two branches of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), the other one being English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). Although EAP and EOP often use similar means, what differentiates them is the goal for which they are established, with EOP focusing on the future occupation of the student and EAP focusing on the student's needs during the studies (Flowerdew and Peacock 11-12).

EAP focuses on meeting specific needs of the learner. It is related to particular disciplines, occupations, and activities and it comprises of appropriate activities regarding lexis, syntax, semantics, and discourse; therefore, it differentiates from "General English". Although this field was designed to help the learners cope with demanding tasks of studying in English which is not their mother tongue, its focus was on the native-speaker model and native-speaker norms (Flowerdew and Peacock 13, Mauranen et al. 44-45).

However, the newest developments in ELF are shaping EAP with regard to the recent focus on non-native speakers of English. The difference in the scientific approach between EAP and ELF is mainly the focus of EAP on the written research material, as opposed to ELF, which primarily focuses on spoken data. As a result of these two fields being in an interplay, ELF has been playing a more serious role in EAP research and applications.

Furthermore, there has been additional research of written academic ELF (WrELFA) conducted by Mauranen (Thompson and Diani 197, Mauranen et al. 44-45).

According to Björkman, in its beginning EAP was used mainly for two groups of students. The first one consists of foreigners studying at universities in English-speaking countries. These students need to learn English effectively both in written and spoken encounters often dealing with native speakers. The second one consist of students outside the English-speaking countries around the world studying in their mother tongue who need help with the course literature written in English; therefore, the focus is on reading skills (81).

With the increased use of English as a medium of instruction in the higher education circles outside the English speaking countries, there is a third group that needs to be acknowledged. This group consists of students and teachers of mostly a non-English-speaking background frequently using English in their encounters in full-time programmes or shorter stays outside the English-speaking countries (Björkman 82-87).

For this group, but not exclusively, the recent combination of findings in both of these fields (ELF and EAP) could prove useful. The ELF approach is useful in its focus on spoken data. The spoken data approach is beneficial for possible conclusions made on teaching academic English, especially when it comes to speaking. Although it might be intuitive, it has become apparent that academic speech resembles spoken language rather than academic prose (Mauranen *Controversies* 148).

2.2 Students' mobility and international programmes

There has been a rise not only in the number of international students in English speaking countries, but also in academic institutions outside the Anglophone countries using English as the medium of instruction. Together with more options for students to study abroad, or to go on short stays or student exchanges, there has been an increased interest in how English is used in academic context. Furthermore, with the greater number of non-native speakers of English involved in international study programmes the research into academic English as a lingua franca has been on the rise (Leung et al. 56, Mauranen *Exploring* 66-69, Smit 16-21).

It has become a part of universities' prestige to offer multilingual programmes and courses. The reasons for doing so are to: increase the number of enrolled students; improve their public image and consequently, their chances on the education market; and to offer new degrees. Other goals include building cultural awareness and global citizenship (Björkman et al. 15).

As this thesis is written in the European context, specifics that arise from that such as the existence of the European Union and the development of students' mobility will be judged. There have been some steps from the EU in favour of students' mobility. To support students' mobility within the EU the Erasmus Programme was founded in the late 1980s. The language of most of the students' programmes is English, although the students often have the possibility to study the language of the country that they study in, sometimes even in the language of the country in which they study. Proving that the applicant for the Erasmus programme speaks and understands English on a sufficient level is one of the key criteria for getting a scholarship to study abroad. The length of the study is from 3 to 12 months. Due to internationalisation there has been a growing interest to study in Europe from the European students and students from outside of the EU alike (Erasmusprogramme, Berns 195).

When students decide to study in another country, the language of instruction is one of the most important criteria for the students' choice of a country of study. Countries whose languages are widely used such as English, French, German, Russian, and Spanish attract international students. However, many institutions in non-English-speaking countries are introducing programmes taught in English in order to appeal to international students. In the European context, this trend is prevailing especially in the Nordic countries. Among other criteria are the quality of programmes and tuition fees (OECD).

This of course means that English is not the only language used as a lingua franca at universities or in academia, but it is undoubtedly the dominant one. Choosing one language makes the fields of study more accessible to a higher number of students.

2.2.1 **ELF at universities and research implications**

There are some reasons why schools generally provide good settings for linguistic research as their main goals are often achieved through communication. This applies also to the research of English used as a lingua franca. Also the nature of communication in this field tends to be continuous or reiterative rather than an ad hoc single event (Smit 19-20).

The tendency towards greater stability in academia is important because the groups using English as a lingua franca are often fluid and unstable. Therefore, this tendency in academia might facilitate the options for research. Nonetheless, it is necessary to keep in mind that the social ties in international academia are often temporary or intermittent which Mauranen classifies as "weak ties". However, also longer-living groups such as research teams can last for years (Smit 19-20, Mauranen *Exploring* 19-20; 27).

Smit further explains that there is a distinction between multilingual educational policies and multilingual learners. The first example - multilingual educational policies - is rarer and also hardly ever comprises of more than two languages regularly used in classroom talk. The latter occurs much more frequently, and with the students' mobility, it is becoming increasingly important also because it creates the preconditions necessary to investigate the use of a lingua franca in education (Smit 21; 78-79).

Multilingual learners' interactions represent ELF environment as the first languages of the students are different. This differs from a classroom practice named content and language integrated learning (CLIL), where, usually, the participants are of a monolingual background. Linguistically mixed study groups have to use English even outside of their classes for peer-communication or group projects. This does not have to apply for CLIL classes as the students' motivation to use English would be considerably lower. Also when something is misunderstood in CLIL students can conveniently switch into their mother tongue (Mauranen *Exploring* 79).

Because of the relative stability, higher education is a good environment for ELF research. However, there are also downsides for this kind of research, which might be for example elitism, in this specific case - linguistic elitism. The students studying at international universities or applying for Erasmus need to prove that they are proficient enough to withstand the demanding process of studying in another language.

In order to be able to enrol into an international study programme, the students need to meet language requirements and other specific requirements of the study programme. To measure the proficiency in English, IELTS or TOEFL tests are commonly used. This means that the students must have been learning English for a longer time before they applied for higher education and also their skills were measured against the standard and broadly accepted English-language tests (Pop).

To sum up, one has to be careful what kind of results the research should provide. Academic ELF research might provide general applications, but it needs to be taken into account that, usually, the speakers are linguistically well-equipped. However, when it comes to academic research applications, this restriction is no longer valid as it is aimed specifically at students involved in higher education; therefore, academic ELF suits perfectly for EAP research purposes.

2.3 Research into Academic English as a lingua franca

2.3.1 ELFA project

The ELFA project is a one-million-word corpus which is so far the greatest study of how non-native English is used in academia. The study is conducted by Mauranen and her team. The corpus focuses on conversational speech event types although in smaller proportions lectures and thesis defences are included as well. The project comprises of different disciplinary domains such as "social sciences (29% of the recorded data), technology (19%), humanities (17%), natural sciences (13%), medicine (10%), behavioural sciences (7%), and economics and administration (5%)". Therefore, it comprises of a variety of domains (University of Helsinki).

The project is divided into two main parts: the ELFA corpus project and the SELF project (studying in English as a lingua franca). "SELF focuses on English-medium university studies, adopting a microanalytic, ethnographically influenced perspective on the social contexts of ELF, tapping the speakers' experience along with their language." The SELF project uses the data of the ELFA corpus. The research team also collects written data of academic ELF – WrELFA (University of Helsinki).

In the study conducted by Mauranen and her team, the data collected are examined and compared with the databases made in the US namely with MICASE and T2K-SWAL which consist of academic speech produced by native speakers of English. With this comparison she can determine the main similarities and differences of the English-language use in higher education by native (MICASE, T2K-SWAL) and non-native speakers (ELFA) (*Exploring* 66-76).

Specifically, she analyses the most recurrent three-word sequences in the data collected in the ELFA project and contrasts them to the data from native spoken English MICASE. In the ELFA project data, she observes lexical simplification that can be perceived in learner language or translations. Furthermore, she notices that spoken ELF is more similar to spoken native English than either of these is to written native English (*Exploring* 88-117). Her assumption that "ELF incorporates those elements of language that are most stable and most vital to communication" is proved to be correct (Ibid. 117).

Among other important results of the study conducted by Mauranen is an increased use of explications in ELF data. Explications are expressed by different discourse devices such as metadiscourse, topic negotiation, tails, repetition, and rephrasing. Altogether they facilitate mutual intelligibility and can possibly represent standpoints at which achieving

communication skills could be oriented. As communication always rests on all of the participants, it is useful to refer to Jenkins' observation that meaning negotiation also helps to reach understanding. Therefore, misunderstanding might be a result of the lack of the participants' will to negotiate the meaning (Mauranen *Exploring* 338, Jenkins 79).

2.3.2 **Longitudinal study of classroom discourse**

A different study of ELF in higher education is made by Smit who performs a longitudinal study of classroom discourse. She has chosen the Hotel Management Programme in Vienna, Austria for her study. She explains that "the hospitality industry is prototypically international in terms of clientele, staff and individual managerial careers" (Smit 82).

Smit characterizes her research as "the first ethnographically inspired longitudinal investigation of ELF as classroom language" (379). At first, she observed the classes of her target group, which were 28 international students and their teachers of the Hotel Management Programme. Then she conducted interviews with the teachers and the students respectively. The main aim of her research was communication, negotiation of meaning, and interactional repair as it evolved over time during four semesters of the study programme (Ibid. 151-159; 379).

The longitudinal nature of her study enabled her to investigate long-term interactional processes and patterns. The most important of her findings is: "Most centrally, problems of intelligibility could be identified as temporary and relative in discursive prominence to the status of familiarity between the ELF interactants" (Smit 380). Furthermore, two interactional principles – the principle of explicitness and the principle of joint forces – are vital to the classroom discourse. The first principle refers to increased explicitness as a means of reaching understanding and the latter labels the work of the group to participate in exchange to make the classroom talk work (Ibid. 380).

As the study was conducted in Austria, Smit comments also on the fact that English was not the only language used during the seminars or subsequent discussions. The German language was the first language of the most participants and the students sometimes used the linguistic advantage to ask for a word or an explanation. In other words, Smit explains that German had more "symbolic power" than the other first languages of the participants. The other participants who could not speak German were at first upset about the role that the German language had; however, gradually they adapted to these circumstances and accepted the symbolic role of German (126-127).

2.4 English-medium instruction at universities in non-English speaking countries

2.4.1 Classroom discourse and linguistic authority

Classroom discourse was identified by various researches as specific in "turn-taking behaviour (turn allocation and time allotment), information flow (usually unidirectional from teacher to student), question and answer sequences and exchange patterns" with the exchange patterns consisting of Initiation, Response, and Feedback or Follow-up. The power relations in classrooms are usually uneven with teacher having power over their students which might be shifted during the education process, but usually returns to the teacher (Smit 23).

The power relations could be interesting in terms of the fact that the teacher does not have to be a native speaker of English, but he or she might conduct their lesson in English. It is clear that they are an authority for the class; nevertheless, they do not necessarily have to be a linguistic authority.

The problem arises when the students have high expectations on the teachers' linguistic competence or when the teachers are not very confident in their knowledge of the English language. A possible solution might be cooperation between the language department and the teachers who are providing the content (Doiz and Lasagabaster 16).

2.4.2 Difficulties

English-medium instruction (EMI) at university in an environment where most of the students and teachers are non-native speakers creates pressures to perform well in English. Among specific obstacles for lecturers in the "traditional education" are "pronunciation problems, lack of clarity and an inability to elaborate and improvise" (Doiz and Lasagabaster 15). As a result, a student-centred approach has been opted for as a means of helping students and teachers by shifting more responsibility in the learning process on the students (Ibid. 15-16).

The quality of EMI programmes is crucial as the programmes would like to attract more students. Students pay attention to international rankings or to other students' recommendations. One of the important qualities is the quality of the teaching staff. The students pay attention to the: "disciplinary competence, teaching competence and language competence" (Doiz and Lasagabaster 18). The language competence seems to be a concern in the early years of the students' study in particular. After some time, students seem to adapt to accents, studying and discussions in English. However, the students' attention is often drawn

to the lack of the teachers' linguistic competence with pronunciation being the main noticeable factor. Even relatively minor pronunciation problems might elicit strong negative reactions from the students (Ibid. 18).

In the study conducted at the University of the Basque Country the non-native speaking teachers were asked about difficulties they face regarding their teaching task performed in English. Out of the inquiries, pronunciation was labelled as the most difficult aspect of EMI (Doiz and Lasagabaster 50). In the end of this questionnaire the teachers were asked whether they felt as though they needed to increase their "language competence", "pedagogic competence" or both. The results have shown that the teachers feel a greater need to improve their language competence (for details see Doiz and Lasagabaster 51-52).

2.4.3 **Native/non-native teacher problem**

The literature on non-native teachers primarily deals with non-native English teachers and the preferences of the students. To a lesser extent, the literature and research concerning non-native teachers in EMI is covered.

With the spread of English, the number of non-native English teachers is also on the rise. However, there is an established historical preference for the native speakers as teachers of English as they can provide the target model. With the changes described in this thesis, namely the growing number of non-native speakers of English and their interactions, it is arguable to what extent native teachers are more suitable than non-native ones. Generally, it is impossible to say which teachers are better simply based on them being or not being native speakers as neither of them are automatically superior (Watson and Punjaporn 24).

However, there is still a broad social acceptance of the native speaker model which also influences the choices of institutions offering English language programmes. One of the indicators that the native speaker model is still highly relevant are surveys exploring students' preferences concerning teachers. The students learning English are either likely to opt for a combination of native and non-native speakers as their teachers or they prefer native speakers (Watson and Punjaporn 24-25). Other study suggests that the students prefer native speakers as teachers to acquire pronunciation skills and non-native teachers for grammar (Doiz and Lasagabaster 51).

In the study made by Shiri and Boaz, the influence of accent on credibility was examined. The participants were native speakers who were judging the truth value of statements read by native and non-native speakers with a mild or heavy accent. The study showed that the native

speakers are more likely to believe a statement said/read by a native speaker than by a non-native speaker with a foreign accent (Shiri and Boaz 1093-1095).

It would be interesting to make a comparative study using non-native speakers as those who should judge the credibility. Nevertheless, it is clear that accented speech might evoke negative sentiments. Jenkins argues that this is due to a negative attitude towards accents which is supported even by non-native teachers of English (Jenkins 14).

Turning back to the EMI programmes outside the English speaking countries, the non-native teachers in these programmes are most likely not trained teachers of English and their competence in the English language might vary. Nevertheless, the interests of universities and students to participate in these programmes are on the rise; therefore, the foreign language competence expectations on the teaching staff are also on the rise (Doiz and Lasagabaster 14-20).

3 The status of English in the Czech Republic

As the Czech Republic is located in the middle of Europe and it happens to be a small or middle-sized country its wish to cooperate internationally is considerably high. This tendency has even increased after the Czech Republic entered the EU in 2004. Firstly, the position of the Czech language will be discussed, and then foreign language competence with the focus on the English language will be reflected.

The Czech language can be described as a relatively small language with over 9 million native speakers. Czech is not endangered and is a predominant medium of communication in the Czech Republic involving various aspects of human life from the workplace to the highest levels of tertiary education and science (Baldauf and Kaplan 17).

To begin with, the proliferation of English in the Czech Republic was caused by power reorientation after 1989. Before that, Russian was a compulsory language learned at school as a result of the Czech Republic being under the Soviet sphere of influence. The turn of the Czech Republic towards Western culture was also followed by its turn to a market based economy and to globalisation and its influences, one of which was the adaptation of the English language as a compulsory language to be learned at school (Landry and Landryova 93).

According to a 1999 survey done by Lidové noviny, 57% of Czechs claimed that they could communicate in Russian, 51% in German, and 21% in English. Although these figures are probably unrealistically high, it is clear that the number of people who could speak the

English language then has changed dramatically in comparison with later studies as it is to be described in the following paragraph (Baldauf and Kaplan 125-126).

Furthermore, it is increasingly important to speak a foreign language in the Czech Republic. In the survey conducted in 2009, 87.7% of Czechs speak at least one foreign language and 28.4% claim to speak two foreign languages. Because of the common history, many Czechs speak Slovak (72.2%); the other important foreign languages are English (61.3%), German (48.4%), and Russian (42.6%). The knowledge of the English language is experiencing the fastest growth of 15% over the past six years (CzechInvest).

The increasing importance of English in the Czech Republic is also represented by the employment of English courses early in the curriculum. As a part of a school curriculum, English is studied as a subject in early stages of school attendance. Many schools have begun to teach English as a compulsory subject at a primary level and for some of the students, English becomes a medium through which the courses in secondary or higher education are instructed due to the high availability of the learning materials in English (Linn 1-2).

Landry and Landryova conducted a study of what the English language represents to the young learners. They stated that it is a global language which is useful for communication, but, on the other hand, some complain that it is compulsory and not that easy to learn. However, the young learners are motivated to learn a foreign language (English) as they feel that the Czech language is not much of use outside of the Czech Republic (94-95).

3.1 English as an academic language in the Czech Republic

Similarly to other European countries, the number of English-taught programmes in the Czech Republic has increased rapidly after the year 2001. Before that the English-taught programmes in Europe were a rather rare phenomenon. Conversely, today, the country that would not offer English-taught programmes would be disadvantaged, as it is part of the universities' prestige (Wächter and Maiworm 27).

The existence of English-taught programmes was supported by the fact that the Czech Republic had entered the EU. The number of full-time international programmes or a shorter stays through Erasmus programmes has been growing in the recent years. The Czech Republic also wants to succeed in attracting international students.

For the English-taught programmes in the Czech Republic, a lack of accreditation seems to be the greatest obstacle. On the other hand, the language proficiency of the administrative staff regarding those programmes is very high in the Czech Republic (84%) with the proportion being higher only in Austria (88%) (Wächter and Maiworm 62; 102).

English is vital for higher education in the Czech Republic. Not only do the international students coming to the Czech Republic need to show proficiency in the English language, but the universities often require proficiency even from the Czech students. For instance at Charles University the applicants for programmes conducted in English need to show sufficient proficiency either at the entrance exams fully conducted in English or to present their scores from internationally accepted English language tests (TOEFL, IELTS, or similar) (Charles University).

According to the Centre for International Cooperation in Education there are 974 programmes listed (bachelor, master or PhD) out of which 471 are marked as being open for the time-period 2016/2017. Apart from these programmes, there are also options for short study stays such as Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees or non-degree Erasmus stays (Centre for International Cooperation in Education).

The data available show that there are 10% of foreign students in the Czech Republic. These, however, include the students of tertiary education who were not born in the Czech Republic or whose nationality is not Czech. Compared to the other European countries, namely Slovakia, Italy, and Greece, the percentage of foreign students of all the students involved in tertiary education is the highest in the Czech Republic. Many foreign students in the Czech Republic come from neighbouring countries, namely from Slovakia (57%) (OECD).

The number of Erasmus students coming to the Czech Republic has gradually increased during the recent years and so has the number of students from the Czech Republic going for Erasmus elsewhere. Charles University in Prague has received the most students (European Commission).

Jašková conducts a study aimed at ESP at the Czech universities from the perspective of novice teachers. She concludes that the teachers are usually unprepared for their role as they are trained for teaching General English at secondary schools. However, during the first three years they try to fill in this gap by self-preparation, asking their colleagues, and asking the students themselves. As ESP is more field specific, the teachers have to make an analysis of the students' needs and then adapt their lesson plans accordingly (121-136).

However, it is necessary to admit that the position of English as an academic language in the Czech Republic is by no means as strong as it is in the Nordic countries such as Sweden, Finland, Denmark, or Norway.

3.2 Research into English as a lingua franca used in academia in the Czech Republic

The research into ELF in the Czech Republic has been triggered by Quinn Novotná and her dissertation "World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca: a reflection of global paradigmatic changes in the Czech Republic." In the practical part, she applies theoretical knowledge of ELF and conducts a study through a set of questionnaires.

The study of Quinn Novotná consists of different target groups, but is aimed at different attitudes to ELF or EFL in the Czech Republic and shows that teachers and students studying to become future teachers would prefer to achieve near native likeness as opposed to what she labels as proficient ELF users. This is not surprising; in the light of the absence of norms regarding what a proficient ELF user actually entails. Nevertheless, the international intelligibility is becoming increasingly more important (Quinn Novotná *World Englishes* 99-213).

The closest to the studies of ELF in academia is the work of Quinn Novotná, Grosser and Dunková, in which the environment of the United World Colleges is investigated. The United World Colleges are post-secondary educational institutions and the participants are awarded an International Baccalaureate diploma. Within the study, 12 United World Colleges were investigated one of which is located in the Czech Republic. As for the 1st International School of Ostrava, this study is a small-scale study with more than half of the participants (teachers and students) being Czech (Quinn Novotná "United World Colleges" 112-120).

Apart from this work, the use of ELF in academia has not been studied in the Czech Republic or at least not so to the knowledge of the author of this thesis. This provides space for further research which this thesis alone most certainly cannot cover, yet does so, to an extent that this type of thesis can do.

PRACTICAL PART

The practical part of this thesis contains a small-scale study done through an online questionnaire addressed to participants in the English-medium instruction (EMI) programmes in the higher education in the Czech Republic. These programmes involve either full-time study programmes or Erasmus (exchange) programmes. The study was aimed at participants whose main field of study is not English.

We were interested in discovering what attitudes non-native students of English adopt towards other non-native or native speakers in EMI programmes. Furthermore, the focus was on respondents' own aspirations to acquire native-like speaking skills.

The following hypothesis was examined:

Non-native speakers' English creates no problems with understanding and is not less accepted than Standard English by students enrolled in English-speaking programmes in the higher education in the Czech Republic.

By less accepted, a strong preference is meant for the native speaker model and/or a negative attitude towards non-native speech. Standard English refers to either Standard British English or Standard American English.

4 Method

In this chapter, the design of the questionnaire, including the pilot phase as well as information about the participants, is provided. The feature that all the participants considered for the study share is that they are all non-native speakers.

4.1 Design of the questionnaire

The questionnaire is designed to be in line with the recommendations about the structure, clarity of questions, and question types from Gavora and is divided into three major parts (99-109). The content of the questions is motivated by similar studies. One of them is a pilot survey conducted by Quinn Novotná in her dissertation. More specifically, questions about students' preferences for their teacher to be a native speaker or non-native speaker or a question about the most understandable spoken English is motivated by this study (*World Englishes* 101-113). Further motivation about the attitudes to teachers' and students' proficiency and managing the complex task of studying in English is found in Doiz and Lasagabaster (14-20).

Most of the items are multiple choice questions with the option "other" provided to those questions in which further information from the respondent is of interest for the study. There are two long answer questions, which are vital for the results of this study. These were: "Why

is it important (not important) for me to speak like a native speaker of English?" and "What causes misunderstanding most frequently? Please list the most common problems." The full final version of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1 after the Works Cited page.

The questionnaire contains three types of questions. Firstly, there are introductory ones eliciting information about the language of the study, type of study programme (Erasmus/full-time) and a selective question specifying whether English is the person's foreign language, second language, or mother tongue. On the basis of this question the questionnaire then has two parts: non-native speakers (foreign language, second language) and native speakers (mother tongue).

Secondly and most importantly, there are 11 core questions regarding the attitude to non-native and native English used at university. Among these questions are: how comfortable do the respondents feel about studying in English, what type of spoken English do they understand the most, what do they think about language competence of their non-native teachers, how do they evaluate the language competence of other students, how important is it for them to speak like a native speaker of English, if they have trouble understanding non-native English and their own preferences based on whether the teacher is or is not a native speaker of English. Most of the questions in this part are of the multiple choice design.

Thirdly, there are factual questions, such as the name of the university, type of the study programme, age, and sex to receive further information about the types of the respondents who took part in the study.

After the questions were completed, a pilot phase was carried out. In the pilot phase, four of the author's friends were asked to fill in the questionnaire and provide detailed feedback on its clarity and the level of user-friendliness. As the future participants' proficiency in the English language was expected to vary, one of the participants, who had not participated in an EMI programme and whose level of English was B2, was asked to comment on comprehensibility and/or possible misinterpretation of the queries. On the basis of his feedback, the word "proficient" in the question about the most understandable kind of English for the respondent was altered to "excellent".

The three other participants, who had participated in EMI programmes outside of the Czech Republic, commented on the content. One of the comments was directed at the question addressing trouble understanding spoken English at university. Specifically, two of the four given options were too similar to each other. These options were then modified to be clearly more different to "no, there are just minor things I do not understand" and "yes, I often miss details of what was said, but I understand the aim of the message".

Another participant commented on the former formulation "When given an option to choose a teacher for my subjects" which was after consultation with the author's supervisor rephrased to "Which teachers do you prefer?". The question type was multiple choice and the options were only if the respondents prefer a native speaker, non-native speaker, or they do not have any preferences - meaning any preferences concerning the teacher's mother tongue. The participant's comment was that more important than the language of the teacher is his or her competence and knowledge in the field. However, the aim of this question was to elicit the students' preferences based on the teacher's language background only. Therefore, no further options were added.

Apart from these comments, the participants were confident about the questionnaire's design as well as its clarity and comprehensibility.

The data were collected online via a Google Docs form, which enabled them to be stored in Excel online. The data were then copied and the relevant responses were selected for the study. In Microsoft Excel, the data were put either into charts, or for the long answer questions, the data were compared.

4.2 **Respondents**

The subjects of the study were non-native students in the EMI programmes and their views on other non-native or native speakers in the programmes - teachers and students. The criterion that the participants' main field of study should not be English stems from the fact that their classes and courses of study are predominantly focused on the content and not the language. It is also in line with the research into academic English as a lingua franca which also focuses on the same target group as these students are considered to be users of English and not learners (Mauranen *Exploring* 4-5).

The participants were students enrolled in different English programmes in the Czech Republic, specifically at universities in Prague. For the purposes of the study, the answers of non-natives speakers of English were selected for the final study. Within these, the answers of Czech students in full-time English programmes were also considered.

Overall 80 responses were collected out of which 66 were used for the final study. 10 responses were not used as they were from native speakers of English, 2 because the participants claimed that the language of their studies is Czech, 1 because, judging from one of the answers, the participant most likely misunderstood the aim of the questionnaire, and finally, 1 because the participant claimed to have a degree in English which was understood to be a degree in English linguistics.

The participants were asked through social media, namely Facebook, to complete the questionnaire. They were contacted either through personal message or through online study groups. The content of the message involved a short description of the questionnaire "it is about English in the study programmes in the Czech Republic" which was apart from formalities and proper politeness, such as a greeting and an expression of an appreciation of their help, all the information they received before completing the questionnaire. None of the participants was informed about aims of this thesis and nobody was given additional information concerning the questions from the questionnaire. Additionally, none of the participants asked for further information.

As the requirements for the participants were quite specific, many people were asked to share the questionnaire to the target group. Among these were: two teachers from the University of Economics and students participating in Erasmus/exchange support programmes from the University of Economics and Charles University.

The study was overall met with positive or neutral reactions. The participants often expressed their encouragement and did not feel disturbed. Some of the participants suggested people who could be further contacted. The people who did not wish to be included for any reason simply did not reply, but the most frequent reason for not taking part in the study was that they did not read the message.

Further in this section, more specific data about the participants are presented to draw a general picture. The final set of data was obtained from 66 responses to the questionnaire which were all completed by non-native speakers of English.

More women 40 (61%) than men 26 (39%) took part in the study. The participants' age was from 20 to 35, most of them aged from 21 to 27. The highest number of participants - 19 (29%) - were aged 24.

The first graph shows the mother tongue of the participants. 65 out of 66 participants indicated this information and the one who did not indicate it is labelled as "NA". Altogether 22 different categories of mother tongues were created. Two of these display that the participants have two mother tongues specifically Arabic and German and German and Polish. The participants whose mother tongue is Czech, French, German, Russian, or Spanish are represented in the data more strongly with the number of participants 6, 7 or 8.

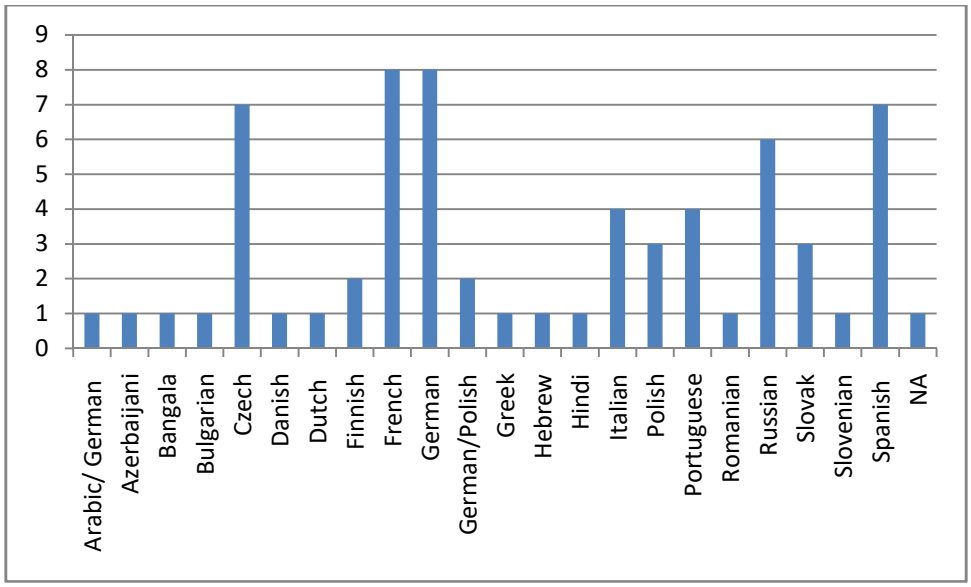

Figure 1. The mother tongue of the participants (n=66).

Similar data follow in the participants' country of origin, although it displays some differences. It shows that especially the participants whose mother tongue is Spanish or Russian come from different places which is not so for the Czech, French, or German participants.

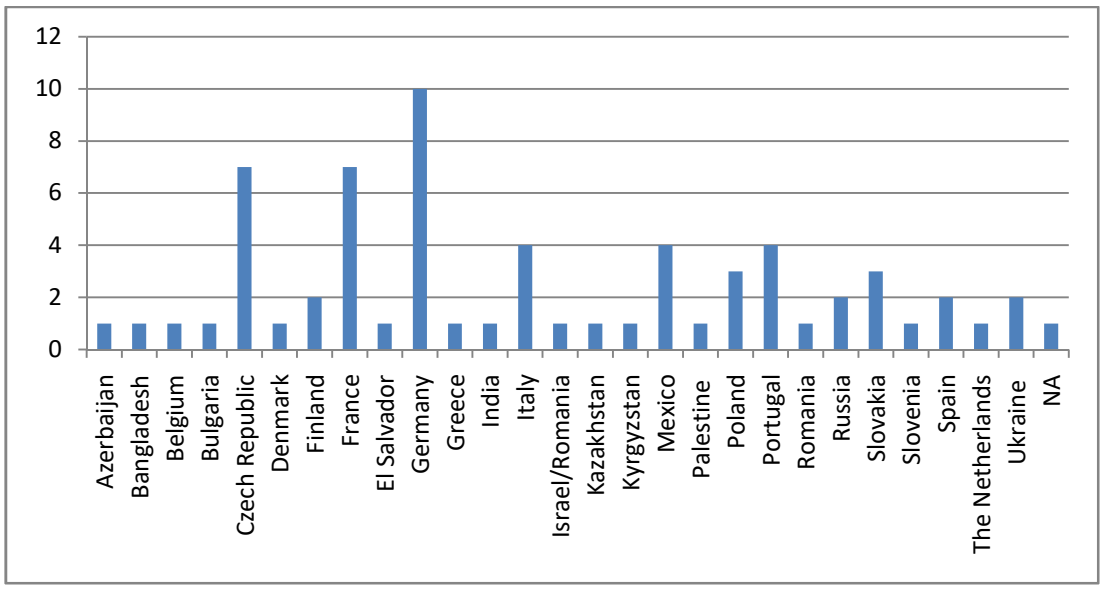

Figure 2. The country of origin of the participants (n= 66).

In the following pie chart, the universities of the participants are listed. The chart shows that most of the participants were from the University of Economics in Prague (VŠE), followed by the Charles University (UK), Czech Technical University (ČVUT), Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague (ČZU), and finally Prague College of Psychosocial Studies (PVŠSP). The last one mentioned is not a real university, but it is an institution of higher education and was therefore included in the study.

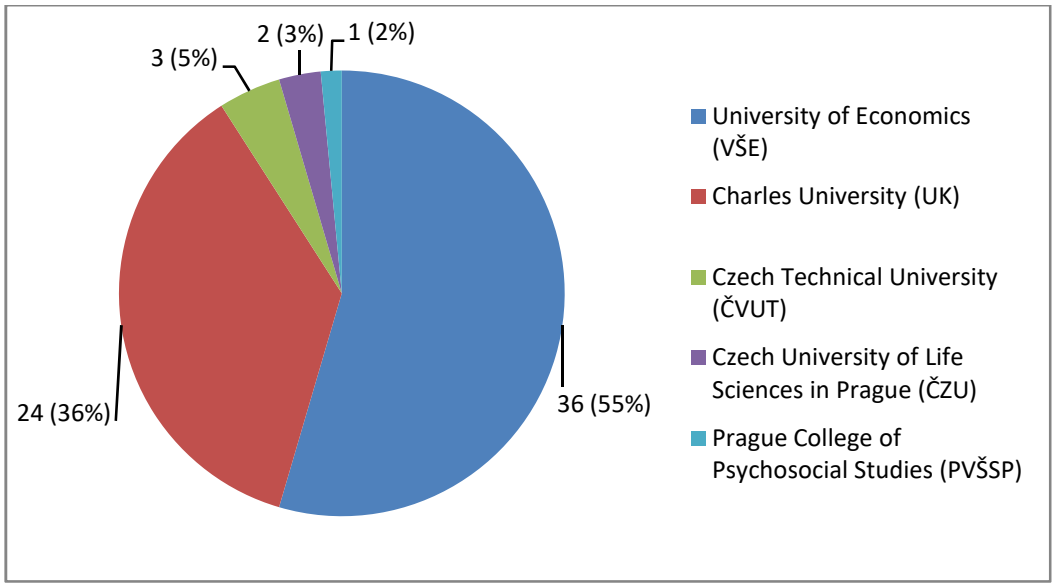

Figure 3. University of the participants (n=66).

All the universities are located in Prague with the exception of 3 responses from students who study medicine at Charles University in Plzeň.

The study programmes of the participants showed a great variety. The complete information about the study programmes of the respondents is listed in Appendix 2 after the Works Cited page. The programme with the highest amount of respondents was Erasmus/exchange programme (16 responses). However, as those students might have participated in, in fact, very different study programmes this particularity was not further considered.

On the other hand, the second most represented programme was a specific full-time programme. This was CEMS: the International Management Programme at the University of Economics as 15 participants, representing 23% of the data, were students of this programme. One of the admission requirements for this programme is that language skills of the students in English must be at least C1 CEFR and that a certificate must be provided. This factor has most likely influenced the final data, namely the proficiency level of the respondents (VŠE "Comparison").

The only other programme with the number of participants greater than 3 is IDS: International and Diplomatic Studies at the University of Economics. Six of the participants are from this programme. The admission requirements for this programme regarding the English skills are at least B2 level CEFR and do not have to be proved by a certificate. This means that the influence of this programme in numbers of participants as well as in the requirements did not affect the final data in a significant way as opposed to the CEMS programme (VŠE "Comparison").

Apart from the above mentioned there were no other significant representations which resulted in variety of the study programmes. The online distribution of the questionnaire is the reason for this variety. The main criterion was, however, that the students' main field of studies is not English.

Further in this section type of the study, years of learning English, and difficulties encountered by studying in English are listed.

Out of the 66 non-native students who participated in the study, most of the participants - 38 (58%) - were Erasmus/exchange students, the rest - 28 (42%) - were full-time students.

As studying in English requires certain language skills, the participants were asked how long they had they been learning the English language. They were asked to indicate this information in the number of years. The answers ranged from 4 to 23 years. The average length was 14 years and the most common answer was 15 years.

When asked how difficult studying in English is for them, the majority of the respondents, 45 in numbers, reported no difficulties. For 19 of the participants, studying in English is slightly more difficult than in their native language and only 2 reported that it is difficult for them and they often need to study harder because of that. We looked at the 2 students who reported difficulties to discover what the self-assed level of their English was. The self-assessment of the level of English of the 2 students who find studying in English difficult were B2 and B1 using the CEFR scale. Further information about the students' level of English is assessed in the next chapter.

5 Results

The following chapter presents the results of the core questions and their subsequent discussion. In brief, these are: the most understandable spoken English, proficiency levels of students and teachers, wishes of students for nativelike conduct in speaking, and understanding and main causes of misunderstanding.

In the first question the participants were asked about the most understandable spoken English for them. Even though all of the participants were non-native speakers, the majority chose native English (either Standard British or Standard American) as the most understandable. Half of the participants chose Standard American English as the most understandable.

Since non-native speakers communicate primarily with other non-native speakers, as it often accentuated in ELF research, this question aimed to find out whether they would claim

to understand non-native speech better than native speech. In this light, the clear dominance of standard native speech seems surprising.

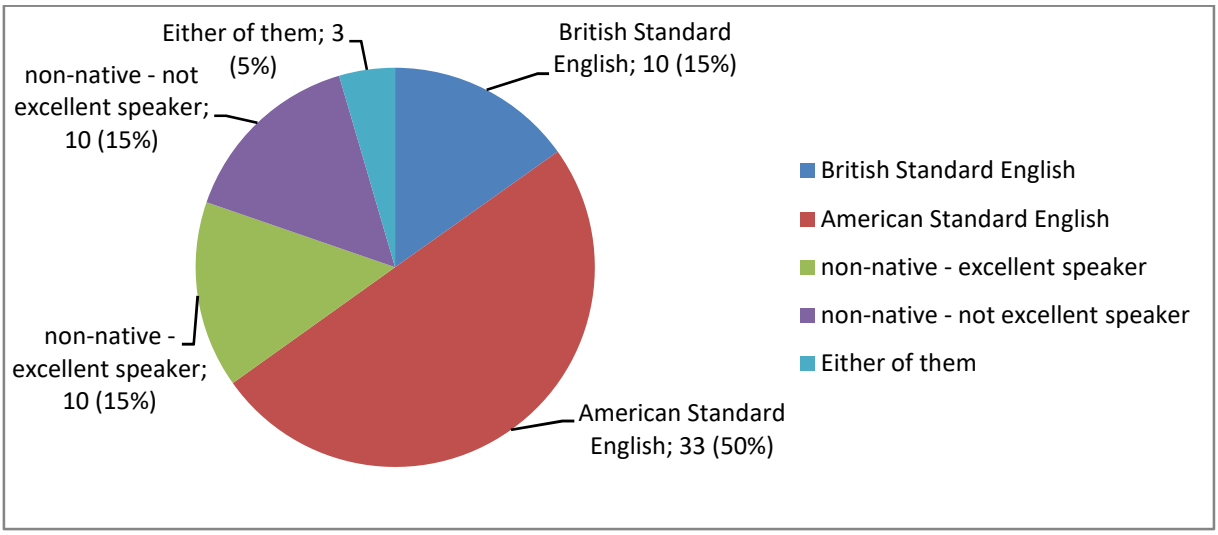

Figure 4. The most understandable kind of spoken English (n=66).

However, there are several reasons which might have influenced the results. Firstly, Standard British and Standard American English are more distinct than non-native speakers' English with any mother tongue. Secondly, the respondents might have associated Standard English with being more professional. Thirdly, they might be exposed to Standard English in their free time through social media and pop culture.

As the study was aimed primarily at how non-native speakers view other non-native speakers at university, it was necessary to ask if this is relevant regarding the language background of the teachers. As was presupposed, most of the teachers in the EMI programmes are non-native speakers. The majority of respondents - 34 (52%) - claim that all of the teachers are non-native speakers, other - 27 (41%) - claim that most of the teachers in the programme are non-native speakers. Lastly, 5 (8%) claim that half of the teachers are native and half of them non-native speakers.

The students were further asked to choose from categories regarding the level of English of the teachers in the programme. Overall, the students tend to view the level of the teachers in the programmes positively. Most of them think that it is either "very high" or "rather high".

When it comes to more critical evaluations, 2 respondents studying medicine at Charles University and 1 respondent from Czech Technical University opted for the option "not suitable for university teachers". All the 3 respondents were studying full-time. Also, the option "rather low" was selected by 7 full-time students, which is half of the total count for this option. As the full-time students constitute only 42% of all the data, it is assumed that the full-time students tend to evaluate the level of English of their teachers more strictly. This can

be further supported by the fact that full-time students have to pay for their studies as opposed to Erasmus/exchange students who often receive scholarships.

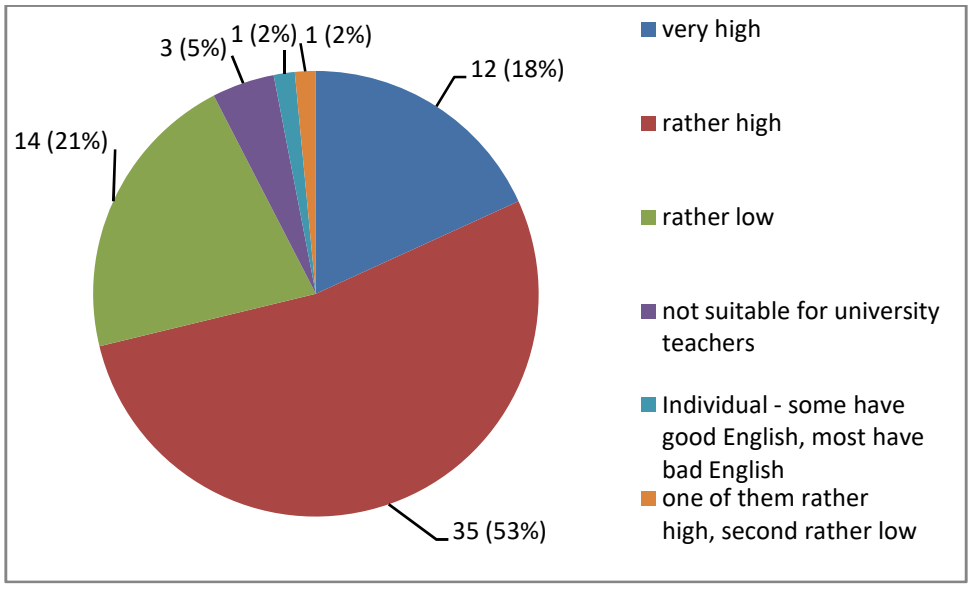

Figure 5. Teachers' perceived level of English (n=66).

Furthermore, the respondents were asked to assess the level of other students. Using the same scale as for the teachers, the results appear to be even better. However, one of the respondents indicated in his answer "rather high for students, which I would consider rather low for a professor". Therefore, it has to be taken into account that the students are likely to evaluate their teachers' level of English more strictly than the level of English of other students enrolled in the same programme. To contrast that with the theoretical part, Doiz and Lasagabaster conclude that the students' attention is often drawn to the lack of the teachers' linguistic resources and they tend to be strict in their judgement, especially in the first year of studies (18).

One of the students claimed that the other students in the programme are (either all of them or most of them) "Native speakers".

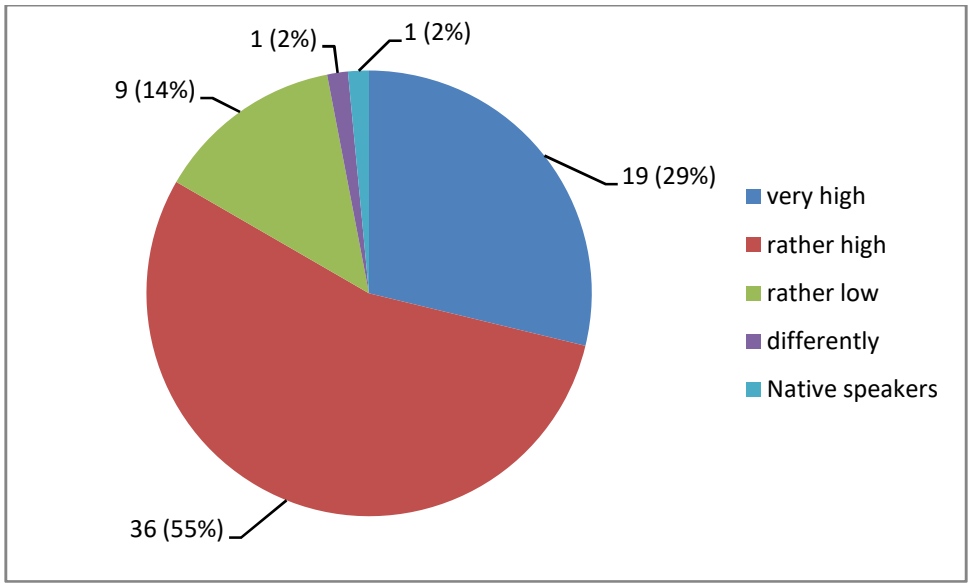

Figure 6. The perceived level of English of other students (n=66).

Finally, the respondents were asked to assess their own level of English. As most of the students used the CEFR scale to evaluate their level of English, the other descriptions were modified accordingly.

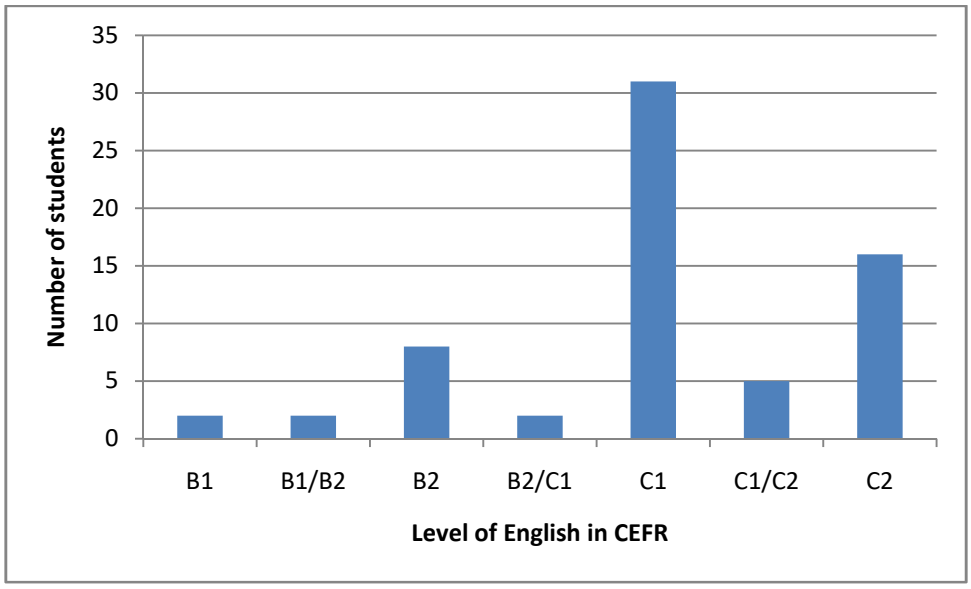

Figure 7. Students' level of English (self-evaluation) (n=66).

Furthermore, a comparison of the level of English of full-time students and Erasmus/exchange students was made. The assumption was that the level of English of full-time students would be higher, which was confirmed, but the difference is not very sharp as 22 Erasmus/exchange students identified that their level of English is C1.

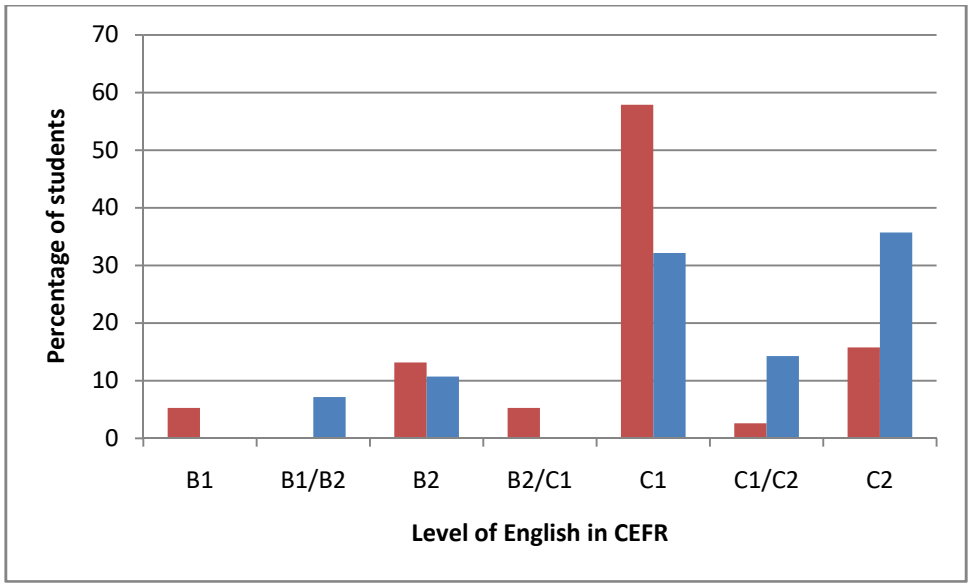

Figure 8. Level of English Erasmus/exchange students (left), full-time students (right) (n_1=38, n_2=28).

However, the above discussed feature stands out more when CEMS students[2] are not included as they are a group with the highest proficiency and are included in Erasmus/exchange students as well as full-time students.

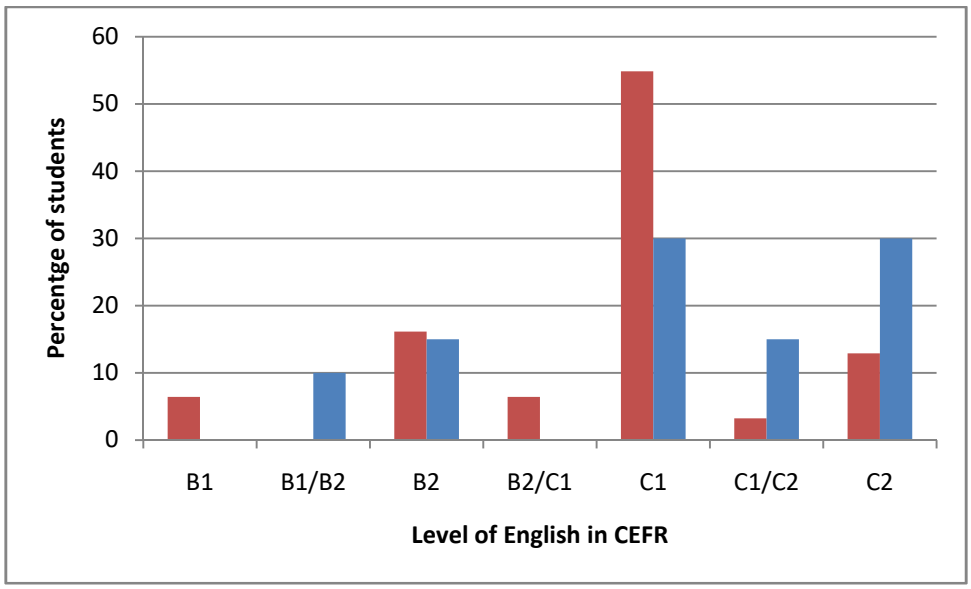

Figure 9. Level of English Erasmus/exchange students (left), full-time students (right), without CEMS students (n_1=31; n_2=20).

In the next task students were asked how important it is for them to speak like native speakers of English. At first, they were given the scale from 1 to 10 with 1 representing not

[2] In this group full-time students as well as Erasmus/exchange students are included as the programme operates on partner universities.

important and 10 representing very important. After choosing a number on a scale, they were asked to give their own explanation for choosing any of the numbers on the scale. Most of the participants selected the numbers from 7 to 10 as can be seen in the table below.

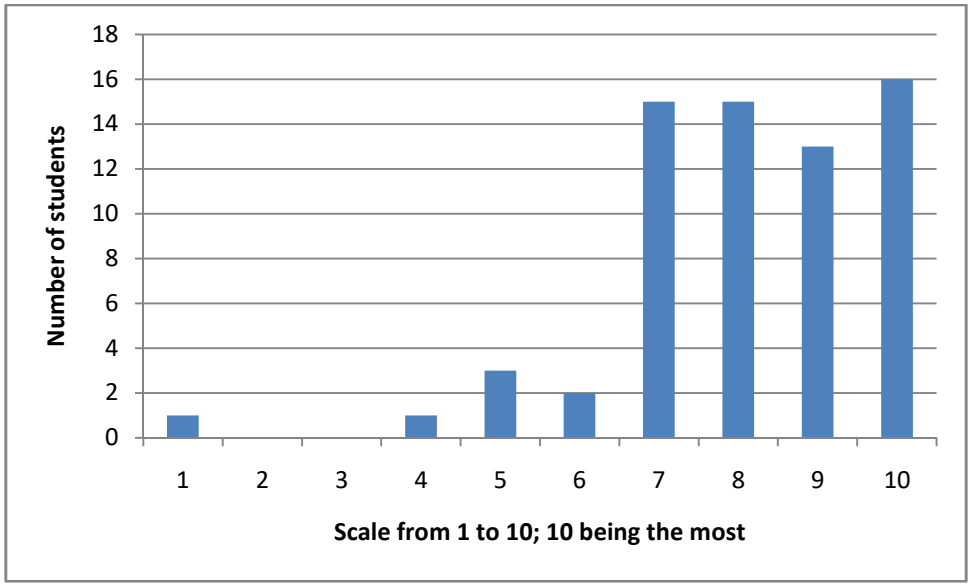

Figure 10. The importance of achieving nativelike conduct of English (n=66).

The reasons why the students expressed the importance of speaking like a native speaker are most likely connected to their study goals and future career options. However, additional factors might have influenced their choices and will be discussed below. As seen in the previous part, the levels of students' proficiency are usually very high. The proficiency is tested mainly in the full-time programmes where the applicants must often provide certificates or are interviewed in English.

Further in this section some of the long answers of the students are listed and categorized according to the number the students assigned in the scale task.

The answers of the students who selected number 10 on the scale were: "Everyday use", "Credibility & Education status", "Ability to travel, work and communicate fluently across countries", "That is the proper way.", "To feel involved in any kind of conversation", "Given the time and money invested in that education, It's my responsibility to do it well", "Perfection and accuracy", "Demonstartes level of proficiency", "In order to find a job".

These students selected number 9 on the scale and wrote: "to easily express myself infront of other people so they would be more focused on my message", "not important for the accent but important for the quality of my speaking and writing eg use of vocabulary", "To have more coherence and as little culture clash as possible", "To feel more comfortable and better understood", "Self esteem".

Some of the answers from the students who selected number 8 on the scale included: “Obviously it's important, but doesn't have to be 100%”, “it's better to have a good english if you want to comunicate with people from other countrires, because english is a universal language”, “To be better understood. Not to be directly recognized from which country I am.”, “To be understandable for everyone”, “I don't like my accent (German)”.

Some of the answers from the students who selected number 7 on the scale encompassed: “It is important for me to have a clear speech in terms of grammar, vocabulary and correct pronunciation, but not in regards to accent (meaning - faking British/American accent)”, “I don't have the aim to sound like a native speaker but I want to proof my high level of english.”, “To be well understood”, “While non-natives find it easier to communicate with other non-natives, native English speakers find it difficult to communicate with non-natives”.

The answers of the students who selected less than 7: “I only care about making sure the other people understand what I am saying. And usually I don't have any problem. I don't care having accent like some native regional accent.”, “Dunno”, “Not that important”.

The most common wish of all the students 15 (25%) and the reason why native-speaker conduct in speaking was important to them was to be understood or to be well understood. Some of the respondents connect proficiency with credibility or education status. The wishes of the students regarding their foreign accent are different. Some of the respondents feel comfortable about their own accents, others feel negative about it. Those who specified their feelings could be divided as follows: 5 (8%) participants feel comfortable about their L1 accent, 3 (5%) feel negatively about it and 2 (3%) expressed their wish to have an understandable and clear accent which is not necessarily a native-speaker accent.

Overall, most of the participants showed preference for the native speaker model as they think that it secures understanding. Generally, it could be argued that for most of the participants the native speaker model is vital.

The students’ own preferences for the native speaker model in speaking could be contrasted to their preference of native speakers as their teachers. When asked about the preferences, most participants - 35 (53%) - demonstrated no preference for teachers in the EMI programmes. However, the students preferring native speakers - 28 (42%) - do not constitute a negligible part of the data. The other 3 participants (5%) preferred non-native speaker as a teacher.

Furthermore, the data about preferences for teachers regarding their being native speakers were contrasted with those from the scale evaluation to find out whether the high preference

for being native-like in speaking is connected to the students' preferences for native speakers or to the neutral preferences. It was established that those two variables are not at all or are only weakly related. This means that even the students that displayed a strong preference to speak like a native speaker (10) are virtually equally divided between those who prefer native speakers as their teachers and those with no preference.

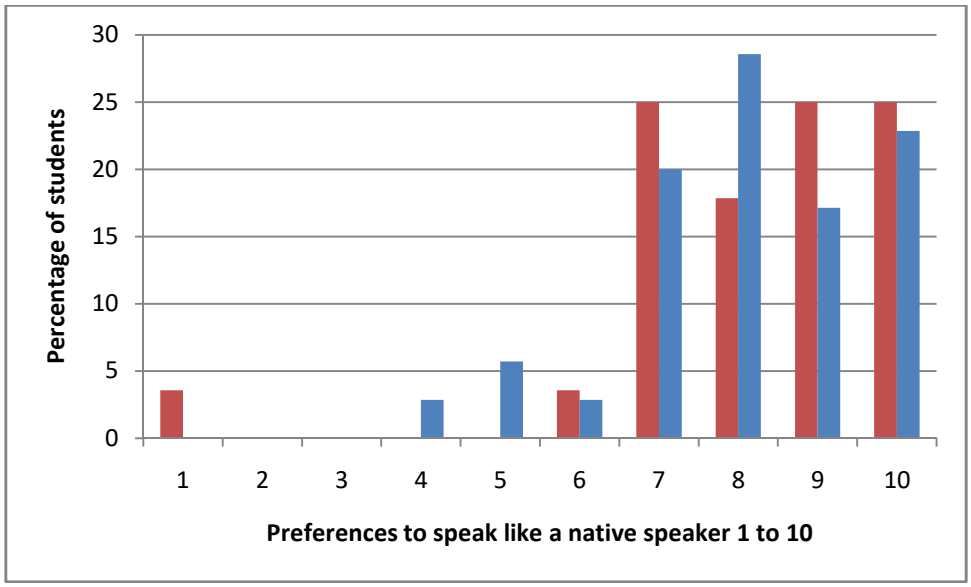

Figure 11. Preferences for native speakers as teachers (left), no preferences (right) combined with preferences to speak like a native speaker (n_1=28; n_2=35).

When asked about understanding spoken non-native English at university in general, the students were mostly confident. 21 (32%) reported no trouble with understanding. 42 (64%) claimed that there are only minor things that they misunderstand. In fact, only 3 students reported more serious problems with understanding formulated as "yes, I often miss details of what was said, but I understand the aim of the message". The self-assessed level of all the 3 students was B2 and they were all Erasmus students.

Furthermore, the differences between the Erasmus/exchange students and the full-time students were compared. The graph below shows that except for the 3 Erasmus students that reported more serious problems with understanding, there are almost no other differences.

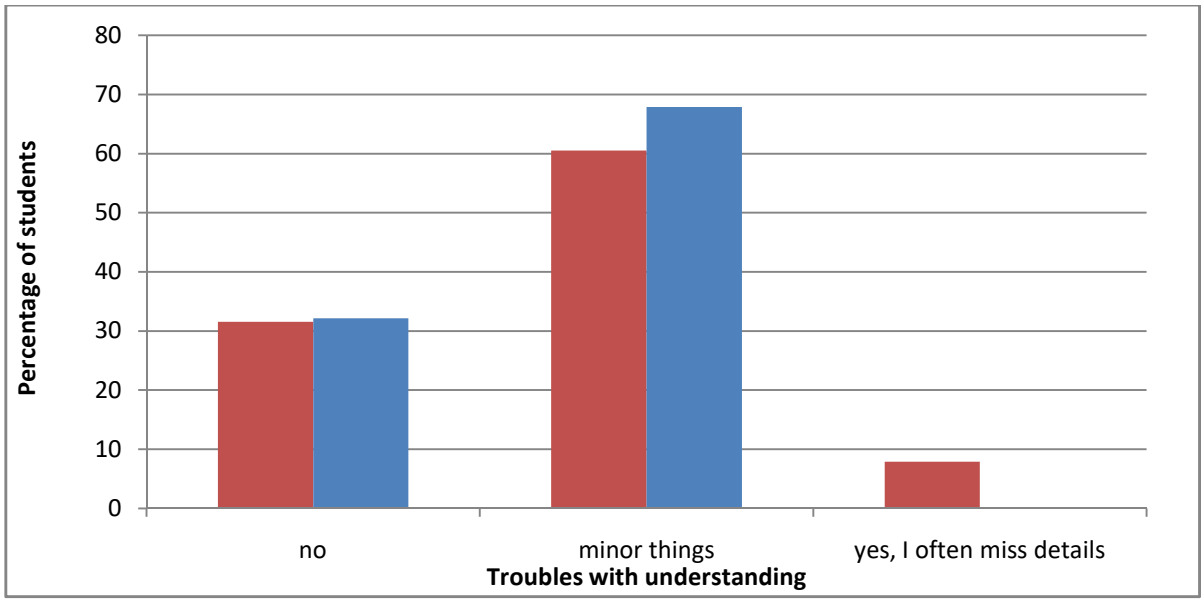

Figure 12. Problems with understanding non-native spoken English at university Erasmus/exchange students (left), full-time students (right) (n_1=38, n_2=28).

After that, the students were asked to describe what causes the misunderstanding most frequently. In the table below, the most common problems with understanding are listed. The students also mentioned some specific problems which are not listed in this table and some of the answers have been simplified to provide this overview.

Problem	**Number of students**
vocabulary	20
accent	19
pronunciation	13
literal translations from L1	6
grammar	5
proficiency	3
speed of speaking	3

Table 1. Most common problems with understanding.

From the table above, the first most noticeable category is vocabulary. The students complained either about their own lack of general vocabulary or specific terms related to the subjects or the teacher's lack of vocabulary/proper terminology.

The pronunciation and accent category were intentionally divided because they probably refer to different problems with understanding although it is necessary to admit that those two categories overlap. In this overview, these two categories were separated, as the pronunciation category was often connected with the word "wrong". The same cannot be applied to accent, which was coupled with the words "unclear" or "difficult".

The students reported problems with non-native as well as native accents. Those who were more specific in their answers are further described. Four respondents mentioned troubles understanding non-native accents – one speaking in general, two reported the French accent, and one the Indian accent. Two respondents mentioned native accents: one of them American and the other British. One respondent wrote "native-english-speakers' dialects" as a common problem with understanding.

Also literal translations from the speaker's mother tongue as well as grammar mistakes were mentioned as causes of misunderstanding. Those who complained about the speed of speaking have mentioned that they tend to understand non-native speech better as the speed of non-native speakers is usually slower.

In the table below, some particularities mentioned by one mere person only are listed. The item "wrong stressing of syllables" was included in the upper count for pronunciation problems; nevertheless, it was the only very specific description of the pronunciation issues.

Problem	**Number of students**
English slangs	1
My bad level in English	1
the spread of discussion	1
wrong stressing of syllables	1
word order	1
University staff not trying to explain things in English - either know it in Czech or don't know it at all	1
A lot of people know words from shows and try to repeat them but they haven seen the word written down so sometimes it can be understood as something else	1

Table 2. Specific problems with understanding

The only problem that is difficult to interpret is "the spread of discussion" which might mean different things such as when more people start talking, the respondent might feel more confused. The reported problem with university staff actually goes against the study by Wächter and Maiworm who conclude that the quality of administrative staff in the Czech Republic regarding the language skills is the second best after Austria (102). However, with no further data it would be misleading to draw any general conclusions.

CONCLUSION

The research into English as a lingua franca is, to a certain extent, a controversial issue that has its supporters and critics who, in fact, try to define what is best for further development in this research sphere. In this thesis, it was attempted to maintain a balanced approach with the positive aspects of research into this domain as well as to contrast these ideas with criticism. However, the author sees the outcomes of this research, generally, as beneficial.

Specifically, the author views positive outcomes of this research namely in increased interest into non-native speakers' interaction and in a view of non-native speakers as competent users of English who use the language for their own purposes. Furthermore, in fields like English for Academic Purposes the results of academic ELF research have already provided conclusions which can be applied to teaching.

From the theoretical part of this thesis, the conclusion can be drawn that the research into academic English as a lingua franca is not established in the Czech Republic. Therefore, this area of study might potentially attract more research interest in the future. In the light of the present growth of English-medium instruction programmes in this country, there might be plethora of objectives which would be worth scrutinizing.

As concerns the practical part of this thesis, it provides insight into English programmes of Czech universities in Prague and further inspects how non-native speakers of English cope with the task of studying in English. It shows that most of the participants feel confident about it and that they do not encounter serious problems with understanding.

Turning back to the hypothesis, especially to its first part, "Non-native speakers' English creates no problems with understanding..." this can be confirmed with a necessary addition that it creates no serious problems with understanding as 95% of the participants reported either no problems with understanding or just minor problems.

Specific problems with understanding are most often related to vocabulary, accent, pronunciation, direct translations from L1, grammar, proficiency, and the speed of speaking. Lacking vocabulary is identified both on the side of the students and the teachers. Accent is mentioned because of the differences of the first languages of the participants in the EMI programmes and pronunciation because of the mistakes.

The preferences of students to have a native-like conduct in speaking are high. Furthermore, it is established that 35 participants, representing 53% of the data do not have any preference for their teacher in the EMI programme to be a native or non-native speaker. However, the number of the students preferring native speakers - 28 (42%) - is also

considerably high. Furthermore, students own preferences to have a nativelike conduct in speaking were contrasted to their preferences for teachers regarding the language of the teacher. However, these two variables seem to be independent.

Furthermore, the second part of the hypothesis "Non-native speakers' English is not less accepted than Standard English by students enrolled in English-speaking programmes in the higher education in the Czech Republic" can be neither confirmed nor denied. Although 53% of the respondents do not have any preference whether their teacher should be a native speaker or a non-native speaker, the percentage of the students – 42% - who prefer native speakers is considerably high.

Finally, as has been mentioned, more research can be done in this area. Specifically, attitudes of teachers and their confidence in teaching through the medium of English can be delved into. Furthermore, the cooperation between language departments of universities and English-medium Instruction can be examined.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. The final version of the questionnaire.[3]

Attitudes towards native and non-native spoken English at university programmes in the Czech Republic

0

Hi and welcome!
My name is Silvia Mocková and I am currently studying English and German at the Faculty of Education Charles University in Prague. As a part of my bachelor thesis, I am conducting a study on attitudes towards English at Czech universities.

1

This questionnaire is aimed at students who study or have studied in the Czech Republic in English either in a full-programme or shorter type study programmes (Erasmus or similar) and for whom English is not the main field of their studies (i.e. you are not studying to become English teachers, translators, linguists or interpreters).

The data are collected anonymously.

Your time and effort invested in this survey is greatly appreciated.

2

The study programme that I am enrolled in (or I was enrolled in) when studying in the Czech Republic: *

- o full-time study programme
- o Erasmus or similar shorter study programme (1 or 2 semesters of study)
- o Other:

The language of this programme is: *

- o English
- o Other:

English is my: *

- o mother tongue
- o second language (English is one of the official languages in the country where I was born or one of my parents' mother tongue)
- o foreign language (I have learned English at school/language school)

3 (non-natives only)

How long have you been learning English? (please indicate the number of years e.g. 10, 12 ...) *

____

Studying in English *

[3] The numbers 0 to 6 indicate separate sections/pages.

- creates no difficulties for me
- it is a bit more difficult than in my native language
- it is difficult, I often have to study harder because of that

The most understandable kind of spoken English for me is: *

- British Standard English
- American Standard English
- non-native spoken English (only if the speaker's English is excellent)
- non-native spoken English (even if the speaker's English is not excellent)
- Other:

The teachers in the programme are: *

- only native speakers of English
- most of them are native speakers of English
- half of them are native speakers, half of them are non-native speakers
- most of them are non-native speakers
- all of them are non-native speakers
- Other:

I think that the level of English of my non-native speaking teachers (in general) is: *

- very high
- rather high
- rather low
- not suitable for university teachers
- all of my teachers are native speakers of English
- Other:

I think that the level of English of the students enrolled in the same programme (in general) is: *

- very high
- rather high
- rather low
- not suitable for university students
- Other:

How important is it for me to speak like a native speaker of English? *

(please choose from 1 to 10, 1-not important at all; 10- very important).

Why is it important (not important) for me to speak like a native speaker of English? *

____

Do you have any trouble understanding non-native English spoken at university? *

- no, I always understand everything
- no, there are just minor things I do not understand
- yes, I often miss details of what was said, but I understand the aim of the message
- yes, I am experiencing great difficulties with understanding

What causes misunderstanding most frequently? Please list the most common problems. *

____

Which teachers do you prefer? *

- o I prefer native speakers of English.
- o I prefer non-native speakers of English.
- o I do not have any preference.

4 (natives only)

The most understandable kind of spoken English for me is: *

- o British Standard English
- o American Standard English
- o non-native spoken English (only if the speaker's English is excellent)
- o non-native spoken English (even if the speaker's English is not excellent)
- o other

The teachers in the programme are: *

- o only native speakers of English
- o most of them are native speakers of English
- o half of them are native speakers, half of them are non-native speakers
- o most of them are non-native speakers
- o all of them are non-native speakers
- o Other:

I think that the level of English of my non-native speaking teachers (in general) is: *

- o very high
- o rather high
- o rather low
- o not suitable for university teachers
- o all of my teachers are native speakers of English
- o Other:

I think that the level of English of the students enrolled in the same programme (in general) is: *

- o very high
- o rather high
- o rather low
- o not suitable for university students
- o Other:

Do you have any trouble understanding non-native English spoken at university? *

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What causes misunderstanding most frequently? Please list the most common problems. *

____

Which teachers do you prefer? *

- o I prefer native speakers of English.
- o I prefer non-native speakers of English.
- o I do not have any preference.

5

My mother tongue *

____

The country of my origin *

____

Name of the university in the Czech Republic *

____

Name of the study programme in the Czech Republic *

____

Age *

____

Sex*

- o Female
- o Male

My level of English *

____

6

Thank you for response and your time!
Should you have any questions or suggestions regarding this questionnaire, please send me an e-mail to silvia.mockova@gmail.com

Appendix 2. Study programmes of the participants.

University programme	University	Number of students
Business	VŠE	1
CEMS: International Management Programme	VŠE	15
CESP: Central and East European Studies Programme	VŠE	1
Czech for foreigners	UK	2
EGEI: Economics of Globalisation and European Integration	VŠE	3
Erasmus/exchange	VŠE, UK, PVŠPS	16
Ethnology and Social Studies	UK	1
General Medicine	UK	2
Geology	ČZU	1
Geopolitical Studies	UK	1
IDS: International and Diplomatic Studies	VŠE	6
International Business	VŠE	1
International Management	VŠE	1
International Relations	VŠE	1
IT	ČVUT, ČZU	2
Journalism	UK	1
Law	UK	1
Medicine	UK	1
MISS: Master in International Security Studies	UK	1
Political Science	UK	3
Social Geography	UK	1
Software Engineering	ČVUT	1
Teaching of Biology for Secondary Schools (one-subject)	UK	1

(n=65, one did not specify)