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**A SURVEY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEEDS IN CZECH  
COMPANIES**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracovala samostatně a  
použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

*Plzeň, červenec 2014*

.....

Na tomto místě bych ráda poděkovala vedoucímu bakalářské práce Aloku Kumarovi, M.A. za cenné rady a odbornou pomoc, které mi při zpracování poskytl.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Bachelor's thesis investigates the fact whether Czech companies need and use English for the business purposes.

The thesis is comprised of eight main chapters. Firstly, it deals with the gradual connecting of today's world, or globalization. However, this trend is not just a matter of today. Therefore, the thesis also deals with globalization processes in history.

In relation to the globalization, the companies ceased to operate only locally and they began to feel the need to communicate with each other across the world. Together with their needs, the technologies of business communication have developed.

English has become the main language of the international communication. The circumstances that led to this fact are presented in the following chapter. English started to appear not only elsewhere in Europe but also particularly in the Czech Republic. It came out that nor this phenomenon is a matter of modern times. Only we can say that at this period, it strengthened significantly its position among other languages.

Further, the thesis deals with the description of Czech companies – their division in legal point of view. Following this information, the theoretical part is supplemented by possible reasons for the use of English in business along with specific data gathered from other sources.

Besides that, the important part of the thesis represents the research which looks into the necessity of English language use and the range of its knowledge within the Czech companies. However, it is focused not only on the use of English but also on other languages; especially nowadays when it is assumed that English is so widespread and used that mere knowledge of this language is sufficient in all spheres and all corners of the world.

## 2. GLOBALIZATION

According to Jiráňková (2010), globalization is generally understood as the process of linking on a global scale. Several kinds of globalization can be distinguished; economic, political, cultural, security or others. It means that particular phenomena and processes acquire a global character. In this chapter, attention will be focused on economic globalization.

Various authors differ on the point of view what period can be considered to be the beginning of this phenomenon. Some of them speculate already about the period of long-distance trade of Venice and Genova in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, others indicate the period of origins of the colonial system in the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century or possibly until 70s and 80s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the economic transformation arrived with R. Reagan's and M. Thatcher's economic and political approaches. However, most sources agree that the beginning was in the period known as *belle époque*, which is dated between 1870 and 1914. According to the different authors like McGrew (2008), Nayyar (2002) or Baldwin, Martin (1999), on the beginning of this wave, the world was homogenous and there was no cooperation between companies. Thanks to this transformation, the society shifted from agricultural to urban. The second wave of globalization which has started in 1960 and lasts until now, has divided the world into wealthy and poor nations.

Above all, *belle époque* represented the period when there were massive flows of goods and capital across national borders along with an extensive migration of population. The end of World War II contributed to the development of international trade. First trading was performed only by developed countries but approximately since the late 60s, other countries, mainly Asian, has involved in trade. Mutual cooperation between states was supported by signing of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) in 1948. This agreement was intended to break

down barriers in international trade and in 1995, it was replaced by WTO (World Trade Organization). Afterwards, developed countries have begun gradually to deal not only in products but also in services. Another change is the introduction of intra-sectorial trade and internal trade in addition to the classical interdisciplinary trade.

An important part of globalization represents the economic migration of population which means that the population shifts from less developed countries to more developed ones. This phenomenon involved primarily the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century when there was a migration from Europe to American continent. During the Global economic crisis and the Second World War, there was an interruption of this trend but afterwards, migration of population grew again.

Technological change of production was the most important part of the second wave of globalization. It consisted of the development of information technology, transport and telecommunications, information interconnection of the world and so on.

Another prerequisite of globalization was the liberalization of economic transactions which had more forms – removal of trade barriers within the above-mentioned agreements GATT and WTO, liberalization of capital movements in the 70s or opening of economies in other areas, such as services. These processes of globalization have changed the role of space and time in human perception and thus we can say that there has been a so-called “reduction” of the world.

Regarding globalization, there exist several contentious issues. The first is the above-mentioned initiation of globalization processes. Other concerns different views on the role of the state in globalization processes. And last but not least, there are different approaches to globalization. According to the defence approach, globalization processes pose a threat to countries with smaller economic power. Another approach to globalization – sceptical – quotes that globalization is a mere

“myth” because only the state itself decides on its environment and its power is not threatened by globalization. On the other hand, liberal approach assesses globalization as a beneficial process during which there is an increase of efficiency of economic activities of individuals through removing and overcoming obstacles, mainly political ones.

## **2.1. Need to communicate**

In order to achieve our goals, the mutual communication is a very important component of living in society. Communication is a social activity thanks to which we can share some kind of information. According to John Adair, *“Communication is essentially the ability of one person to make contact with another and to make himself or herself understood. Or, if you prefer a slightly more formal version, communication is the process by which meanings are exchanged between people through the use of a common set of symbols”*.<sup>1</sup>

Likewise, the necessity of communication cannot be omitted nor in the business sphere. Due to the aforementioned globalization, the world is changing quite fast and at the same time, people are supposed to be up to date. For this reason, the transmission of information is essential. First of all, before transferring information, it is necessary to sift it during collection from various sources like books, newspapers, verbal or non-verbal means, advertisements and so on. The gathered information has a great significance in business. Thanks to it, companies can consider multiple choices, identify and evaluate problems and make decisions. Data acquisition is associated also with education. As it was said before, technology goes fast forward and it is vital for people in business to keep pace with this development. Without following of these changes, companies would remain ignorant or inadequately equipped.

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<sup>1</sup> SINHA, K.K. *Business communication*. New Delhi: Galgotia Pub. Co, 2000. p. 3.

Sinha (2000) states the next causes of the growing importance of communication.

Nowadays there are many large companies which have hundreds or even thousands of employees working on numerous levels of hierarchy and frequently also in different states throughout the world. At this point, communication is used to control their own staff and it is necessary as a mean of organizing such a large unit.

Another case is the communication with trade unions. They were quite ignored in the past but mainly in the period after World War I, they have begun to appear frequently. The cooperation with the representatives of the employees plays an essential role for the successful running of the company.

Further, we can mention the human relation aspect. It is clear that people perform best work when they are treated humanely as they are not machines. Managers use the communication as a mean of maintaining good relationships and meeting the needs of the employees. The companies have to make all possible efforts to motivate their workers and thus to achieve their goals. As 'Collins Cobuild Dictionary' says: *If you are motivated to do something, you are caused to feel determined to achieve something and willing to work hard in order to succeed.*<sup>2</sup> The positive attitude to work is more likely to ensure the success for the company.

Similarly, an organization has to communicate also externally - with the environment, i.e. with its customers, suppliers, stock-holders, governments and others with regard to maintaining a good image of the whole business. For the healthy business environment, the most important thing is a good relationship with the customer. The customer has never been taken into consideration as much as nowadays. Satisfied or even delighted customer is the main objective for the company. When

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<sup>2</sup> SINHA, K.K. *Business communication*. New Delhi: Galgotia Pub. Co, 2000. p. 72.

the company has satisfied customers, it has also a huge competitive advantage over the others. As the director of Hindustan Lever said: *“The customer (earlier) received a lower priority, and there were islands of functional competence, with no networking between them. But in the (new) organization approach, the focus changes to the customer, the process, and process ownership by empowered employees.”*<sup>3</sup>

And finally, thanks to the communication, the company can identify not only the needs of its customers but it also becomes aware of the activities of its competitors which may protect it against potential threats.

### **2.1.1. Technology of business communication**

Communication was all the time associated with business. Its purpose was always the same but its form has changed over the years. Originally, the communication took place in small groups in the form of face to face conversations. Since there was no mass medium, the only way how to address more people was to speak in front of the crowd. Toffler (1990) divides the development of communication to three waves and this is the first one.

During the second wave, the communication distance began to apply. In the nineteenth century, there appeared some technological innovations. The communication by post, telegraph and telephone was used. This expansion was thanks to Industrial Revolution. Then in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the newspapers, movies, radio or television were able to spread any message to millions of people at the same time.

According to Toffler, the third wave called the electronic revolution is dated since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century up to the present when the individual media are interconnected and divided into segments that are targeted to specific groups of people. This period has brought things like personal

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<sup>3</sup> SINHA, K.K. *Business communication*. New Delhi: Galgotia Pub. Co, 2000. p. 130.

computers, mini computers, mobile phones, electronic mail along with the huge development in telecommunication. With all these sources of information, this period may be referred to as the “Information Age”.

It is clear that the information in business is of great importance. Therefore, there is computer system MIS (management information system) which is very useful for organizations. It procures data generating, processing and transmitting. Thanks to it, the companies can for example improve their strategy or customer care.

Sinha (2000) states that besides MIS, telecommunications are also the important part of business. Mobile phones are probably the most widely used kind of telecommunication, although it is paid. It is a very useful method for businessmen who travel.

Much more cheaper is pager, which can receive messages from anyone from his or her telephone. However, its disadvantage is that we cannot send messages through it. Communication may therefore seem to be somewhat one-sided.

In contrast, there is video conferencing which represents the interactive form of communication. Thanks to it, both voice and video of people from different location are transmitted via satellites or phone lines.

Another technological device is fax, although it is quite an old one. It enables to send text documents, charts, photos and so on to another fax machine which receives and prints the message. Nowadays, it is possible to send the messages to the fax also from a personal computer.

The use of electronic mail is today also very popular because it is simple, cheap and it reduces paperwork. Via e-mail, not only messages but also various files can be sent. Compared to fax, there is no problem with legibility.

Intelligent networks are another kind of telecommunication. It is the popular mean of communication that consists in free calls for people – all charges are paid by company.

In addition to e-mail, with the invention of Internet, business communication now can be held also in the form of so-called e-commerce (electronic commerce). It can be defined as *“the use of electronic transmission mediums (telecommunications) to engage in the exchange, including buying and selling, of products and services requiring transportation, either physically or digitally, from location to location”*.<sup>4</sup>

It means that it is necessary to perform the transaction electronically. However, the object of commerce can be transported both through digital mechanisms (e.g. software download from the Internet) as well as by use of traditional physical shipping (in case of the delivery of goods by post). Regarding e-commerce, it is not just about the trading in goods. On the contrary, it also includes the exchange of information which is very important for business activities. Therefore, “electronic business” would be a more appropriate title.

E-commerce has several advantages. The main thing is that by using e-commerce, it is possible to reach many business partners and customers because Internet is easily affordable. However, e-commerce must face to some difficulties. Prevailing problem is that the web-based companies are often victims of information losses or theft of data.

There are also many other methods of business communication but after all, no technological achievement can substitute the basic writing and speaking skills.

### **2.1.2. English in communication**

Currently, English is the most important language in the world although it is not used by the largest amount of people. On the first place in the number of speakers there is Chinese. Anyways, English is spoken by more than a billion people as their first or second language.

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<sup>4</sup> SINHA, K.K. *Business communication*. New Delhi: Galgotia Pub. Co, 2000. p. 599.

Sinha (2000) mentions that English came from the British Isles to India, Africa, Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand as the language of business, travel and exploration. Its expansion was caused also by its significant flexibility: *“Like the original lingua franca that was a mixture of Italian, French, Greek, Arabic, Turkish and Spanish, English is a mixture of Anglo-saxon, Greek, Latin, French, Arabic, Sanskrit, Spanish, Portuguese and has freely borrowed and adapted words from all the main languages of the world, all adding to its extraordinary richness.”*<sup>5</sup>

English is a language with a worldwide character. It is likely that it contains the largest number of words that are used and understood globally. At the same time, the number of words in English has been growing fast.

### **2.1.3. Business English**

According to Sinha (2000), some people think that business English is something special and unusable for other than commercial purposes. They are used to call it “Commercial English” or “Commercialese”. This manner of speech has several typical features which are listed below.

As the first we can mention platitudes or frequently repeated phrases. It is generally known that the business correspondence is full of this kind of expressions. Probably, it is predominantly the result of dictation.

Furthermore, it is again the repetition, but this time it is the abundance of courteous expressions which are used mechanically.

The next is needless use of passive instead of active voice, for example “It is believed that...” in place of “We believe that...” Phrases like that can sound somewhat reserved and unfriendly.

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<sup>5</sup> SINHA, K.K. *Business communication*. New Delhi: Galgotia Pub. Co, 2000. p. 32.

Long words along with complicated sentences and collocations are also popular in this kind of communication. In this way, quite simple message can convert to incomprehensible phrase.

The use of vague abstract words instead of concrete words is the last important feature. In this case, the same holds true regarding obscurity. To give the better idea, there is a specific example: "*National circumstances are such as to necessitate a comprehensive alteration of financial policy and consequent reduction of capital expenditure in both the domestic and the foreign market.*" instead of much simpler "*Events force us to spend less both at home and abroad.*"<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, business English is the same language that is otherwise used for ordinary communication. It does not have any special grammar. As for its expressions, neither there are any special words because nowadays, many terms with economic background like *marketing, profit, customer or product* have become part of the vocabulary of every English speaking person.

The main purpose of using English in business is persuasion. It is obvious that this function appears in the most frequent kinds of written communication like advertisement, response to query, statement of problem or suggested solution. Besides that, we use English for a number of sub functions like recommendation, request, disagreement, conclusion, explanation, asking for information and so on.

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<sup>6</sup> SINHA, K.K. *Business communication*. New Delhi: Galgotia Pub. Co, 2000. p. 176.

### 3. NEW LINGUA FRANCA IN EUROPE

Among the other significant European languages (e.g. French or German), English has become the most widely used. Průcha (2010) points out that its eminent position is the outcome of several aspects. The historical events are the first reason. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, England was the leading maritime superpower in the world and it expanded its colonial domination. In this way, it established many English speaking communities around the world.

Next event which strengthened the use of English was the industrial revolution. It was the period of great inventions between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century due to which English became the language of advertising, industry, education and social media.

Thirdly, there were political causes. The result of World War II was decisive. After the war, USA monitored an extensive growth and became the most powerful and industrialized country. Thanks to the economic power, USA exercised their interests and language in various international organizations like UNESCO, OECD, NATO and others. The influence of the outcome of the war is described also by U. Eco:

*“Had Hitler won World War II and had the USA been reduced to a confederation of banana republics, we would probably today use German as a universal vehicular language, and Japanese electronic firms would advertise their products in Hong Kong airport duty-free shops (Zollfreie Waren) in German.”<sup>7</sup>*

Fourthly, there are cultural reasons. English arrives to all the continents due to the adoption of the British and American culture and style through popular music, films, leisure activities and primarily through the Internet. This type of spreading of the language is nowadays very intensive and probably the most essential.

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<sup>7</sup> ECO, U. The Search for the Perfect Language. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995. p. 331.

As the next point, we can mention educational causes. Because of the expansion of English during the past decades, it became the compulsory foreign language in schools in many countries. As a consequence of this development, more and more young people have some English knowledge and this fact contributes again to its spreading.

Finally, there is the linguistic factor according to which English is considered to be easy in comparison to other languages; therefore its great expansion was more likely. However, this statement is unsubstantiated because none of the natural languages can be called simple. When learning the language, it depends on the fact if the mother tongue of the speaker belongs to the same language group or not. Thus, the English knowledge is more common among the people from Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands, i.e. the users of other Germanic languages.

All of these impacts are very helpful for English to remain the lingua franca; nevertheless, its leading position is not certain in the long term, especially because of the growing influence of Chinese or Spanish.

#### **4. PENETRATION OF ENGLISH IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

Nekula (2005) describes that English started to emerge in the Czech territory already in the Middle Ages (approximately 5<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> century). In these times, commercial and political relations with Anglophone countries were built by the Přemyslid and Luxembourg royal dynasties. The establishing of these relationships with other European countries helped the main representatives of each country to calm the situation during the war period. English gained the importance also in the area of religion. Thanks to the gatherings of English Catholic and Protestant Church Members in Prague, the contacts with English were more frequent.

In the nineteenth century, Czech countries were in contact not only with England but also with the USA. The reason was the revolution in the central Europe in 1848 which was caused by the effort for sovereignty and the resistance to Germanization. Thus, many Czech people looked for a shelter and immigrated to the USA. According to the official records, at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, the number of Bohemian and Moravian emigrants achieved almost 350 thousand.

On the contrary, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the influence of Anglophone countries was reduced because of the World War II when Soviet Union seized the reign over Czechoslovakia. In these times, Russian was quite important and it became the first compulsory foreign language in all kinds of Czechoslovak schools. In most of secondary schools, there was no opportunity to learn any second foreign language. This situation lasted until the Velvet Revolution in 1989. It was the milestone of the great use of English by Czech people; then they could choose among the foreign languages (English, French, German, Russian or Spanish) already during their elementary studies and mostly often they opted for English which was popular mainly because of the origins and expansion of the Internet in 1990's. Although there was a great lack of qualified English teachers, an increasing number of students chose English as their first foreign

language, so that already since the school year 1997/1998 English has become the most preferred language in elementary and secondary schools.

#### **4.1. English knowledge in the Czech Republic**

*“Language skills of the population belong to the symptoms of education of each country.”* (“Translation mine”)<sup>8</sup> Průcha (2010) points out that in this regard, Czech people can be considered as well educated because in the Czech Republic, the great emphasis has been always put on the teaching of foreign languages. The main reason is the fact that Czechs feel the need to learn foreign languages as they create less numerous nation and want to communicate with those from different corners of the world without barriers and to equal them.

As it was indicated above, according to this view, Czech people can speak foreign languages at a relatively high level. However, the language knowledge is of course influenced by several factors like the age – Průcha (2010) states that more than 80 % of people from 18 to 29 can speak some foreign language; or achieved education – about 98 % of all university students know a foreign language. No significant differences were recorded between the language skills of men and women.

According to the survey “Průzkum jazykové vybavenosti obyvatel ČR” performed by Universitas agency<sup>9</sup> among 1255 inhabitants of the Czech Republic, English was on the first place in terms of the quality of language knowledge. 1/5 of the respondents stated that they spoke English fluently. Nevertheless, the results are distorted owing to the subjectivity of the responses.

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<sup>8</sup> Průcha J. Interkulturní komunikace, Grada Publishing, 2010. p. 120.

<sup>9</sup> Results were presented by P. Kuchař and J. Buriánek (2002)

The integral part of this thesis - the questionnaire - which was focused on the English language needs amongst the Czech companies, sought to avoid this problem of inaccuracy. Instead of the demand for estimating the level of English knowledge among the employees, it examined their skills on the basis of obtained certificates.

## 5. TYPES OF BUSINESS

When starting a business, the founders can choose how it will be organized. From a legal point of view, there are several types of businesses in the Czech Republic. Each of them involves different conditions regarding legal liability and income tax treatment. This chapter will briefly describe the most common ones.

### 5.1. Sole proprietorship

The first option is to become a sole proprietor. It is the simplest way to start up business because there are fewer forms to file than with other business types. However, this possibility is not ideal for high-risk businesses because in a sole proprietorship, exclusively the owner takes the full responsibility for all profits, losses, assets and liabilities and is liable for them for all his or her personal assets. This is called unlimited liability. The books state several examples of kinds of businesses that are considered risky. They include child care, animal care, repairing items of value, selling edible goods or alcohol and others. If the individual has troubles with personal debts, then he or she should avoid these fields of business or in the better case, choose a different legal structure that will protect his or her assets.

As a sole proprietorship, it is possible to use one's own name or a business name. In addition, it is compulsory to pay self-employment tax on his or her income. The biggest advantage of this form of business is that the sole proprietor has the freedom to make business decisions.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.investopedia.com/walkthrough/corporate-finance/1/forms-business-organizations.aspx>

## **5.2. Limited liability company**

LLC or LTD is the most common form of business in the Czech Republic. The company is liable for its obligations with all of its assets. As for associates, they are liable jointly to the sum of all outstanding funds.

The company can be established by one up to a maximum of fifty associates. The associates have to agree on the content of the partnership agreement and sign it at the notary. The company arises at the time of the registration in the commercial register.

The minimum registered capital is 200.000 CZK. The minimum amount of deposit of each associate is 20.000 CZK. The total amount of deposits must agree with the amount of the registered capital of the company. All non-monetary deposits have to be noted in the partnership agreement. If the company is established by one founder, it can be recorded in the commercial register only when the registered capital is repaid in full.

The registered capital of the commercial company is not untouchable; it becomes the property of the company which has it at its disposal and uses these means for the purchase of equipment and other.

In the limited liability company, there are three bodies – general meeting, supervisory board and the executive directors. General meeting is the highest body of the company and each associate is its member. General meeting is convened at least once a year. It can for example change the partnership agreement and the amount of registered capital, admit non-monetary deposits and so on. Further, it approves the distribution of profits. Executive directors represent the statutory body. They lead the company and take responsibility for running of the company, accounting and so on. Supervisory board is the voluntary body which oversees the activities of the executive directors, controls the accounting documentation etc.

The advantage of this type of business is the limited liability for the obligations of the company, low value of the minimum capital and undemanding administrative requirements.<sup>11</sup>

### **5.3. Joint-stock company**

The registered capital of this type of company is divided into a number of shares of some nominal value. The shares are the securities. Depending on the number of shares, the shareholders may participate in the management of the company, receive its profits and the liquidation balance upon the dissolution of the company. The shares might be issued in paper form (=physical) or book entry form (=dematerialized). The shares must include the name and address of the company, its nominal value, the indication of the form of shares, the amount of the registered capital, number of issued shares and the date of issue.

The company is liable for the obligations with all of its assets. The associates – the shareholders are not liable at all.

This type of business can be established by one juridical person or two natural persons. If the company is established by more founders, they conclude the founding agreement. In the case of only one founder, there are the articles of association.

There are two kinds of minimum amount of the registered capital, depending on the circumstances. The registered capital of the company established with the public offering of shares must be at least 20 million CZK, while the registered capital of the company established without the public offering of shares must be at least 2 million CZK.

The joint stock company has three bodies: general meeting, board of directors and supervisory board. General meeting is the highest body in the company. It is composed of all shareholders. It decides on the

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.businessinfo.cz/cs/clanky/obchodni-korporace-zalozeni-a-vznik-ppbi-50403.html#!>

establishment of the company and the articles of association, it elects bodies of the company, approves the distribution of profits and financial statements. The number of votes of each shareholder depends on the number of shares held. The board of directors is the statutory body that manages the company and acts on its behalf. It has at least three members and it decides by majority of votes. It is elected for 5 years. Supervisory board oversees the management of the company and the accounting. Its members are elected by the general meeting. Supervisory board must have at least three members. The part of the members are elected by the general meeting, another part is elected by the employees. It is elected for 5 years.<sup>12</sup>

#### **5.4. General partnership**

The establishment of this type of business can be risky because all the associates (at least two – either two natural persons or two legal persons) are liable for the obligations with all their property jointly and severally. When creating the company, the partnership agreement has to be signed. The agreement must include at least this information: name and address of the company, name and address of the associates (in case of natural persons) or name and seat (in case of legal person) and subject of business of the company. The partnership agreement can be changed only with consent of all associates. The agreement regulates matters concerning the management of the company. Usually, each associate is entitled to lead the company – all of them are the statutory body.

For all members, there is the competition ban. That means that they cannot do business outside of the company in the same field without consent of the other partners.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.podnikatelskyweb.cz/akciová-společnost/>

The application for entry in the commercial register must be submitted by all members. Signatures of all members must be officially verified.

The advantage is that this type of company does not need to create any registered capital. In case that there is not any change in the partnership agreement, the company's profit is divided equally.<sup>13</sup>

### **5.5. Limited partnership**

In the limited partnership, there are two types of associates – limited partners and general partners. For the establishment of this company, there must be at least one limited partner and at least one general partner which conclude the partnership agreement. There is a difference in liability for the obligations of the company between these two. Limited partners are liable up to the amount of their unpaid deposit. On the other hand, general partners are liable with all of their assets.

The partnership agreement must comprise of the following parts: the name and seat of the company, identification of the associates – both in the case of natural and legal person, the subject of business, determination which of the associates are general partners and which are limited partners and the amount of deposit of each limited partner.

General partners (komplementáři) are the statutory body and they are the only ones who are authorized to lead the company. The competition ban applies on them. When deciding on other matters of the company, each associate contributes with one vote. Limited partners must deposit at least 5.000 CZK to the registered capital. General partners don't have this obligation.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.businessinfo.cz/cs/clanky/obchodni-korporace-zalozeni-a-vznik-ppbi-50403.html#!>

The application for entry of his type of company in the commercial register must be submitted by all the associates (both limited and general partners). Their signatures must be officially verified.

Profit is usually divided in half for the company and for the general partners. The profit attributable to the company is after tax divided among the limited partners according to the amount of paid-up deposits.<sup>14</sup>

## **5.6. Co-operation**

When setting up the co-operation, it is necessary to have at least three founders. The maximum number of members is not limited. There is no need to sign the partnership agreement but the constituent meeting must be held. This meeting adopts the statutes, elects the members of board of directors and audit committee and approves the way to meet the membership contribution.

The minimal amount of the registered capital just as the minimal amount of deposit is not specified. The co-operation is liable for its obligations by all its assets but its members are not liable at all.

The bodies of this type of business are as follows: membership meeting (the highest body), board of directors and supervisory board.

The application for entry in the commercial register is submitted by all members of the board of directors or the chairman of the co-operation. All their signatures must be officially verified.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.businessinfo.cz/cs/clanky/obchodni-korporace-zalozeni-a-vznik-ppbi-50403.html#!&chapter=6>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.businessinfo.cz/cs/clanky/obchodni-korporace-zalozeni-a-vznik-ppbi-50403.html#!&chapter=7>

## **6. ENGLISH IN CZECH COMPANIES**

When a man is looking for work nowadays, it is very important to know at least one foreign language – primarily English – to have success. This language knowledge is slowly becoming a standard requirement in a variety of positions and it does not depend on the fact if the company is seated abroad or in the country of the candidate. The ignorance of the foreign languages reduces the opportunities to get a job and at the same time, it may have detrimental impact on the remuneration.

### **6.1. Reasons**

The reason that leads the employers to seeking after the linguistically equipped personnel is stated by Průcha (2010): If their company has the intention to rise, it should not only operate in the Czech Republic but also concentrate on the export. In such a case, it is necessary to consider the adaptation of its products and services for the foreign market and communicate with the foreign business partners. Some companies got used to adjust also their own names or logos and they offer their products on English websites. This trading across national boundaries is easier now, thanks to the fact that the technology links people faster and more efficiently and more people are on the move than ever before – they are globally active and become the part of the international labour force.

However, the company which has decided to become a multinational organization has to face to managing the diversity between the inside and the outside of the company. This global structure comprises the abilities to understand and integrate different cultures and the responsibility for coordination of these objectives. The intercultural involvement commences with the individuals and teams and can result up to the global alliances.

## 6.2. Survey data

According to the information which was published by the Internet portal *Profesia.cz*, up to 75 % of all Czech employers who offered a job in the first half of 2010, required the knowledge of the foreign language. In seventy per cent of cases, they demanded English. German was asked for only by 18 % of employers. Although English is the most widespread foreign language among the candidates (57 % of them stated some English knowledge), their knowledge level often ranks among the beginners' or intermediate. Besides, it was found out that the employers in the Czech Republic are more demanding with regard to the language requirements in comparison to those from Slovakia or Hungary. Only about 60 % of local employers require some foreign language from their employees.

Another survey conducted by the *GlobalEnglish* company whose results were mentioned on the Czech website *byznys.ihned.cz*, was investigating the language skills in the area of business English among the different nations. 77 countries from all around the world participated in the survey. The position of the Czech Republic was not very favourable; it took 49<sup>th</sup> place – just after Slovakia. Among the all European countries, Bulgarians and Romanians have achieved the best results. This evaluation is carried out annually. In 2013, 212 thousand of tests were filled in. 30 % of all respondents were only on the level of beginners. The employees in engineering, aerial industry and financial services have demonstrated the best skills, on the other hand, those in the public sector and media haven't succeed that much.

The provider of the printed and online advertisement *Annonce* stated the findings that resulted from its survey related to the demand for new employees. They say that the ideal type of Czech employee is the one that has completed secondary education in the technical field, can prove some experience and speak English. These three aspects are needed

most after the job seekers. It means that the experience in the field along with the ability to communicate in English is much more important than university education. Many university graduates remain unemployed in the long term. Four of ten recruiters refuse a candidate if he or she cannot speak at least one foreign language, most commonly English. Communication level of English is required by almost one third of employers. However, German knowledge is demanded only by 7 % of human resources officers.

### **6.3. Point of view**

The penetration and frequent use of English language in the Czech Republic sometimes encounters the opposition of the local population. This subchapter will present the point of view of a man who is quite sceptical about this fact. It is Zdeněk Hlízničkovský, one of the readers of the Czech websites *Britské listy*.

The author of the article entitled “*A proč jen anglicky?*” agrees with the chief editor’s opinion that the Czech society does not have high-quality background for teaching English so in this regard, it cannot equal to other European nations. At the same time, he speculates about the fact why everything is connected still only with English. He understands that we live in the rapidly developing modern world where the English need is perceived as very important. He asks himself a question why English constitutes the international language – if it is due to its relative simplicity or because it is represented by the largest percentage of users on our planet. He does not like the current situation when English slowly substitutes the individual national languages. According to him, some words cannot be expressed in other languages properly and there lies a beauty in the heterogeneity of the national dialects. In addition, each language is supported by its own culture. In other words, the world should not be linguistically unified.

The prevailing reason for the international expansion of English is rather the fact that Britain received many colonies in the past. Therefore, the author has doubts that English has the right to be the most widely used language provided that it has the imperialistic history. It is good to think about the fact whether English poses a threat or if it just provides the natural transformation of other languages. Hlíznikovský is afraid that the simplified form of language – unified language – leads to the simpler view of the world. *“It is the truth that English simplifies the international communication to us but it is at the expense of the skipping of some elements that it cannot express. I dare to say that English language extended beyond the Anglo-Saxon territory is primarily focused on the economic aspect of life and after that on the interpersonal communication. And perhaps that’s way the details of our lives that we can describe in our national language aren’t important for English.”* (“Translation mine”)

## **7. QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **7.1. Methods and composition**

In order to evaluate the knowledge and necessity of the English language use in Czech companies, the short questionnaire was compiled (appendix number 1). It was written bilingually due to the fact, that it is interested also in people who use English words or phrases but don't have sufficient language knowledge to understand merely English questions.

The questionnaire is composed of 16 questions. Some questions allowed to respondents to choose one answer only (questions no. 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 15 and 16), others offered more alternatives (questions no. 7, 12, 13 and 14) and in some cases, it was possible to express oneself and give practical examples (questions no. 1, 2, 3, 8 and 9). This system combined closed questions which substantially facilitated practical assessment of the survey with open questions thanks to which the respondents could comment on particular point.

The first part of the questionnaire was focused on the basic information about the company – name, area of business and age along with the size of the company. The questions 5–9 were related to trading – whether the firm is engaged in international business, which language is used in such a case and which employees are responsible for it. The third set of questions (no. 10–12) dealt with the need for English – necessity of English language certificates and occasions in which it is possible to meet English. The final four questions concerned the promotion of the company – what means of promotion does the company use if it promotes itself and which language is used in each particular case.

The survey was realized during June and July 2014. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents in electronic form. All of the companies had their headquarters in the Czech Republic. Total

number of addressed companies exceeded 500. 111 people visited the sent link from which 64 just displayed it, 10 didn't complete it and 37 filled in all questions successfully. And this is also a finite number of respondents for the analysis. The overall success rate is therefore 33.33 %.

## **7.2. Company info**

The first inquiry mentioned in the questionnaire concerned the name of the company. The list of companies that participated in the survey can be consulted in the appendix no. 2.

Further, the respondents were asked about the sector of activity of their company. It can be observed that the branches of companies were quite diverse. Trade was the most represented field (6 companies), then food industry (5), production (4), mechanical engineering (4), power industry (2) and advertisement (2). Other sectors were as follows: information technology, services, telecommunication, civil engineering, electrical engineering, real estate business and travel agency.

Third question investigated how many years has the company been operating in the market. There were only 2 start-up companies – younger than 1 year, in the range of 2 to 9 years, there were 7 companies, 20 companies were found between 10 and 20 years and 8 remaining were in the business over 20 years – among them inter alia Pilsner Urquell with 172 and Nestlé Česko, s.r.o. with 124 years of tradition. According to these results, we can say that the survey was carried out mainly by the companies well-established in the market.

The last question of this section was focused on the size of the company. The vast majority (27 respondents) stated that their company was small (with less than 50 employees). Nevertheless, I managed to get the answers from 6 medium-sized (50–249 employees) and 4 large companies (more than 250 employees) – the aforementioned companies

Pilsner Urquell and Nestlé Česko, s.r.o along with Walmark, a.s. and Teplárny Brno, a.s. The ratio of sizes is well illustrated in the chart no. 1 below.

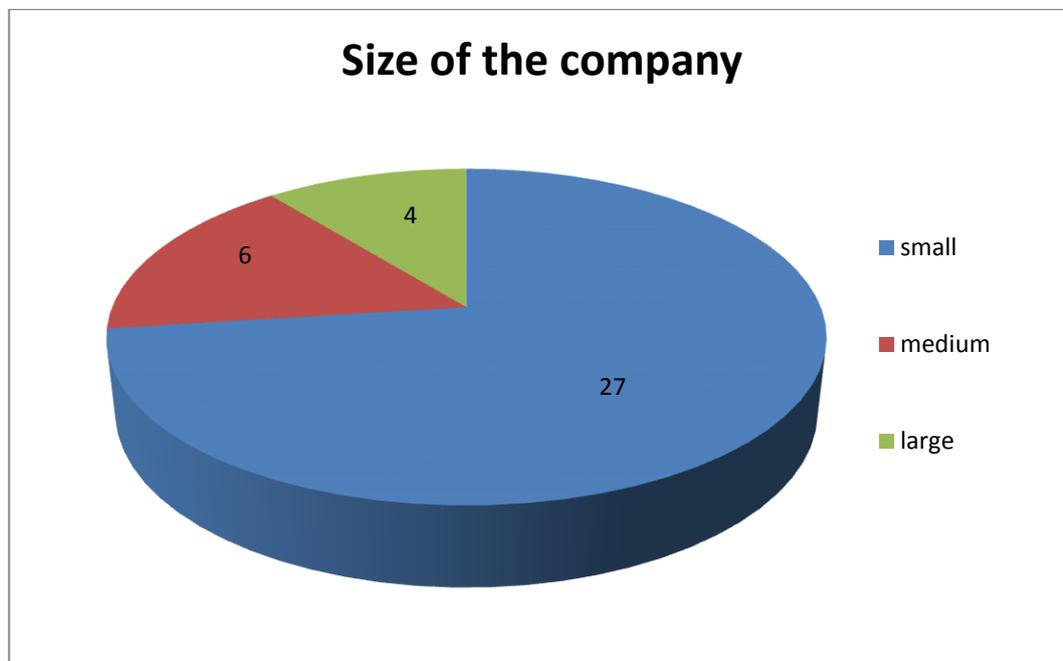


Chart no. 1. Size of the company

### 7.3. International business

This set of questions referred to trading. At first, respondents should state whether their company does international business. Of all 37 respondents, 27 people (73 %) responded positively.

Similar results were shown also in the following question which investigated whether, in the case of international business communication, the company prefers English. According to the responses, 28 companies favour this language and only 9 of them use different language.

The next question examined what language are companies used to communicate with their customers, partners or suppliers. It was possible to choose more than one answer or to add another language. As it might be expected, Czech occupied the first place with its 33 votes (89 %). But English was also often used for the communication in business relations –

it was mentioned by 29 companies. Other options were considerably less represented. German was stated by 11 companies and French was not marked at all. However, some respondents added other languages, mostly often Russian (7). Respondents also mentioned Polish, Spanish, Italian and Slovak. The results emerged from this question may be somewhat surprising. The Czech Republic shares more than half of the total length of the borders with two German speaking neighbours; nevertheless German language is sporadically used in business communication. The responses are clearly visible in the following chart no. 2.

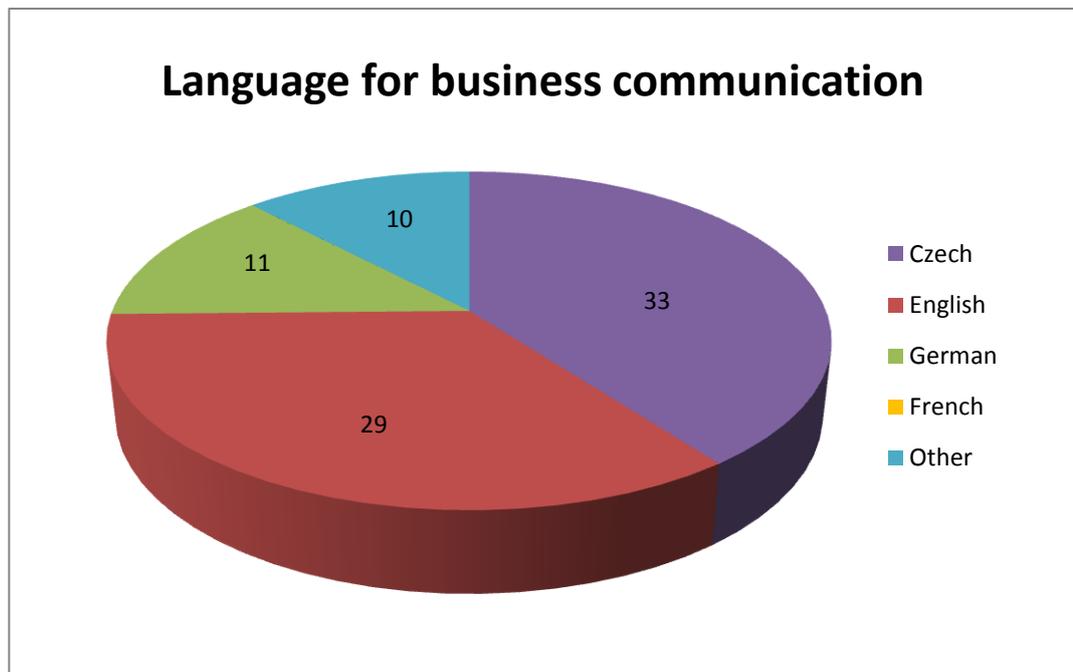


Chart no. 2. Language for business communication

Following question surveyed how many people in the company are responsible for international business communication. The answers to this question depended primarily on the size of the company. As for small businesses with 1 to 49 employees, the international communication is in most cases handled by 1 to 6 persons. Two companies stated higher number – 10 and 18. On the other hand, in three small companies, there

is no one who would ensure the international communication. It was similar in medium-sized companies (50–249 employees). According to the respondents, the number of such people ranged from 1 to 10. Only in one case, there were mentioned 20 people. The difference was in large companies where the figure ranged from 50 to 70. The exception was the company Teplárny Brno, a.s. where international communication is provided by 5 employees.

The question no. 9 looked into the fact what are the qualifications of people responsible for such international communication. Here, the results were very diverse. Many respondents had problems with answering this question and left it out due to lack of understanding. Some of them mentioned that these people worked as dealers or sales representatives. Three respondents stated that they had the English certificate or relevant experience. Nevertheless, most people agreed on two responses – for 9 companies, it is necessary to have secondary education and for 13 companies to have university education.

#### **7.4. Need for English**

The questionnaire also examined the companies' need to use English. At first, respondents were asked if they required some English certificate from their employees and in case of positive response, they should state its level. It turned out that from the total number of 37 companies, only two of them required language certificate, namely FCE (First Certificate in English).

Next question followed the previous one and inquired whether the employees in the company have any English language certification and in that case what level. At this point, 9 respondents answered positively and stated the following: in 4 companies, they have FCE, two other companies mentioned PET (Preliminary English Test) and one CAE (Certificate in Advanced English). The rest of respondents said that they

didn't know the level. On the basis of these findings, it is obvious that people are trying to receive language certificates even though they are not required by the employers and thereby to increase their skills and competitiveness.

Respondents should also indicate on which occasions their company encounters English. They could mark more options and also add some extra. Besides three people who said that they did not meet English at all, respondents mentioned the following cases: communication with colleagues from abroad or with parent company, catalogues, international exhibitions, service, technical support or conferences. Other options can be seen in the chart no. 3.

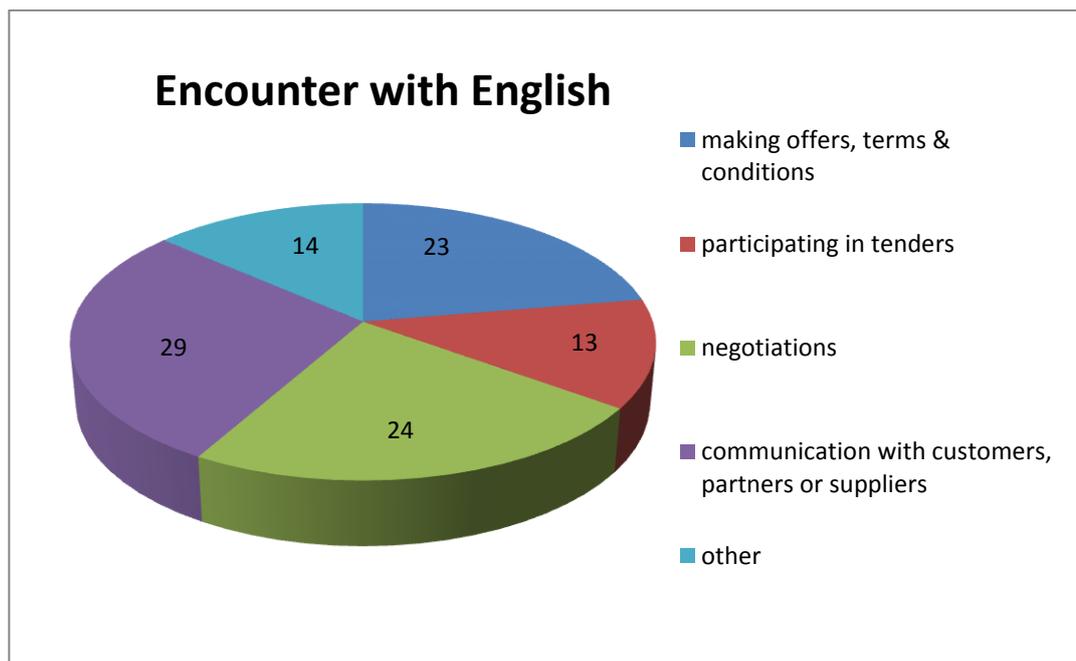


Chart no. 3. Encounter with English

## 7.5. Company promotion

In the end, the research tried to discover if the company promotes itself and what language does it use for this purpose. Respondents could choose several ways of publicity and languages. The results revealed that

the most popular way is the promotion on the Internet in the Czech language. English is used by companies for advertising on the Internet roughly in half of the cases. Detailed results are shown in Table no. 1 below.

	Czech	English	German	French	other	no promotion
hoarding	21	3	1	1	5	13
TV	15	2	1	1	6	19
radio	19	2	1	1	5	15
Internet	36	16	7	2	5	1

Table no. 1. Language for promotion

On the basis of the question no. 14, the respondents indicated which language do they use for web presence. Here again, they could choose more possibilities. It is not much surprising that all companies use Czech in their websites. 16 companies have their website also in English version. German was stated five times and French only once. Other listed languages included Polish, Slovak, Hungarian and Russian.

In the end, the respondents were asked about their relation to social networks. Firstly, they should say whether their company use them. According to the received answers, greater number of companies is using social media today – 22 from the total number of 37. The first is Facebook with 19 votes, then Twitter and Google+ with 4 votes and some companies stated also LinkedIn, Skype and YouTube.

The last question was not compulsory and related to the previous one. It investigated if English language is used in any of the social media mentioned before. Results showed that only 7 companies use English in this case.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Main idea of the Bachelor's thesis was to evaluate the fact if English occupies an important position within the Czech companies. The analysis began with the description of interconnectedness of the world which represents the main reason for the need to communicate with each other and above all – to make oneself understood. For this purpose, people have started to use a common language.

Subsequent chapters were focused on the technology of business communication and the role of English then and now.

The theory was underpinned by the various articles which stated a number of data or mentioned particular ideas. Following these information, the survey that brought another results was drawn up.

The research was carried out within the companies of various sizes and fields of activity. Their legal form was the limited liability company or joint-stock company. Their common feature was the seat in the Czech Republic. However, the companies were deployed throughout this territory.

With respect to the findings which have arisen from the research, either via the questionnaire or by studying of the relevant literature, these facts can be mentioned.

The role of English in the Czech Republic has recently grown significantly. Some of the aspects that have contributed to this fact comprise of expansion of information technologies and the Internet and also the influence of many different areas like pop culture, sport, etc. Nowadays, we can observe the common trend – considerable interest of the Czech employers in recruiting of the linguistically equipped personnel. However, the research has shown that there are not many companies which would require the English language certificate from their employees. They are more likely interested in practical knowledge and experience.

Further, we can observe that nowadays, although they are located within the country, nearly three quarters of Czech companies engage in the international business and when it comes to the international communication they prefer English. The fact that German and Russian language is used relatively equally often can be quite interesting.

Likewise, when communicating with the customers, business partners or suppliers, Czech or English prevails. Other languages are represented sporadically.

As for the employees who are in charge of international communication, in most cases these are people with a university degree or at least secondary school diploma. Good language knowledge is a commonplace for such people.

The results of the survey have shown that Czech companies need English because they encounter it often in different forms – when making offers, communicate not only with customers but also with colleagues or parent company, organizing of exhibitions or conducting negotiations.

Regarding the promotion, on the other hand, Czech companies focus rather on the domestic market, as the most methods of promotion is done in Czech. Only for promotion on the Internet, in about half of cases, they use also English. Again, other languages are hardly represented.

It seems that the use of social networks is not related to the use of English. Or at least according to the research which revealed that only a small number of companies use English on their social networks.

On the basis of findings arising from this research, we can conclude that English still defends its important position not only in with the foreign companies but also with those ours.

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## **10. ABSTRACT**

The Bachelor's thesis investigates the fact whether Czech companies need and use English for the business purposes.

Firstly, it deals with the gradual connecting of today's world. The circumstances that led to the fact that English has become the main language of the international communication are presented in the following chapter.

Further, the thesis concerns the description of Czech companies – their division in legal point of view. Following this information, the theoretical part is supplemented by possible reasons for the use of English in business along with specific data gathered from other sources.

Besides that, the important part of the thesis represents the research which looks into the necessity of English language use and the range of its knowledge within the Czech companies.

## **11. RESUMÉ**

Hlavním cílem bakalářská práce je zjistit, zda české firmy používají angličtinu pro obchodní účely.

Bakalářská práce se nejprve zabývá postupným propojováním světa. Okolnosti, které vedly k tomu, že se angličtina stala hlavním jazykem mezinárodní obchodní komunikace, jsou popsány v následující kapitole.

Dále práce popisuje rozdělení českých firem z právního hlediska. V návaznosti na to je teoretická část doplněna možnými důvody pro užití angličtiny v obchodování společně s nasbíranými údaji z jiných průzkumů.

Důležitou součástí práce je dotazník, jenž prošetřuje potřeby znalosti anglického jazyka v českých podnicích.

## 12. APPENDICES

### Appendix no. 1 – Questionnaire

1. What is the name of your company? / Jaký je název Vaší firmy?

2. What is the core area of business of your company? / Co je předmětem podnikání Vaší firmy?

3. How many years your company is in business for? / Jak dlouho působí Vaše firma na trhu?

4. What is the size of your company? / Jaká je velikost Vaší firmy?

- small (1-49 employees) / malá (1-49 zaměstnanců)
- medium (50-249 employees) / střední (50-249 zaměstnanců)
- large (250+ employees) / velká (250 a více zaměstnanců)

5. Does your company do international business? / Zabývá se Vaše firma mezinárodním obchodem?

- no / ne
- yes / ano

6. Is English your preferred language of international business communication? / Upřednostňuje Vaše firma angličtinu v mezinárodní obchodní komunikaci?

- no / ne

○ yes / ano

7. What language does your company use for communication with your customers, partners or suppliers? / Jakým jazykem komunikuje Vaše firma se svými zákazníky, obchodními partnery nebo dodavateli?

- Czech / česky
- English / anglicky
- German / německy
- French / francouzsky
- other / jinak

8. How many people in your company are responsible for international business communication? / Kolik lidí ve Vaší firmě je zodpovědných za mezinárodní obchodní komunikaci?

9. What are the qualifications of these people? / Jaká je kvalifikace těchto lidí?

10. Do you require some certificate of English knowledge from your employees? If so, what level? / Vyžadujete od svých zaměstnanců jazykový certifikát o znalosti angličtiny? Pokud ano, jakou úroveň?

- no / ne
- yes / ano

11. Do your employees have any English language certification? If so, what level? / Mají Vaši zaměstnanci jazykový certifikát o znalosti angličtiny? Pokud ano, jakou úroveň?

no / ne

yes / ano

12. On which occasions does your company encounter English? / Při jakých příležitostech se Vaše firma setkává s angličtinou?

- making offers, terms & conditions / při tvorbě nabídek, obchodních podmínek
- participating in tenders / při účasti na výběrových řízeních
- negotiations / při jednáních
- communications with customers, partners or suppliers / při komunikaci se zákazníky, obchodními partnery nebo dodavateli
- other / jiné

13. Which language does your company use to promote itself? / V jakém jazyce se Vaše firma propaguje?

▪ hoarding / na billboardech

▪ TV / v televizi

▪ radio / v rádiu

▪ Internet / na internetu

14. Which language do you use for web presence? / Jaký jazyk používáte na svých webových stránkách?

▪ Czech / češtinu

▪ English / angličtinu

▪ German / němčinu

▪ French / francouzštinu

▪ other / jiný

15. Does your company use social media? If so, which ones? /  
Používá Vaše firma sociální sítě? Pokud ano, jaké?

no / ne

yes / ano

16. Is English language used in any of these social media listed  
above? / Je angličtina používána na některých z výše uvedených  
sociálních sítích?

no / ne

yes / ano

## Appendix no. 2 - Participating companies

1.	Kasvo spol. s r.o.	třída Maršála Malinovského 385, 686 01 Uherské Hradiště	info@kasvo.cz
2.	FAMILY FINANCE, s.r.o.	Praha 6, Libocká 255/28, 162 00	info@f.finance.cz
3.	CA PENCIL Travel	Komenského 67 68801 Uherský Brod	info@penciltravel.cz
4.	TEMPEX s.r.o.	Chelčického 1447/1, 792 01 Bruntál	info@tempex.cz
5.	Reality GAIA, spol. s r.o.	Národní třída 267/16 69501 Hodonín	reality@realitygaia.cz
6.	MI-Europe s.r.o.	Svatováclavská 408 68601 Uherské Hradiště	mieurope@mintl.com
7.	Amtest-TM s.r.o.	Svatováclavská 408 68601 Uherské Hradiště	supp@amtest-tm.com
8.	SELCOM, s.r.o.	Předbranská 415 68801 Uherský Brod	selcom@selcom.cz
9.	Daniel Medek – MaR a elektro	Podolí 117, 686 04 Kunovice	dan.medek@seznam.cz
10.	VODO-TOPO Horecký, s.r.o.	Šumice 126 68731	michal.horecky@post.cz
11.	TUBOSOL, s.r.o.	Průmyslová 712 68601 Uherské Hradiště	info@tubosol.cz
12.	DRIZORO CZ, s.r.o.	Bánov 68754	info@drizoro-cz.cz
13.	EMES-OST, s.r.o.	Levského 3201/12 14300 Praha, Modřany	info@emes-ost.cz
14.	ENERGO LaR, s.r.o.	Javornická 1501 51601 Rychnov nad Kněžnou	novotny@energolar.cz
15.	KTJ Electronic,	J.E. Purkyně 507	ktj@ktj.cz

	s.r.o.	686 06 Uherské Hradiště	
16.	ePack s.r.o.	Kostelní 435, 43401 Most	info@epack.cz
17.	AS- INTEGRATED, s.r.o.	Nivnická 423 68801 Uherský Brod	info@asintegrated.cz
18.	MASTER SPORT, s.r.o.	Provozní 5560/1b 72200 Ostrava, Třebovice	info@mastersport.cz
19.	Plzeňský prazdroj, a.s.	U Prazdroje 64/7 30100 Plzeň, Východní Předměstí	katerina.krasova@pilsn er.sabmiller.com
20.	Essentra Components, s.r.o.	Vídeňská 101/119 61900 Brno, Dolní Heršpice	info@essentracompon ents.cz
21.	Merida Hradec Králové, s.r.o.	Zemědělská 898/3 50003 Hradec Králové, Slezské Předměstí	office@meridahk.cz
22.	CMYK FACTORY s.r.o.	Sokolovská 428/130 18600 Praha, Karlín	info@c-m-y-k.cz
23.	Discomp, s.r.o.	Dopravní 1218/2a 31800 Plzeň, Skvrňany	info@discomp.cz
24.	Colognia press, a.s.	Havlíčková 844 28002 Kolín IV	info@etikety.cz
25.	NOVUS Česko s.r.o.	Raspenava 191 46401	objednavky@novus.cz
26.	Nestlé Česko s.r.o.	Mezi vodami 2035/31 14300 Praha, Modřany	consumer.service@cz.n estle.com
27.	SCI spol. s r.o.	Vyskytná nad Jihlavou 104 58841	sci@sci.cz
28.	POEX Velké Meziříčí a.s.	Velehradská 2174 68603 Staré Město	info@poex.cz
29.	Řempo CB, a.s.	Nemanická 437/5 37010 České Budějovice 3	obchod@rempocb.cz

30.	PLASTY-KO s.r.o.	Kobylí 374 69110	info@plastyko.cz
31.	Xella CZ, s.r.o.	Vodní 550 66462 Hrušovany u Brna	obchod.cz@xella.com
32.	Teplárny Brno, a.s.	Okružní 828/25 63800 Brno, Lesná	mail@teplarny.cz
33.	ÚSOVSKO FOOD, a.s.	Klopina 33 78973	usovskofood@usovskof ood.cz
34.	WALMARK, a.s	Třinec, Oldřichovice 44 73961	info@walmart.cz
35.	ROMMY AGENCY	Jeronýmova 570/22 46007 Liberec VII-Horní Růžodol	info@rommyagency.cz
36.	KAMILA CHOCOLATES , s.r.o.	Vyskytná nad Jihlavou 126 58602	info@chocolates.cz
37.	TIBM Holding, spol. s r.o.	Bělehradská 858/23 12000 Praha, Vinohrady	info@tibm.net