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INTERLANGUAGE HOMONYMY: FALSE FRIENDS

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

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English Language in Education

Supervisor: PhDr. Naděžda Stašková, PhD.

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Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

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vlastnoruční podpis

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ABSTRACT

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The object of this undergraduate thesis is the linguistic phenomenon of false friends. It consists of two main parts, theoretical and practical one.

The theoretical part of this study deals with the treacherous words from the synchronic point of view providing the reader a brief overview of false friends and its classification. Secondly, the diachronic point of view is discussed and thus in relation to the greatest English playwright William Shakespeare. It demonstrates the change of meanings of words over time.

The practical part focuses on the general awareness of false friends. Four categories including Czech students of English as well as of other subjects and people working in the Czech Republic as well as abroad were examined. The conducted research was realized by means of questionnaires which firstly aimed at the personal information of respondents. Secondly, their knowledge of false friends was examined in exercise addressing to these tricky words. Based on the results, the most problematic false friend represents the word *abstinent*. It is also concluded that generally Czech people make mistakes when dealing with false friends; however people working abroad err more frequently than respondents in the other categories.

Key words: false friends, interlanguage homonymy, treacherous words, meaning of words, William Shakespeare, mezijazyková homonymie

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

L1	native language
L2	foreign language
TL	target language
OE	Old English
ME	Middle English
EMoE	Early Modern English
MoE	Modern English

INTRODUCTION

The term “false friends” is not very well known; however the usage of such words is remarkably frequent. Every foreign language learner of every level of proficiency has come across some confusion in the every-day speech. Mainly it is caused by false friends. These somewhat treacherous words are used unconsciously and may lead to great embarrassments and humorous moments. Ordinary speakers, students of the target languages as well as translators deal with them.

My motivation to write about these tricky words led from my own experience. At the grammar school I translated the Czech sentence *Dej to na polici* as *Put it on the police*. At that time it was funny and we all laughed in the class; however no one explained us what for a linguistic error it was. The second time I encountered false friends was at university, when we were learning about them as a kind of deceptive words a learner should be aware of.

In my bachelor thesis I want to present a brief overview of this linguistic phenomenon and describe how various linguists explain it. . Before the commencement of my writing I had established the following research questions:

1. What are false friends?
2. Why are these words so tricky?
3. How people deal with them?

To understand better this topic the classification of languages had to be done. The overview of false friends from both synchronic as well as diachronic point of view was demonstrated. It is fascinating how broad this linguistic interference is. It may be examined within one, two or even more languages. The more related languages are the more frequently false friends occur. However, it is not a rule and these treacherous words may be found even between two relatively distinct languages.

When the history of a language is considered, more false friends may be discovered. There are false friends between Old and Middle English as well as between English of the time of Renaissance and today’s English. The work of the greatest English playwright William Shakespeare is taught at all secondary schools; however teachers do not mention his natural ability of word-plays in his pieces of work. He leaves present-day readers as well as translators confused as he introduces new meanings to already known words. Many of words have already changed their meaning, which leads to confusions in

translations and thus false friends. All the discoveries of such peculiar word pairs are entertaining and astonishing.

In the final part of the thesis the research is described and commented on. It was done in order to ascertain to what extent common users of English as a foreign language make mistakes when dealing with false friends. As a learner of English language and the one extremely interested in this topic I argue that more attention should be paid to these linguistic errors.

1 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

At the commencement of this study two principal language classifications will be discussed in order to clarify the basic terms of the English language.

1.1 Typological classification of languages

Based on their morphological features linguists in the 19th century wanted to assign languages to relevant groups. There are three basic types of languages (McArthur, 1998), sorted according to the ability of morphemes to fuse to each other:

1. Analytic or isolating languages

Words tend to consist of solely one single morpheme. Morphemes are not dependent on each other. To such languages belongs for example Chinese or Vietnamese.

2. Agglutinating languages

Juxtaposition of morphemes forms new words. There is a morpheme carrying a meaning and while adding other morphemes the original meaning is specified. That means that each morpheme exists separated as well. Agglutinating language is for instance Turkish or Bulgarian.

3. Inflected languages

In Latin or Spanish there are words carrying already fused morphemes. The suffix *-orum* of the word *servorum* (of slaves) signifies possession, plural, and masculine. Affixes added to the stem express grammatical functions. Change of stem when creating a plural form is possible as well.

McArthur further adds two more terms and thus synthetic (as an opposite of analytic) and polysynthetic languages, which differ in number of morphemes in a word (1998).

There may be dominance of one of above stated types however no language is solely inflected, agglutinative or isolating. English is mainly isolating, since nouns and verbs do not inflect. There are no clear boundaries between word classes (e.g. adjective may be changed for adverb, verb for noun etc.) and numerals do not correspond with case. Analytical features are expressed in creating verb tenses: *to work, have done, would have been given...*

Another division of languages represents genealogical classification.

1.2 Genealogical classification of languages

The genealogical classification is based on the assumption that languages were not created by God, as the Bible indicates, however, they have developed from a common base, an ancestral language. It was not until 1786, when Sir William Jones ascertained that Sanskrit was similar to Greek, Latin and the earlier forms of Modern English. After his discovery European scholars commenced comparison of the languages which suggested in the 19th century the beginning of a discipline called historical linguistics (Petrlíková, 2009).

According to this classification, there are 16 main families around the world, which share languages with related qualities and which can be further sorted into several groups and subgroups. Since dealing with English, the most important for this study is the Indo-European language family, which was named by Thomas Young in 1813 (Petrlíková, 2009).

The Indo-European language family consists of two main subdivisions: *European* and *Asian* one. The first mentioned includes 9 other sub-branches:

- Albanian
- Armenian
- Baltic
 - Lithuanian, Latvian
- Celtic
 - Brythonic: Breton, Cornish, Gaulic Welsh
 - Goidelic: Irish, Manx, Scots Gaelic
- Germanic
 - Icelandic, Faroese, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, English, Frisian, Dutch, Afrikaans, Flemish, German
- Romance
 - French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Catalan, Spanish, Galician, Occitan, French, Italian, Sardinian, Romance, Rhaeto-Romance, Rumanian, Latin, Dalmatian
- Greek
- Slavonic
 - Czech, Slovak, Polish, Serbo - Croatian, Slovenian, Macedonian, Bulgarian, Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian
- Other extinct languages

- Etruscan, Old Prussian, ...

The Asian branch involves Indian, Iranian and, in addition, several sub-branches of no longer existing languages (Čermák, 2009; Petrlíková, 2009).

This study focuses on Germanic languages. These are spoken by around 470 million people, principally in Europe. However, due to all the migrations in the previous centuries, Germanic languages and many kinds of their variations were spread all over the world. English represents a significant part in the globalisation (Negrea, 2015). According to the online catalogue's survey, English is the 3rd widely spoken language in the world, after Chinese and Spanish, with total of 335 million speakers in 101 countries (Lewis, 2015).

As mentioned above, English pertains to Germanic language subbranch that is usually considered to include three groups (Čermák, 2011; Petrlíková, 2009):

- I. North Germanic languages – Scandinavian languages (Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Faroese)
- II. West Germanic languages – further divided into the North and South German, according to the place where being spoken; that is Germany, Austria, Switzerland on the first side and England, Benelux and parts of Germany on the other one.
- III. East Germanic languages – all of them extinct (Gothic, Burgundian, Vandalic)

For a better comprehension of how language works one should have a closer look at the basic unit of lexical-semantic level – a “word”, a unit made of string of sounds. It is an essential element of a speech and its functioning with reality.

1.3 Definition of a word

"In the beginning was the Word" [Bible: St. John]

A word is described as “a combination of sounds.... or its representation in writing that symbolizes and communicates a meaning” (Peprník, 2003: 8). In other words it designates “an intermediate structure smaller than a complete phrase and generally larger than a single sound segment” (Jackson & Amvela, 2000: 48). Basically, a word is an isolated unit of form and content, which consists of individual components – morphemes.

1.4 Word as a sign

A word is a representative of reality that conveys a meaning. There have been several linguists who were interested in the theoretical study of signs and symbols, semiotics:

Charles S. Peirce, later in the 20th century his follower and also inventor of the term “linguistic sign” Ferdinand de Saussure and I. A. Richards and C. K. Ogden, who focused on the development of linguistic signs in relation to reality (Čermák, 2011; Peprník, 2003). In this study there are two main theories about the linguistic sign mentioned:

- I. Three part model – Richards-Ogden’s model: this concept is being explained as a semiotic triangle.

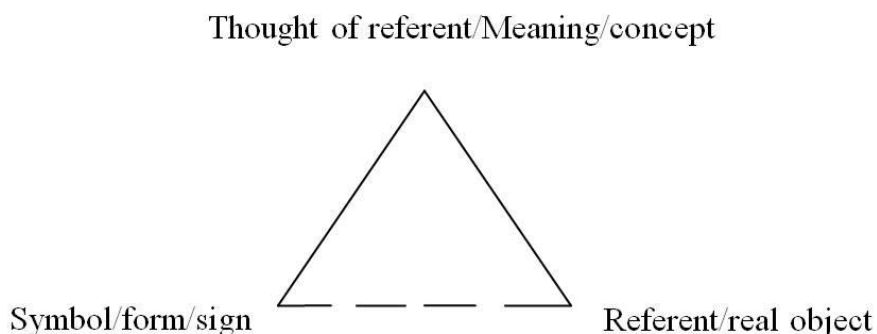


Figure 1: Semiotic triangle (created by the author)

The spoken or written word, also known as a sign, denotes the real object, refers to it (do not name it!) and at the same time represents the real object. The relation between the symbol (sign) and the thought of referent (concept) is based on the general convention, whereas the relation of the symbol and the referent is relevant, based on arbitrariness (Čermák, 2011; Peprník, 2003).

- II. Bilateral model: this concept is described by Ferdinand de Saussure, the founder of semiotics in Europe, who assumed the linguistic sign to exist as a form in relation to its referent. The concept is being not considered (Čermák, 2011).

Table 1. Bilateral model (created by the author)

Signifier/form
Signified/ referent

Words are instruments (Ogden & Richards, 1989). That signifies they carry a meaning, however, they are incapable of standing by themselves. Words permit us to realize the process of communication. Psychic awareness of the extra linguistic reality is

necessary in the act of an effective communication. Devoid of the consciousness about what the word stands for, the transmission of words would be pointless. To comprehend the content of words correctly, the knowledge of context is crucial (Peprník, 2003). Denotation expresses a process of matching certain words with certain notions. Nonetheless it might happen that a wrong meaning is assigned to a word. Reasons are various, from the phonological to graphical similarity or homogeneity. For learners of a foreign language the trickiest difficulty in comprehension words may appear as a matter of so called “false friends”.

1.5 False friends / faux amis

The lexical term “cognates” (“Vrais Amis”) is very common across natural languages, especially those within one language family or better yet within a same sub-branch, in which they share equal historical origin, for example German – English (*nacht* – *night*¹) or Spanish – English (*público* – *public*²) etc., though it is not a rule. Several examples of cognates may be found in English and Turkish (*gelatine* – *jelatin*³) however in a lesser amount (Torrichos, 2009). Cognates are words similar or identical in appearance or sound (Friel & Kennison, 2001). It means, they share orthographical or phonological features and overlap in meaning – as Frunza (2009) stated, these words “are perceived as similar and are mutual translations” (3). The orthographical identical cognates such as German *Butter* and English *butter* are called homographic cognates, on the other hand those spelled and pronounced in a similar way are known as non-homographic cognates (Friel & Kennison, 2001).

True cognates are seen as a significant advantage in learning a foreign language (L2), since the words are already known in the native language (L1). According to studies (Friel & Kennison, 2001: 249), it is proved that cognates are faster accessed and categorized, easier to remember and, what is more, due to a common morpheme root they are swiftly as well as correctly translated. Student’s foreign language learning is aided when cognates occur. It permits learners to build their vocabulary more effectively and

¹ There is as well *nuit* (French), *natt* (Swedish, Norwegian) and *nótt* (Icelandic) mentioned as samples of words requiring no or a little effort when learning the other language (O'Neill, Bennetm, & Vanier, 2010).

² Spanish and English are relatively close languages, therefore there appear a greater percentage of cognates (Torrichos, 2009).

³ Other example of Turkish words related to words of European languages is showed turkish asma and bulgarish acma (“grapevine”) (Uzun & Salihoglu, 2009: 570).

facilitate their language comprehension. We can consequently talk about a positive transfer – a positive influence of the native language on the target one.

So far only true cognates have been investigated. However, there are several more types of cognates that must be discussed. A counterpart to cognates is represented by non-cognates, which do not share any common conceptual representation (Friel & Kennison, 2001: 251). A total opposite of true cognates (also known as true friends), in other words an extreme on the other side of a continuum (Gouws, R. H., Prinsloo, D. J., & De Schryver, G., 2004) is a phenomenon called false friends. These are cross linguistic homographs and/or homophones that share no or solely few semantic components (Szubko – Sitarek, 2015).

1.5.1 Synchronic point of view of false friends

Example of graphical false friends:

police (Czech “shelf”) *police* (English)
house (Czech “gosling”) *house* (English)
Gift (German “poison”) *gift* (English)

Frunza (2006) states in her thesis that false friends “... are not translation of each other but are orthographically similar ...“ (50). O’Neill and Casanovas (1997) describe false friends as “interlingual deceptive cognates, that is, words which have the same or similar orthographic/phonetic form” (103). According to these statements, it is obvious that the examples above are false friends, which share the orthographic facets, however do not overlap in their meanings. On the contrary, Seelbach (2002) describes “orthographische falche Freunde” (orthographical false friends) as words that cause no difficulties for a language user since there are solely slight distinctions in orthography (14). He demonstrates his statement on the following examples of differences in suffixes in English and German words:

Table 2. Suffixes in English and German words (created by the author)

English	German	Examples	
-re	-er	theatre	Theater
-le	-el	noble	nobel
-que	-k	grotesque	grotesk
-c	-k	direct	direct

The spelling of given examples is a little bit different, to be exact, their suffixes are not spelled in the same way, however, their meanings are identical. Then there is a question why these pairs of words are called false friends. Endeavouring to clarify Seelbach's point of view the word orthography should be explained. It derives from Greek "orthos" (true or right) and "graphein" (to write)⁴ and represents the study of correct spelling according to established usage"⁵. Consequently these English German pairs may be considered as deceptive according to tricky suffixes in their languages.

Examples of phonetic false friends:

ինչ (Armenian what) *inch* (English)

是 (Mandarin is, yes) *sure* (English)

White House (English) *white house* (English)

They may overlap in form in two or more languages however the meaning is never equal, because they do not have any common linguistic ancestor. To provide it in Saussure's style, the pairs of words share "significant", but never the same "signifié". According to Chamizo-Domínguez (2008), the best definition of this problem is expressed by Hayward and Moulin (1984). They define it as follows:

"In the learner's mother tongue a particular signifiant is associated with a particular signifié. Once the signifiant appears, even in a foreign-language context, the above-mentioned association is so strong that the user automatically thinks of his mother-tongue signifié (in its totality)" (Hayward & Moulin, 1984:190).

Not being aware of these linguistic peculiarities, though being using them in common conversation, a listener may experience many confusions, misunderstandings or even great embarrassments. Problems of this type can also occur in different scopes of linguistic areas, for example English teaching, translating, lexicography or different levels of linguistics such as psycholinguistics or contrastive linguistics. There is no specific datum of discovery of this linguistic interference, as it might have been exploited since the very beginning of natural language use. The oldest works discussing this topic date back to the 17th century. Some kinds of allusions may be found even from the time before. Hand in

⁴ Orthography. (n.d.). Retrieved March 12, 2016, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/orthography>

⁵ Orthography. (n.d.) *American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition*. (2011). Retrieved March 12 2016 from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/orthography>

hand with globalization mentions of the phenomenon had been rising until the 20th century, when in 1928 French linguists Maxime Koessler and Jules Derocquigny coined the expression “Faux amis” (False friends) in their study *Les faux amis, ou, Les trahisons du vocabulaire anglais: conseils aux traducteurs* (False friends, or, The Treacheries of English Vocabulary: Advice to Translators) (Chamizo-Domínguez, 2008; Broz, 2008).

“False friends” is not the only term we can come across when coping with these deceptive words. Broz (2008) writes about, for example, “false equivalents”, “false cognates”⁶, “false pairs”, “treacherous words/twins” or even “belles infidels”, which literally signifies an “unfaithful good-looking woman”. Additionally we might chance upon expressions “misleading cognates” (Lankamp, 1988: 110), “homographic non-cognates” or “interlingual homographs” (Friel & Kennison, 2001). On the other hand, the primal term (“false friends”/ “faux amis”) is the most widely spread one. It became so eminent and well-known due to its high frequency of occurrence between scientists as well as ordinary language learners that this term has been lexicalised.

According to the terms listed above, it is quite obvious that a speaker deals with some kind of deceitful words. Like every good-looking, though faithless woman cannot be trusted, nor can these words have speaker’s confidence. Nowadays this phenomenon describes a linguistic interference of two words which in (at least) two or more languages look alike, yet their meaning differs a lot. Learners of L2 tend to unconsciously denote meaning of the word of L1 to the same or similarly looking word of L2. Errors and subsequently confusions arise. One can encounter a cognate in L2 which looks very similar to that of his/her native language hence it is only natural to attribute the identical meaning to that cognate. However, sometimes the connection of two words of L1 and L2 does not have to be as utterly obvious as one could say at first glance.

Figure 2 graphically illustrates the difference between true and false friends.

⁶“False cognates” is not a proper term for this phenomenon, since cognates are etymologically related words unlike false friends which not always share their etymological root (Klégr & Šaldová, 2006: 170). It follows that “false friends” is a hyponym for “false cognates”, since all false cognates are false friends, but not the other way round (Chamizo-Domínguez, 2008: 3).



Figure 2. True and false friends (Seelbach, 2002)

As a many-faced issue false friends may be evaluated from two perspectives – synchronic and diachronic (O’Neill & Casanovas, 1997).

Synchronic point of view

As mentioned above, false friends can be treated orthographically as well as phonetically. Apart from these two differentiations Chamizo-Dominguèz and Nerlich (2002) further distinguished into two there are two main categories including both graphical as well as phonetic false friends:

- Chance false friends
- Semantic false friends

1.5.1.1.1 Chance false friends:

This type of “faux amis” includes pairs of homonymic words that are considered akin, although they do not share any etymological or semantic origin. These pairs may be easily confused. The Czech word *mísa* (dish) could be mistaken for the Spanish equivalent *misa* (“holly mass”). There is neither a close nor a distant relation of these two similarly looking like words. Chamizo-Dominguèz and Nerlich (2002) investigated the word *burro*, which in Italian means “butter”, though when using *burro* in Spain the speaker would be referring to a “donkey/ass”. The same phonetic as well as graphic appearance may confuse more than one speaker; however, there is solely a coincidental relation between them.

Chance false friends may be demonstrated on many examples, one of them German *Auge* (“eye”), an analogue of Spanish *auge* (“culmination”) and there is even one more *auge*, possible to find in French (“basin, bowl”) (Chamizo-Dominguèz & Nerlich, 2002). This last example indicates that chance false friends may appear within more than two languages. The occurrence of false friends between related languages is much more common than between unrelated languages. However, even when coming across two far distant languages such as Sepedi (a language spoken in the South Africa) and French there may be found a chance false friend. The word *gare* means in Sepedi “in the centre”, whilst in French “station” (Gouws, Prinsloo and de Schryver, 2004).

In addition, chance false friends may appear as abbreviations and acronyms as well (Chamizo-Dominguèz & Nerlich, 2002). One could never expect that *DNA* is not the same as *dna*. In scientific and medical field *DNA* carries the meaning of “Deoxyribonucleic acid, a self-replicating material which is present in nearly all living organisms as the main constituent of chromosomes. It is the carrier of genetic information”.⁷ *Dna*, on the other hand, is an English slang used in messages on mobile phones or in online chats in order to save space – it’s an abbreviation of “does not answer” (Allan & Burridge, 2006).

1.5.1.1.2 Semantic false friends:

Cognitive linguistics regards semantic false friends as a cross-linguistic polysemy. That is the difference between chance and semantic false friends. While chance false friends are homonymic words, semantic are considered as polysemic words, with the difference that apart from polysemy, which signifies an existence of more meanings in a word, semantic false friends are considered inter-linguistically. They resemble in their graphical and/or phonetic forms. Another feature is that they have risen from common languages, namely Latin or Greek (when talking about European languages). It emerges that since they share a common etymological root, merely their meanings have diverged. Nevertheless such words remain related to each other by “...various figurative links” (Chamizo-Dominguèz & Nerlich, 2002); through metaphor as well as metonymy or euphemism.

Semantic false friends are subdivided into two groups and thus into full and partial false friends.

⁷ DNA. (n.d.) Retrieved March 12, 2016, from www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/dna

1.5.1.1.2.1 *Full false friends*

As from the title “full (also known as total, absolute) false friends” follows, these pairs of words are the strongest version of false friends. Their meanings vary so considerably that they are close to be called homonyms (Chamizo-Dominguèz & Nerlich; 2002). To demonstrate an example of full false friends, there can be the above mentioned *Gift* and *gift* repeated. In German *Gift* means “poison”, while in English the substantive “present”. Granieri (2008) describes for a present-day reader an amusing, but at that time of Berliner Blockade a provocative situation, when American government (in order to gain more credits in the rising Cold War) sent food packages to Germans with labels *Gift of the American People*. Of course, the word *gift* was depicted highly noticeably. It would not matter anywhere else however in Germany the association of the meaning of the word *gift* is different than in, for instance, America (Granieri, 2008).

Full false friends can be never translated by similar words from L2 to L1 and vice versa. An example of such type of pitfall is again demonstrated by Chamizo-Dominguèz (2008) in his publication. He mentions the English – Spanish pair of words *topic* and *tópico* (“platitude, commonplace”). Both words origin in Greek *tópos* (“place”) and from the time of its first occurrence it has changed a lot; the Spanish equivalent has undergone a process of pejoration unlike the English one, which has gone through an ameliorative process (Chamizo-Dominguèz, 2008).

1.5.1.1.2.2 *Partial false friends*

These words do not wholly overlap in meaning – their visual resemblance is not constantly misleading. In other words, partial false friends behave as false friends as well as true friends (Parkes & Cornell, 1989). It depends on the sense of words in the context. A clear example is demonstrated on words *Glas* and *glass* (Parkes & Cornell, 1989). The first mentioned is a German expression that can be indeed translated into English as “glass” respectively in the sense of “a hard, brittle substance, typically transparent or translucent, made by fusing sand with soda and lime and cooling rapidly. It is used to make windows, drinking containers, and other articles”.⁸ To make this definition even clearer, there are two translations from German to English language showing the cases, in which the words *Glas* and *glass* carry an identical meaning. In other words, it demonstrates that these words are true friends.

⁸ Glass. (n.d.) Retrieved March 12, 2016, from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/glass>

I möchte ein Glas Wein.

I would like to have a glass of wine.

Im Badezimmer haben wir Tür aus Glas.

In our bathroom we have a door made of glass.

However, a tricky situation may happen and thus when a German speaker talks about *Glas* in the sense of a “wide-mouthed cylindrical container made of glass...especially one used for storing food”.⁹ It means that the word *glass* cannot be used in the sense of *jar*, even if in German the very same word occurs in all cases. For instance:

Ich muss ein Glas Honig kaufen.

I have to buy a jar of honey.

In case the German sentence was translated into English using the word *glass*, it would cause an error called “partial false friends”. The expression *glass of honey* does not signify that the honey was stored in a jar; it evokes a feeling that the speaker mistook wine for honey and poured honey in a glass.

Ich muss ein Glas Honig kaufen.

≠

I have to buy a glass of honey.

The following Figure 3 illustrates the functioning of false friends. Where the words overlap in meaning there is the area of true friends (Parkes & Cornell, 1989).

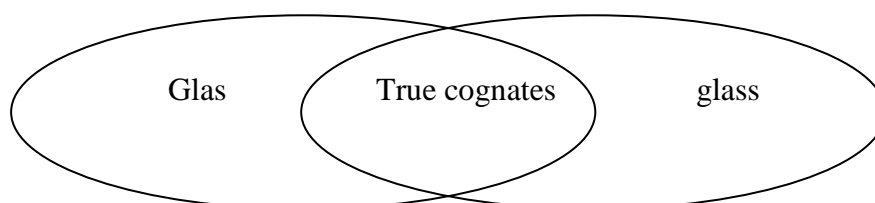


Figure 3. False and true cognates (created by the author)

In this study the classification of false friends by Chamizo-Dominguèz (2008) and by Chamizo-Dominguèz and Nerlich (2002) has been examined. They incorporate chance and semantic false friends, which further divide into full and partial. Veisberg (1996) distinguishes subsequent false friends:

1. Proper false friends
 - a. Absolute
 - b. Partial
 - c. Nuance differentiated word pairs
2. Accidental or occasional false friends
3. Pseudo false friends

⁹ Jar. (n.d.) Retrieved March 12, 2016, from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/jar>

The first group corresponds partly with Chamizo-Dominguèz, with a slight discrepancy that Veisberg adds so called “nuance differentiated word pairs”. The peculiarity of such words is that while their denotation is similar, they differ in features like register (the word may carry a positive meaning in L1 and a negative meaning in L2), semantic limitations (a term in L1 may be used as ordinary word in L2) or frequency of usage and collocational restrictions (Veisberg, 1996). Such word-pair is for instance the English – Czech *absolute-absolutní* (Ambrožová, 2014). In most cases this pair collocates with true friends, since *absolutní* carry the same meaning as *absolute* and may be used for translation of *absolute error – absolutní chyba*. On the contrary, there are expressions needed to be further determined and thus the true cognate cannot be used: *absolute silence – naprosté ticho; dead certainty – absolutní jistota* (Ambrožová, 2014).

The second group involving accidental/occasional false friends refers to pairs of collocations, which do not have any common etymology and comprise pairs by coincidence, since they “belong to a different logico-subject group” (Veisberg, 1996: 629). Basically, this group corresponds to “chance false friends” by Chamizo-Dominguèz.

Pseudo false friends comprise the third group. These word pairs are considered as new and very creative expressions that actually do not exist in the target language (TL). The resemblance of L1 and L2 causes that people use a word from their L1 in the L2. They believe that the word must exist in the TL as well. Czechs are able to use the word *narcoman* in English on the presumption that it is originally taken from English. These words are also made by adding suffixes or postfixes to their stem.

Pseudo-anglicisms are invented by learners of other languages than English, who assume such words to be loan words of English. Again, Czech speakers may replace the proper English expression *dinner-jacket* with *smoking*, since in Czech this type of dress for men looks graphically identical. On the contrary, Gstrein (2003) makes differences between pseudo-anglicisms and loan words saying that the first mentioned are words that exist in more languages, solely the meaning differs (see *smoking*) Wherein the latter ones are real invented words in speaker’s NL (see *narcoman*).

Henceforth, this study will focus on false friends separately. False friends between English and German as well as English and Czech will be examined. These two languages were chosen due to its close relation to English, since both German and Czech are together with English in the same language family and are spoken in Europe. In general, factors as

internet, tourism and globalization had caused a great influence of English on languages around the world (Nicholls, 2003). And thus more false friends may appear.

Firstly, false friends between English and German will be shown.

1.5.1.2 English – German false friends („falsche Freunde“)

Since English and German belong to the Indo-European language family and both to the Germanic sub-branch (Čermák, 2011), it is obvious that these two languages have a lot in common.

According to the web www.macmillandictionaries.com, “it has been estimated that around 35% of the non-technical words and the majority of the most common words in the English language are Germanic” (Nicholls, 2003) There are many true friends between these very close languages, i.e. words that are written in the same way and share one meaning. For instance word pairs such as: *Finger – finger, Hand – hand, Ring – ring*. Or they may slightly differ in spelling and pronunciation however the meaning retains, as in example *Bier – beer*. The reason why such expressions are equivalents is simple – English borrowed these words many centuries ago directly from German (Nicholls, 2003). On the other way, in the past both languages borrowed words from French; however, they did not follow the original use. For example *chef* which is a French word and means both “boss” as well as “cook who is in charge in the kitchen” (Clark, 2015). Another pairs according to Clark (2015) are:

Residenz (palace) – *residence*

Fantasie (imagination) – *fantasy*

Allee (avenue) – *alley*

Exposé (outline) – *expose*

Gstrein (2013) mentions 5 types of “falsche Freunde” and thus:

1. Rechtschreibungsbedingte

This group corresponds to the division by Seelbach (2002) who calls it “orthographische falsche Freunde”. These orthographical false friends have a slight difference in spelling and therefore are considered as causing confusions. English *barracks* loses one *r* in German equivalent *Baracke* and *theatre* changes into *Theater* (Gstrein, 2013; Seelbach, 2002).

2. Aussprachebedingte

Seelbach (2002) calls this group “phonologische falsche Freunde” (16). These words are treacherous solely in their way of pronouncing. Gstrein (2013) demonstrates this group on English *technique*, where the stress is laid on the second syllable while in German analogue *Technik* the stress is put on the first syllable (4). The mispronunciation may lead to weird complications in comprehension. According to McMaster (2004), when the stress in word *important* occurs on the first syllable instead of on the second, a German speaker could translate the sentence *Our manager is very important* as *Unser Manager ist sehr impotent* (51).

3. Bedeutungsbedingte

Finally, in this group are truly deceiving false friends which differs in their meaning. To this group may be assigned the earlier mentioned *gift* and *Gift*. Another example is English *shellfish*, which does not refer to the same sea animal as German *Schellfisch* (“cod”). The following list shows other instances of these false friends (Nicholls, 2003):

Table 3. German-English false friends (Nicholls, 2003)

German	English
<i>Gift</i>	<i>Poison</i>
<i>Kind</i>	<i>Child</i>
<i>Police</i>	<i>insurance policy</i>
<i>Taste</i>	<i>button or key (on a machine)</i>
<i>Wand</i>	<i>Wall</i>
<i>Mist</i>	<i>dung, manure, or nonsense, rubbish</i>
<i>Brand</i>	<i>Fire</i>
<i>Rock</i>	<i>Skirt</i>
<i>Ratio</i>	<i>Mason</i>
<i>List</i>	<i>trick, ruse or cunning, artfulness</i>

The classical division of false friends into full and partial, as was explained earlier, is used even in the work by Parkes and Cornell (1989). Table 4 provides a short list of their examples of false friends between German and English:

Table 4. German-English false friends (Parkes and Cornell, 1989)

<i>Annonce</i> (advert)	<i>announcement</i>
<i>Faul</i> (lazy)	<i>foul</i>
<i>Hochschule</i> (university)	<i>high school</i>
<i>Hose</i> (trousers)	<i>hose</i>
<i>Karte</i> (map)	<i>card</i>
<i>Konsequent</i> (persistent)	<i>consequent</i>
<i>Kritik</i> (criticism)	<i>critic</i>
<i>Mappe</i> (folder)	<i>map</i>
<i>Marke</i> (stamp)	<i>mark</i>
<i>Mist</i> (dung)	<i>mist</i>
<i>Sympathisch</i> (likeable)	<i>sympathetic</i>
<i>Warenhaus</i> (shopping mall)	<i>warehous</i>

4. Pseudoanglizismen

Due to all globalization anglicisms are very common. It can happen that a speaker does not suppose there could appear so called “Pseudoanglizismen” as well. This term describes invented English words. A sufficient example may be demonstrated on the word pair *Handy*, which in German denotes a “mobile phone” and *handy* which in opposite carries the meaning of *useful*. Other pseudo-anglicisms are for instance German words *Dressman*, which describes a male model (Nicholls, 2003), or *Mobbing* (“bullying/harassment”). *Dressman* looks like an English compound while the suffix *-ing* in *Mobbing* evokes a feeling of an English word.

5. Mehrfache falsche freunde

“Mehrfache” false friends have multiple mistake focus.

Another linguistic peculiarity for speakers and translators are compound words (Nicholls, 2003). One has to be aware of the impossibility to translate such words literally. Nicholls (2003) demonstrate this thought in the Table 5.

Table 5. German compound words (Nicholls, 2003)

<i>Gottvater</i> (God + Vater)	<i>God the Father</i> , not <i>godfather</i>
<i>Selbstbewußt</i> (self + aware)	<i>self-confident</i> , not <i>self-aware</i>
<i>Alltaglich</i> (all + daily)	<i>everyday</i> or <i>commonplace</i> , not <i>all day</i>
<i>Nachdenken</i> (after + thought)	<i>thought</i> or <i>reflection</i> , not <i>afterthought</i>
<i>Mittelalterlich</i> (middle + aged)	<i>medieval</i> , not <i>middle-aged</i>
<i>Warenhaus</i> (wares + house)	<i>department store</i> , not <i>warehouse</i>
<i>Hochschule</i> (high + school)	<i>college</i> or <i>university</i> , not <i>high school</i>
<i>Ruckseite</i> (back + side)	<i>reverse</i> or <i>verso</i> , not <i>backside</i>
<i>Ausländisch</i> (out + land + ish)	<i>foreign</i> or <i>from abroad</i> , not <i>outlandish</i>
<i>Überall</i> (over + all)	<i>everywhere</i> , not <i>overall</i>

In addition, Seelbach (2002) mentions another interesting point of view, namely “textlinguistische” false friends (26). They include, for example, the phrase *there is* which would be literally translated into German as “da ist”. However, in some cases this phrase must be translated as “es gibt”.

As apparent from all the facts described above, not solely German native speakers may be puzzled when learning English, but also English learners of German may be confused when dealing with such plays of words. One has to pay attention carefully to determiners in German language. Indeed, *die See* is translated as “sea”; however, when using masculine determiner *der See* the meaning of this word changes and the speaker refers to “lake” instead.

1.5.1.3 English – Czech false friends (“zrádná slova”)

In Czech language one can come across words which resemble in their form, but differ in their meaning. According to Hladký (1990), these words are mainly international with origin in a third language - one of the classic ones (Greek, Latin), and which in the course of time changed their meanings as other languages adopted them (5). It is examined

on the following example: *sympathia*, originally from Greek words *together* (“spolu”) and *feelings* (“cítění”) came into Latin as *favour, liking*. English took this meaning and exaggerated the sense of “being there for someone”, *commiseration* (“soucítění”). On the other hand, Czech used the Latin *favour, liking* to express “affection to someone” (“náklonost”) (Hladký, 1990). As in other languages the same division of false friends is applied in Czech as well. There may be found:

1. Full false friends

These word-pairs are semantically absolutely dissimilar. Czech speakers have to be careful when translating words such as *mixer, actual* or *concurrency* into Czech. It cannot be associated with seemingly identical words *mixér, aktuální* and *konkurence*, even if due to their resemblance speakers tend to do so. These equivalents carry different meanings, namely *blender, topical* and *competition* (Hladký, 1990; Stašková, 2001). Some words may be graphically similar as for instance Czech *house*¹⁰ (gosling) and English *house* (“dům”). It can also happen that a Czech student of English translates the sentence *Dej to na polici* as *Put it on the police*, since *shelf* is in Czech *police* (and English *police* is “policie”). Such mistakes lead to funny situations as well as feelings of humiliation.

2. Partial false friends

In the Czech language there are plenty of partial false friends; i.e. word pairs which in some case may overlap in meaning. Hladký (1990) mentions *precise*, which indeed may be translated as *precizní*, however more frequently it is used in the sense of *přesný* (accurate) and *přesně* (exactly) (5). Land (2011) comments on plenty of partial false friends – she explains the meaning of words such as *action, author, control, document, function, programme, text* ...and many others (2, 15, 36, 46, 55, 74, 95). Let’s have a closer look at several of them:

Action/akce

It could seem as these two words have a similar meaning. *Action* may be translated as “akce” only when talking about a battle, fight or when a film director shouts “*Lights, camera, action*”. However, in many cases *akce* must be translated as “campaign, event, operation or sale” (Land, 2011: 2).

¹⁰ The example *house* retrieved from: <http://www.helpforenglish.cz/article/2005121901-false-friends>

Control/kontrola

English *control* share the same meaning with the Czech “kontrola” when talking about a power or a place where something is being *controlled/checked* and as a verb *to administrate*. In other cases it is necessary to substitute the Czech *kontrola* for English *audit/check-up//inspection/inspector* (Land, 2011: 36).

Text/text

Even in an apparently easy translation of a text there may occur confusion. *Text* certainly means “text”, but solely when mentioning a writing that may be read (part of a book or a magazine). On the contrary, it cannot be said *text of a song* – in this case it is necessary to say *words/lyrics of a song* (Land, 2011: 95).

Partial false friends are highly deceptive and the speaker should be well informed about the possibility of using certain words in certain situations.

3. Anglicisms

Same as in German, there are words looking as being loaned from English to Czech language. The already mentioned *narcoman* (drug-addicted) exists in Czech as well. *Harmonogram* (“schedule”) and *gratulant* (“well-wisher”) sounds English; however they may not be found in English language (Hladký, 1990).

4. Expressions borrowed from English

Finally, this immense group of false friends includes English loan-words, which gained a new meaning in Czech. Hladký (1990) presents examples such as *džem* (“jam”), *fotbal* (“football”) or *hendikep* (“handicap”) (5). *Džem* may be translated either as *jam* or *marmalade*, while English *jam* means in Czech *dopravní zácpa* (“traffic jam”) (Hladký, 1990: 40). According to the explanation of partial false friends, these treacherous loan-words could be considered as a part of partial false friends.

More examples of Czech false friends will be further discussed in the practical part. On the following pages this study will aim at the problem of false friends from the diachronic point of view.

1.5.2 Diachronic point of view of false friends

Old English (OE), 5th – 11th century

England has been inhabited for thousands and thousands of years. However, English language has not been spoken in this land for such long time. According to Petrlíková (2009), it may be around 1500 years. After the Paleolithic and the Neolithic humans the Celts settled here along with Celtic as the first of Indo-European language. During the Teutonic invasion Germanic tribes came to the islands in approximately the middle of the 5th century. Not too long after the conquest made by the Jutes, Angles and Saxon, the Roman occupation commenced. Christian missionaries brought Latin to England and according to Jackson and Amvela (2007), it is considered as the beginning of literary age (27). The Vikings cannot be excluded from this brief history of English language. Also word-loans of the Old Norse may be found in English, such as: *birth, egg, ugly, to crave, get ...* (Petrlíková, 2009). The first manuscript of this time period, which dates back to the 5-6 century AD, was written in the runic alphabet.

Middle English (ME), 11th – 15th century

Two centuries after Scandinavians Normans commenced the famous Norman Conquest of England which culminated in the battle of Hastings in 1066, when William, the duke of Normandy, succeeded. England became a part under the French ascendance and it had a salient impact on English language since politicians and royals, essentially everyone in the upper classes and even in the lower as well, spoke French as the official language. English was obscured. It was not until the 15th century when French disappeared as a result of the Hundred Years' War and the Black Death. Literacy had been rising, universities were established (Cambridge, Oxford). Scholars wrote in English, French and Latin. In the 15th century the printing press was introduced to English people (Petrlíková, 2009).

Early Modern English (EMoE) 16th – 19th

Self-consciousness and pride of both humans and their language was significant. In this time period England expired over the world, overseas trade was running well and English required enriching of its vocabulary. In the 16th century English was enlarged by thousands of new words taken from Latin, French, Greek, Spanish and Italian in order to

be able to express all the new concepts that were invented in Europe and for which English language was not rich enough. Two centuries later edification of the language was of a great importance. Linguists were endeavouring to standardize English and to set basic and steady rules. First dictionaries and books of grammar were printed. To sum it up, English was a “matter of popular interest” and the most salient influences on the development of English were William Shakespeare and *King James Bible* written in 1611 (Petrlíková, 2009; Jackson & Amvela, 2007).

Modern English (MoE), 19th – to date

The major part in this last process, which has been forming since the 1800 century, takes the interest in discoveries related to, for instance, science or technology. The specialized vocabulary has been constantly growing together with every new technique or a discovery. Together with the society the language changes as well. It cannot be said it is improving or deteriorating. It is simply changing (Crystal, 2006; Jackson & Amvela, 2007).

As can be seen, English language had not an easy way throughout all the centuries to gain its form as it is known today. So many words have come into English, mainly from so called “mother tongue” Latin (O’Neill & Casanovas, 1997), from French and approximately 50 other languages. To put it in figures, about 900 words commenced their usage between the 9th – 19th centuries; out of them solely 450 were introduced to the common speech. Between the 11th and the 14th century about 10 000 new words made their way to English. In the Renaissance period some about 12 000 words were borrowed from other languages. In total it makes unbelievable 22 000 – 25 000 of new words transferred to English between the 11th – 18th century (O’Neill & Casanovas, 1997). Moreover, O’Neill and Casanovas (1997) further states that out of these numbers 75% are still in common use (106). These are enormous numbers, which show the openness and variability of languages in general. It leads to the fact that no language is stable. It can be compared to a living organism which is constantly altered. Words have undergone a long way full of changes; they gained new meanings (also through processes of specialization and generalization) or, on the contrary, returned to their original meanings (O’Neill & Casanovas, 1997). Due to all these processes there is an uncountable amount of false friends.

These peculiar words may be found even between OE and ME even though the language of OE varies a lot - it looks rather exotic to a present-day reader. It is caused mainly by its distinctive spelling, unfamiliar vocabulary containing mainly short (one syllable) words, sundry grammar and consonants in combinations such as *gn*, *lk*, *kn* or *wr*. Furthermore, it is due to its unusual pronunciation of consonant clusters and symbols, which were unknown for Latin alphabet (Crystal, 2002; Petrlíková, 2009). As an example of a false friend in OE and ME may be the word *lewd* mentioned. *Lewd* in OE meant “secular”, the opposite of “ordained”. To ME this word came already with meaning of “unlearned”, however no sexual down tone is meant (Black..., 2009). Crystal (2006) goes even further and clarifies that *lewd* maintains a false friend even for the present-day reader, since from “unlearned” in ME it has moved to the meaning of “crude and offensive in a sexual way” (OED), which describes someone who is sexual in an abusive way (153). O’Neill and Casanovas (1997) call these words which look identically through the centuries but carry different meanings in different time periods and for this reason are confusable for readers, as 2nd degree false friends. As another example of 2nd degree false friend they mention the word *nice* (107). Jane Austen used this word in her letter to her friend Tom Lefroy: “*You scold me so much in the nice long letter which I have this moment received from you, that I am almost afraid to tell you how Irish friend and I behaved*” (Austen & Jones, 2004: 3). In Oxford Dictionary we can find that *nice* originated in ME and had the sense of “stupid”, “ignorant”, then “coy”, “reserved”, which led to “fastidious”, “scrupulous”, later “fine”, “subtle” and finally, today’s “pleasant”, “good-natured”¹¹. O’Neill and Casanovas (1997) state that the sense of *nice* used by Austen meant “foolishly particular” (108).

Such false friends do not have to be solely from the literal pieces. Let’s consider *Goths*¹² – members of Germanic tribes, originally from the south Scandinavia. On the contrary, today Goths exist as well, however it indicates fans of a musical genre who wear black clothes and black heavy make-up on their eyes (Crystal, 2003).

This study will further aim at the EMoE and William Shakespeare who had significantly enriched the English lexicon. Examples of false friends used in his works, which, according to Crystal (2006), separate the EMoE from the MoE, will be discussed (153).

¹¹ Nice. (n.d.) Retrieved March 12, 2016, from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/nice>

¹² In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Goth>

Shakespearean language

In the time of William Shakespeare, i.e. in the 16th century, the vocabulary of English language was expanding and enriching with new words and new meanings. It was common that authors assigned brand new meanings to already known words and put them in new ways (Crystal, 2006). Consequently the words were becoming greatly polysemous. Shakespeare is known for his innovative use of language and it is utterly unimaginable to think all words added to English by him could be counted. It can be neither proved whether his neologisms were genuinely used for the first time by Shakespeare nor if the expressions had been already used by his ancestors. In Crystal's opinion these so called *Williamisms* might had been connected to the earlier Elizabethan English and that Shakespeare might had heard them before or also might had not and coined them unaware (Crystal, 1998). One way or another, even if he did not invent the words, the creative way of using them makes William Shakespeare to be "the uncrowned king of word creation", since in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) the overwhelming majority of "first recorded instances" of words is attributed to him (Crystal, 2006: 140). Together with assigning new meanings confusions occur. And in that case we talk about false friends.

Kaasinen (2012) examined in her thesis the word *sad* and its usage in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* in sense of obsolete "serious", "steady" as well as current "feeling sorrow" or "regret" (50). White (2012) inquires into the derivation *sadness* and refers to the OED where the original senses of this noun are: "fullness", "constancy", "steadfastness", "seriousness" (288) and demonstrates it on the extract of *Hamlet* when Polonius describes Hamlet as "falling into sadness" (289) and on phrase of *As You Like It* "in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness" (289). In these two cases *sadness* is used in the sense of "seriousness". *Sadness* in the meaning of "sorrow" appeared in the 16th century and in the mid of the century both variants were possible to use (White, 2012), which is demonstrated in *The Twelfth Night*:

Olivia: Smil'st thou? I sent for thee upon a *sad* occasion.

Malvolio: *Sad*, lady? I could be *sad*; this does make some obstruction in the blood, this cross-gartering – but what of that? If it please the eye of one, it is with me as the very true sonnet is: 'Please one and please all'. (TN 3.4.18-22)¹³

¹³ Extract retrieved from: <http://www.shakespeareswords.com/Plays.aspx?Ac=3&SC=4&IdPlay=21#188309>

Kaasinen (2012) states that in Olivia’s speech the word *sad* means “serious”. In case a present-day reader is not aware of this obsolete meaning he/she may think Olivia is talking about an occasion full of sorrow. On the other hand, Malvolio’s reply is in the sense of “unhappy”. This demonstrates the tricky play of words which Shakespeare used to love.

White (2012) further explains Shakespeare’s way of creating new senses to already existing words such as *amazement* that Spenser used in his works in the sense of “extreme fear”, “horror” (Johnson, 1824) and that Shakespeare understood as “being in a maze”, therefore he used this word in *Hamlet* as follows (290):

GHOST

Do not forget. This visitation
 Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
 But look, *amazement* on thy mother sits.
 O, step between her and her fighting soul!
 Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works.
 Speak to her, Hamlet. (Hamlet, III. iv. 111-116.1)¹⁴

The ghost in this part of play describes feelings of Hamlet’s mother rather as *bewilderment* and *perplexity* than *astonishment* as a present-day reader could suppose (D. Crystal & B. Crystal, 2008; White, 2012).

To look closer at the noun *amazement* in Shakespeare’s plays, Crystal’s glossary (Table 6) will assist to get organised.

Table 6. Shakespeare’s glossary: *amazement* (D. Crystal & B. Crystal, 2008)

<u>amazement (n.)</u>	1	alarm, apprehension, fear
<u>amazement (n.)</u>	2	bewilderment, perplexity, distraction
<u>amazement (n.)</u>	3	overwhelming wonder

In the example above taken from *Hamlet*, the meaning 2 (in the Table 6) was examined. Subsequently, solely meaning 1 will be demonstrated, since “overwhelming wonder” is the sense we know and operate with today. In the play *Pericles* the main

¹⁴ Extract retrieved from: <http://www.shakespeareswords.com/Plays.aspx?Ac=3&SC=4&IdPlay=2#118177>

character says: “*Amazement shall drive courage from the state*” (Per.I.ii.26). In this case the author desired to express not “bewilderment”, but “fear” or “apprehension”.

Not solely the noun, but also the verb *amaze* is included in the Shakespeare’s glossary. As stated in the Table 7, Crystal (2008) describes the main senses of *amaze* with first one being the current meaning and three other that Shakespeare used in his works.

Table 7. Shakespeare’s glossary (D. Crystal & B. Crystal, 2008)

<u>amaze (n.)</u>	amazement, extreme astonishment	
<u>amaze (v.)</u>	1	confuse, perplex, bewilder
<u>amaze (v.)</u>	2	alarm, dismay, scare
<u>amaze (v.)</u>	3	appal, overwhelm, terrify

In *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* Hermia is in the forest amazed in the sense of being confused: “*I am amazed at your passionate words*” (III.ii.221), “*I am amazed, and know not what to say*” (III.ii.345) (White, 2012: 290). Meaning 2 may be demonstrated on example of the play *Henry IV.*, when Prince Hal advises the king to advance in the battle: “*I beseech your majesty, make up, Lest your retirement do amaze your friends*” (1H4 V.iv.4)¹⁵.

In *Measure for Measure* Escalus is more likely appalled than astounded when saying: “*My lord, I am more amazed at his dishonour, than at the strangeness of it*” (MM V.i.378.1)¹⁶.

Indeed, as seen from the examples above, Shakespeare might had made confusions even to his contemporaries. On the other hand, people in the 16th century were probably used to the polysemous feature of words and might had been aware of all possible meanings. However, it may be tough for a today’s reader not to get in *amazement* but stay clear about what Shakespeare wanted to say. Latter definition of *amazement* from the 17th century used by Milton is in the sense of “extreme dejection” (Johnson, 1824).

Not solely these words are the deceptive ones which can be found in Shakespeare’s plays. White (2012) concerns himself with the affective words. He explains that after the Romantic period and Freud’s theories people see emotions associated with the state of

¹⁵ Quotation retrieved from: <http://www.shakespearewords.com/Plays.aspx?Ac=5&SC=4&IdPlay=33#236090>

¹⁶ Quotation retrieved from: <http://www.shakespearewords.com/Plays.aspx?Ac=5&SC=1&IdPlay=27#211922>

mind rather than of body. It is also connected to the invention of psychiatry (287). Further, according to White (2012), “most if not all of words used by Shakespeare to describe states of mood and emotions are false friends in carrying meanings” (288). As example he points at the word *upset*, which in Elizabethan time meant “erected” or “anxious” (“careful” or “attentive”).

It might seem that Shakespeare has been too difficult and tricky to read. Readers would totally lose their courage if they knew there were about 50 000 words in all his plays, which differ even in the slightest way with the MoE (Crystal, 2003). Crystal squares this information by explaining that in total there are about 1 000 000 words in Shakespeare’s plays. Moreover, truly different words represents 20 000 of the given amount and solely 3000 of them may cause troubles to a reader. Eventually, from the initial number solely 1 000 words remain as the difficult ones, to which pertain words that reader does not know and has to look them up in a glossary, and deceptive words that are discussed in this study – false friends (Crystal, 2003).

However, when reading any of works of the 16th century, whether Shakespeare or Milton or others, one has to be aware of the semantic puns in which one single word may be used in different senses by the very same author in the very same paper. Then it cannot happen, when reading about Hamlet sending Ophelia to the *nunnery*, that the reader will assume her going to a *convent*. He/she will know that Shakespeare meant a *brothel* (O’Neill & Casanovas, 1997).

2 ANALYSIS

2.1 METHODS

This chapter will cover details of the research questions, which were created in order to demonstrate people's awareness of Czech-English false friends. On the following lines its assignment, progress as well as results will be conceived.

To ascertain detailed information about respondents, twelve personal questions had to be answered at the commencement of the survey. The initial information needed was the current stay of respondents, whether they were living in the Czech Republic or abroad. Subsequently the concern focused on their age and occupation or studies. Further the investigation aimed at his/her length and depth of the interest in English language and related experience with working abroad or participation in language courses as well as other programmes improving foreign language skills. Last but not least, the question involving the frequency of English language usage was asked.

For the second part ten questionnaire sentences were invented, including one or two word-pairs consisting of a false friend and its correct equivalent. Respondents had to choose which of these words fits into the sentence. The Czech-English false friends used in the questionnaire were selected randomly, following the dictionary of false friends *Zrádná slova v angličtině* (Hladký, 1990). All types of these somewhat treacherous words were used in the exercise.

The anonymous research questions were put online on the server www.vyplnto.cz in March 2016. Students across the West Bohemian University, Charles University and the University of Economics in Prague as well as working people were asked to complete it. In total 44 respondents filled out the questionnaire and were further divided into four categories according to their studying or working status and their current stay. The categories are Students of English, Students in general, People working in the Czech Republic and People working abroad. For the reason of receiving as spontaneous reactions as possible respondents were not told what linguistic peculiarity they were dealing with.

To sum it up an online questionnaire was invented which aimed at people speaking English language. This research included two parts, the initial one concerning personal data and the second one comprised of an exercise, which consisted of ten sentences with false friends.

In the following chapter the results of the research and commentaries made on will be discussed.

2.2 RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES

In this chapter there will be demonstrated information about the respondents within each category. The results of exercise will be provided. All the amassed data will be examined successively, according to the categories. Firstly, answers of the students will be discussed. The initial category being examined will be Students of English followed by Students in general. Secondly, this study will focus on people from the working spheres, commencing with those living in the Czech Republic, subsequently Czech people living in England and Germany will be aimed at.

Such various categories were chosen on purpose in order to demonstrate how Czech people from various spheres and different countries are dealing with the linguistic issue of false friends. Since the queries are anonymous it cannot be surely said who exactly has completed them and where they are from; the only thing that is obvious is that there are 10 Students of English, 11 Students in general, 13 People working in the Czech Republic and 11 People working abroad, mainly in the United Kingdom.

2.2.1 Students of English

Students from the English department at the Faculty of Education, West Bohemian University were asked to fill it in. Not so many were interested in completing the questionnaire - there are ten students in this category. The youngest respondent was 21 years old on the other hand the oldest one was 36 years old. With such divergence the mean age may be considered as 23.6 with standard deviation 4.4. A grammar school attended 80 % of them. The rest graduated at a secondary school. For all of respondents English was part of their graduation exam.

They have been learning English for the minimum of 12 years, maximum was 26. The average length is then 13 years. The interesting fact is that everyone in this particular category had already participated in a language course in the Czech Republic, in the United Kingdom, USA or Canada or had worked abroad before they started university. To be precise, 70 % experienced English language when living in an English speaking country. Two students took the advantage to take part in Erasmus Exchange Programme during their studies at university.

Another interesting circumstance is their working background – 70 % of interviewees have been already working as tutors of English. The visible concern might be considered as greatly positive, since these students are studying to become teachers.

The success rate in the exercise was 95%. For the reason this group of students use English every day and study this language into depth such results were expected. Solely three word-pairs made difficulties to them and thus: *sympathetic / likeable*, *moderators / anchormen*, *abstinent / abstainer*. The other words in pairs were chosen correctly. Due to such attainment the focus will aim at those trouble making pairs.

1. *Sympathetic / likeable*

According to the Graph 1 it is obvious there was one person who selected *sympathetic* instead of *likeable*.

2. *Moderators / anchormen*

This particular case is similar to the previous one. Solely one person answered *moderators*. There are two conceivable options – the student is not aware of meaning of the word anchorman and thought *moderators* is the correct answer or he was inattentive when completing the questionnaire. One way or another the success rate in this pair was 90%.

3. *Abstinent / abstainer*

The confusion in the word-pair *abstinent/abstainer* was significant. The whole half of the group chose the wrong answer. The sentence including this *false friend* made definitely most difficulties for students of English.

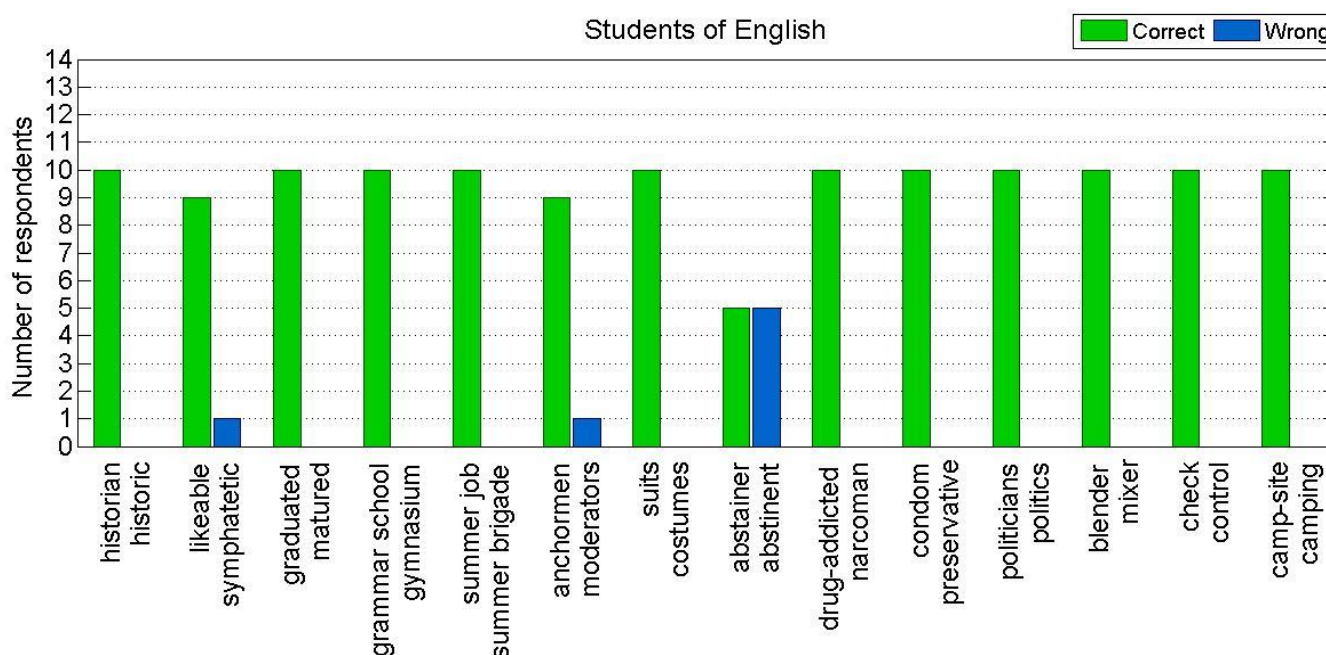


Figure 4: The success rate of the exercise in the category *Students of English*.

2.2.2 Students in general

This group includes eleven students who do not study English as their main subject. The rank of universities varies a lot. There are people from the Pedagogical Faculty studying social care, psychology and visual art as well as from other faculties and departments, studying medicine, economics, information technology, law, international politics and diplomacy, then cybernetics and control engineering.

The length of their studies of English varies from minimum of 5 to maximum of 18 years – this makes an average of 12 years for the group. Eight students attended a grammar school, nine of them graduated of English. Their experience with English in language courses in the Czech Republic or abroad is not copious. Solely four students had an endeavour to improve their language abilities out of school schedule. One student partook in an English course in the city of Pilsen, another one in ISLS (The International Summer School) - both these went to study abroad as well via Erasmus Exchange Programme. The two remaining students attended language courses; one in the Czech Republic, the other one in the United Kingdom.

These students mainly use English every week; three of them are dealing with English every day. Another two people claim they appear to talk in English on every-month basis and one person uses English occasionally.

Related to the working background, four people do work in their free time. There were answers such as baby-sitting (2x), waitress and a job in the field of biomechanical simulation.

The age of these people is 19, 21, 22 (4x), 23 (3x) and 24 (2x).

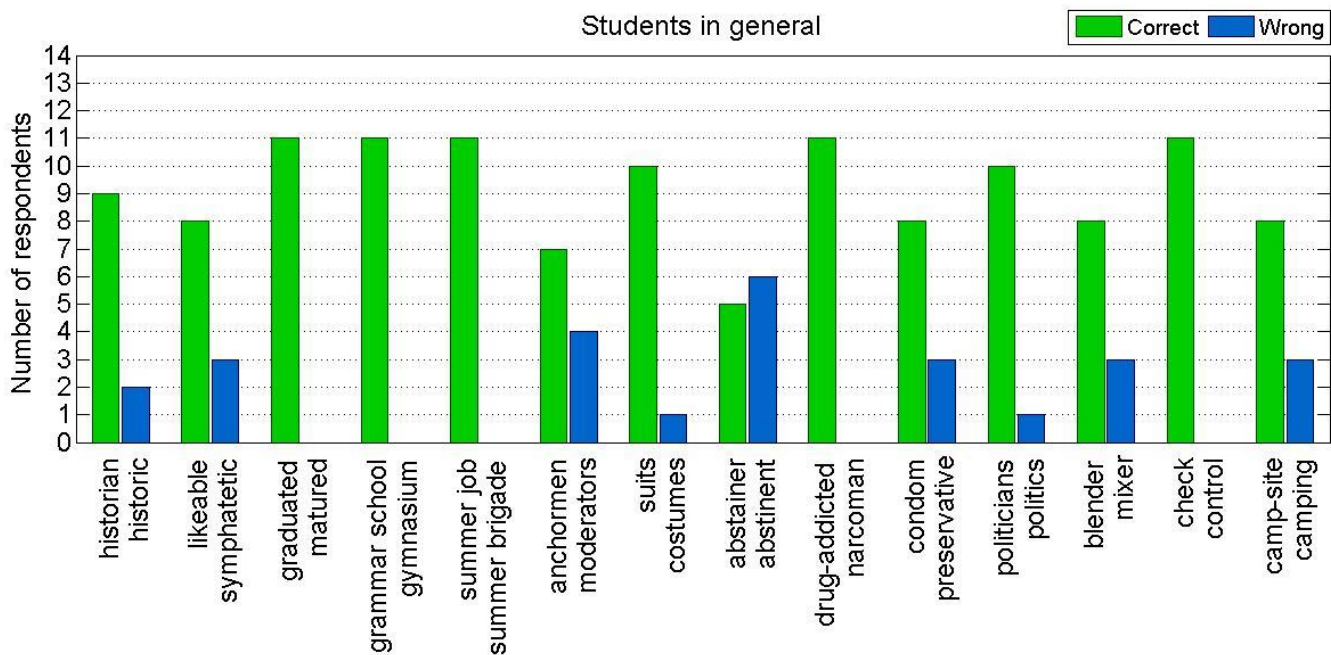


Figure 5: The success rate of the exercise in the category *Students in general*

Results of the exercise are more reverse than in the foregoing category. As can be seen in Figure 5, four word pairs are completed for 100%. The remaining pairs have at least one wrong answer.

Taking into consideration both categories of students, attention must be paid to five word pairs which are fulfilled devoid of making any mistake. These pairs are: *graduated / matured*, *grammar school / gymnasium*, *summer job / summer brigade*, *narcoman / drug-addicted* and finally, *control / check*. For the reason students have successfully chosen the right option these pairs may be considered as familiar ones. It is possible these words are encountered by speakers in everyday life speech. It may be considered as surprising that all of students are aware of the Anglicism *narcoman*. The choice *to check* (instead of *to control*) could be contemplated as an undemanding one, since Czech (mainly young) people use the verb *to check* as “zčeknout” in their ordinary speech. When listening to youth, the noun *job* can be frequently heard in Czech language as well. It is noticeable that English equivalents have been substituting the Czech words in the common speech.

On the other hand, the most substantial problem for both categories was the word-pair *abstinent/abstainer*. In the Czech language there exist the word *abstinent* which is the translation of English *abstainer* nonetheless as apparent from the questionnaire, for nearly half of all responded students this translation is not known and they assume *abstinent* as English origin.

2.2.3 People working in the Czech Republic

This category occupies with the working class in the Czech Republic. In total thirteen people at the age from 22 to 57 responded. Major half of them (7) studied at a grammar school and six of them attended a secondary school. Solely six people graduated in English. The length of being interested in English language itself varies from 5-30 years. The average makes then 13 years.

The question which is concerned with participation in a language course or studying / working abroad was solely eight times answered positively. Seven respondents did attend a language school with two of them who in addition worked abroad (UK, USA) and took part in Erasmus Exchange Programme. One person partook in an internship.

The use of English is for eight respondents on a daily basis, five people require English every week and thus in working sectors such as: engineering, wearable electronics and smart textiles, car industry, customer service, sales support, tourism, culture, programming, finance, human resources or accountancy.

Related to the exercise the most problematic word-pair was *abstinent/abstainer* in a ratio of 8:5 and *moderators / anchormen* in a ratio 6:7. These two false friends were the most difficult for this category. In comparison to the earlier discussed categories all of them share one significant feature – for all three categories was the most perplexing word *abstinent*. There is constantly the superiority in number of people who has chosen *abstinent* instead of *abstainer* in the categories Students in general and People working in the Czech Republic. In the category of Students of English there was one half who opted for the correct word and another half who was wrong in their meaning. On the other hand, there were five word pairs which did not cause any troubles in the category of People working in the Czech Republic as apparent in Figure 6.

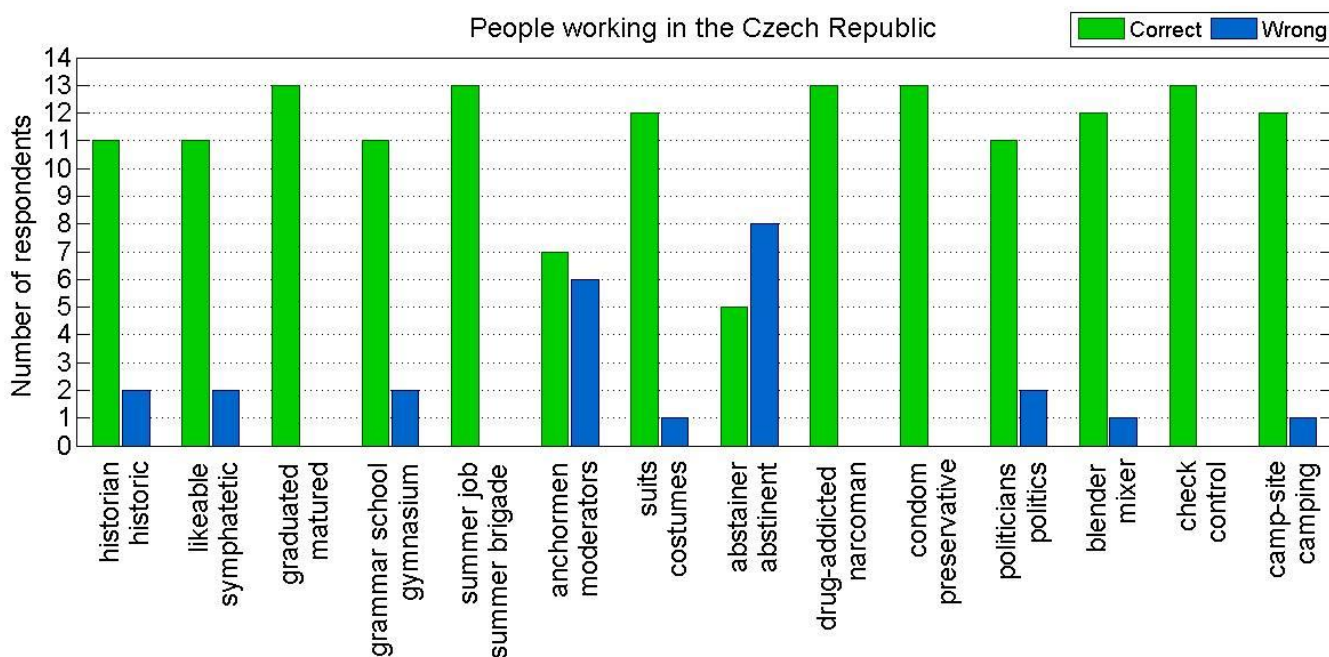


Figure 6: The success rate of the exercise in the category *People working in the Czech Republic*

2.2.4 People working abroad

This category concerns eleven Czech people who moved abroad, mainly to the United Kingdom (8), three respondents to Germany however their need of English language is on every-day basis. Solely two respondents living in Germany use English every week. The age varies from 21 to 48. This divergence leads to the mean age of 29 with standard deviation 8.

The shortest length of studying English represents 2 months, on the opposite the most extensive is 14 years. Contrary to other categories respondents in this particular one have learnt English for the shortest time. It is an interesting fact when we consider that Czech people who work abroad do not have interest in English language for an extensive time. Prior to moving to England or Germany solely three of them learnt English through Erasmus Exchange Programme (2) and Work & Travel USA (1). The others experienced native English speakers after moving abroad.

As for their level of education, the vast majority of respondents in this category attended a secondary school and two of them attended a grammar school. Solely for three people English was a part of their graduation exam. These respondents work in the spheres of electronics, hospitality, transport, logistics, project management and domestic service.

The most interesting fact is that there cannot be found any word-pair in the exercise filled in with the 100 % success rate. There was constantly at least one wrong answer. For the first time, the most problematic pair was definitely *camping / camp-site*. Seven people chose *camping*. The second most tricky false friend was *abstinent* and *moderator*. These words were chosen by five people out of eleven. In contrary two word pairs were resistant to false friends and thus *summer job / summer brigade* and *politicians / politics*. In these two cases with the highest rate of success (91%) ten respondents opted for *summer job* and *politicians*. The reason of the low success rate – solely 74 % - may be assigned to the years of experience with English. This could be thought to be the most genuine reason why the results of the exercise are not as successful as in other categories. Another fact leading to the stillborn results is that the vast majority of respondents in this category neither graduated in English nor participated in a language course. It may be assigned as a lack of interest.

Even if the respondents are currently living in the English speaking world they are not aware of false friends between Czech and English language. That may cause them confusions in the real life when, for example, telling a native English speaker that *they watch TV news and there was a symphatetic moderator talking about a narcoman*. Details may be seen in Figure 7.

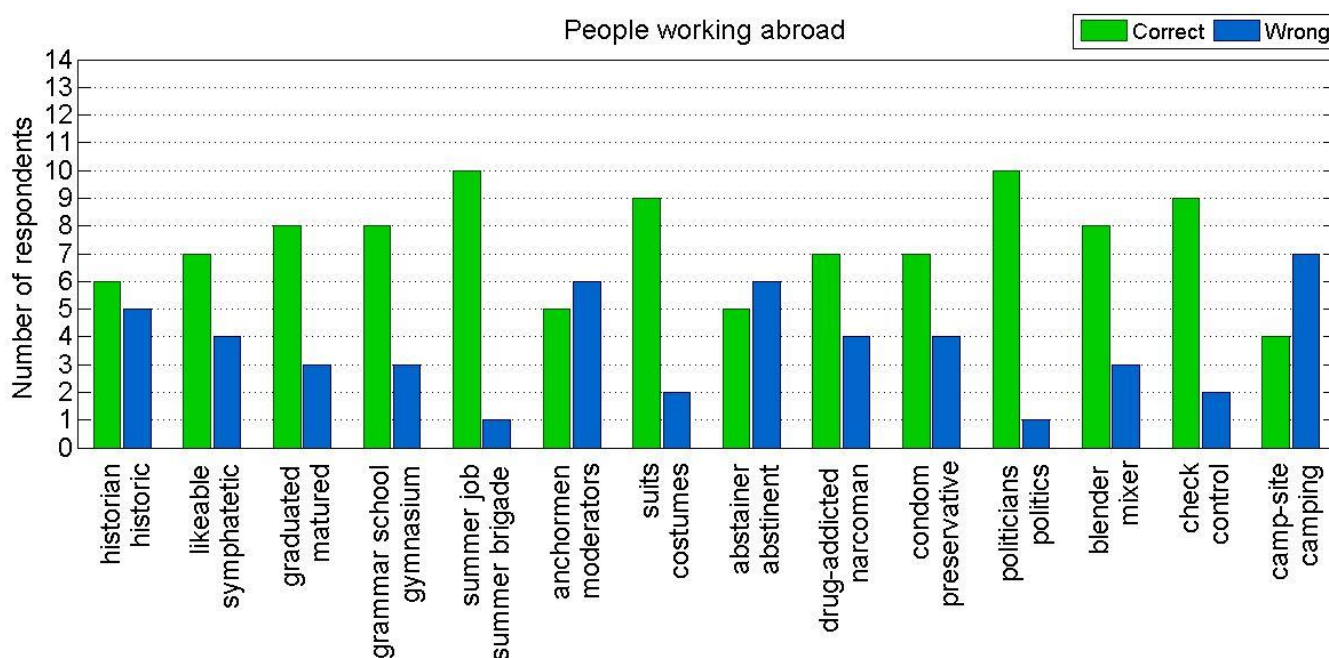


Figure 7: The success rate of the exercise in the category *People working abroad*

In comparison to People working in the Czech Republic this category was less successful. There were more mistakes in the exercise. It could result from the length of learning English, which is significantly diverse between these two categories. On the average, people who work in the Czech Republic have been learning English for thirteen years while respondents in the category of People working abroad have been learning English solely for five years, which is the shortest time in comparison to all categories. The participation in a language course or another English studying programme is greatly diverse. People who work in their home country were more interested in studying English in their free time.

Another interesting difference is the type of school respondents from these two categories attended. In general, people who are working abroad were mainly studying at a secondary school, while in the other category major half of respondent did attend a grammar school. All these facts may cause the extensive divergence between these two categories of workers.

The word pair *summer job / summer brigade* is the only pair where the categories share a high success rate – everyone in the group of People working in the Czech Republic and ten (out of eleven) in that of People working abroad chose the right answer.

The most precarious false friend for all the categories was undeniably *abstinent*, which however in English carries absolutely different connotation. In English I can say: *She leads an abstinent life* (Hladký, 1990). Nonetheless when she does not drink alcohol she can never be called *abstinent*. In contrary, the noun *abstinence* is graphically equal in both Czech and English and denotes the very same meaning.

The most uncomplicated word-pair for all the categories was *summer job / summer brigade*. Solely one respondent from the group of People working abroad made a mistake here, the rest of 44 respondents have chosen summer job.

In total the best results are naturally in the category of Students of English with the success rate 95 %. On the second place are People working in the Czech Republic with 86 %. The success of Students in general is solely slightly lower and thus 83 %. At the end of the list there is surprisingly the category of People working abroad with the success rate of 67 %.

In this chapter the findings of the research questionnaire were discussed within every category as well as a comparison of students and workers separately and subsequently the intersections of the most and least problematic false friends were implied.

According to the results demonstrated in this part, the following chapter will provide advice for teachers and learners and information about limitations of this research.

2.3 IMPLICATIONS

In this part of the thesis the subsequent implications for learners and teachers of English will be discussed. This information results from the data gained in the questionnaire and discussed in the former chapter. Possible limitations of the research process will be mentioned as well.

The various pieces of information in each category may lead the reader to think about the general interest in English language itself as well as the awareness of false friends. Students who are studying English as their main subject were expected to achieve the best results of all the respondents. According to the author's personal experience the category People working abroad was not expected to be the best one, since many people who work abroad move there for the financial reasons and not for the endeavour of studying the language itself. The results have demonstrated the accuracy of the opinion. The fact that the category of People working in the Czech Republic achieved better results than Students in general is surprising and maybe caused by the lack of English lessons at universities. The other possibility might be a small interest in English for people who do not study linguistics. For the reason English is a language of the globalized world and is extremely required in nearly all working spheres all students should be taught this language at grammar or secondary schools as well as at universities.

The restrictions of the research were caused by the insufficient array of respondents which may lead to less objective results than if the questionnaire was completed by hundreds of respondents. Despite the online version people were unwilling to spend time over several questions and a short exercise. Nevertheless, the minimum of respondents is in each category and approximately demonstrated how treacherous may the most common false friends be for people from various studying and working fields.

In my opinion this study could be improved by asking the respondents not solely via internet but also face to face. The examples of false friends might be extended and more challenging. On the other hand I would never suppose *abstinent* to be the trickiest word of all false friends in the exercise. It might be interesting as well to create an exercise with false friends from the diachronic point of view which might aim at translation of words used by Shakespeare.

CONCLUSION

The major purpose of this thesis was to study false friends from various points of view in order to find out what the term “false friends” signifies and why it is so tricky for all speakers of foreign languages. To obtain an organised notion of this linguistic phenomenon many linguists, who are interested in this topic, were discussed. The synchronic point of view describes false friends according to their form and provides the reader a brief overview of this extensive linguistic subject. Many interesting facts were found and explained. The idea of the theoretical part was to clarify the term false friends and its relation between English and German and English and Czech. Since these languages belong to the same language family it was no surprise to encounter many false friends between them. There were found different types of false friends including very common pseudo-anglicisms, which are in both Czech and German.

The diachronic point of view brought a new view of these somewhat treacherous words. An interesting fact is that in writings of William Shakespeare there are many words that carry a different meaning today and thus are tricky for a present-day reader. Words such as *sad* or *amazement* were examined. These words are used today as well, but look so familiar that a reader would not think of any change in their meanings. Another fact is that the author himself loved to play with words and used to assign new meanings to already known words. This unconventional study from the diachronic point of view can broaden one's horizons and shed light on the phenomenon of false friends.

The research demonstrated how Czech people deal with such tricky words. To obtain as precise information as possible the respondents were divided into four categories, two including students and two describing working class. The most surprising fact found was that people working abroad, mainly in the United Kingdom, are not so aware of this linguistic peculiarity. Their success rate was not as great as in the other categories. In every question in the exercise there was always someone who had chosen the wrong answer. Since these respondents have to deal with English on every-day basis it can be considered as, at least, interesting that they are not familiarized with false friends. The tricky word *abstinent* made most troubles to all the categories.

The information gained in the theoretical part may be utilized in the research part since there appear all types of false friends. New knowledge of this linguistic phenomenon demonstrated in this thesis may lead to various ideas how further study false friends.

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APPENDIX I

Questionnaire

The first part of the questionnaire including personal questions:

1. Do you live in the Czech Republic or abroad?
2. What is your age?
3. Are you studying?
4. What are you studying?
5. Are you working?
6. In what field are you working?
7. Did you attend a grammar school or a secondary school?
8. Was English a part of your graduation exam?
9. How long have you been learning English?
10. Have you ever participated in a language course? When and where?
11. Have you ever worked or studied abroad? If yes, what kind of work/programme was it?
12. How often do you use English? (every day, every week, every month, occasionally)

The second part of the questionnaire consisting of the exercise with false friends:

1. My favourite *historic* / *historian* is very *sympathetic* / *nice*.
2. The author of this song *graduated* / *matured* at the same *grammar school* / *gymnasium* as I did.
3. I received a letter from a friend I had met in summer *brigade* / *job*.
4. *Moderators* / *anchormen* in TV news have to wear *suits* / *costumes*.
5. She is an *abstinent* / *abstainer* but her boyfriend is a *narcoman* / *drug addicted*.
6. As prevention against venereal diseases, e.g. AIDS, it is important to use *preservative* / *condom* during sexual intercourse.
7. Our *politicians* / *politics* own luxurious cars.
8. When cooking I don't use a *blender* / *mixer* so often.
9. You should always *control* / *check* your homework before you hand it in to your teacher.
10. We found a lovely *camping* / *camp-site* near the sea to put up our tent.

APPENDIX II

False friends used in the online survey and their translations:

Czech word	Correct translation	False friend	Translation of false friend into Czech
historik	historian	historic	historický
sympatický	likeable	sympathetic	soucitný
maturovat	graduate	mature	dospět
gymnázium	grammar school	gymnasium	tělocvična
letní brigáda	summer job	brigade	vojenská brigáda
moderator zpráv	anchorman	moderator	moderator debaty
oblek, kostýmek	suit	costume	maškarní kostým
abstinent	abstainer	abstinent	střídmý
narkoman	drug-addicted	narcoman	-
preservative, kondom	condom	preservative	konzervant
politik	politician	politics	politika
kuchyňský mixér	blender	mixer	míchačka
zkontrolovat	check	control	vládnout
kemp	camp-site	camping	kempování

CZECH SUMMARY

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá mezijazykovou homonymií, konkrétně jevem zvaným *false friends*, neboli *falešní přátelé*. Cílem této práce je zjistit, proč tato slova dělají problémy nejen studentům anglického jazyka, ale i překladatelům a běžným mluvčím, nehledě na úroveň jazykových vědomostí.

Práce se skládá ze dvou hlavních částí, tedy teoretické a praktické. Teoretická část se zabývá jevem *false friends* na základě synchronního a diachronního pohledu. Takzvaná *zrádná slova* jsou rozdělena do oddílů dle klasifikací různých lingvistů. Jsou rozebrány *false friends* mezi anglickým a německým jazykem, dále pak ve vztahu anglický vs. český jazyk. Studie z diachronního pohledu skýtá možnost poznání jazyka Williama Shakespeara, který je známý svým bohatým přínosem pro slovní zásobu anglického jazyka.

Praktická část analyzuje vědomosti studentů anglického jazyka i jiných oborů a lidí pracujících v České Republice a v zahraničí. Cvičení, ve kterém respondenti museli zvolit z nabízených slov a použít je ve větě, demonstruje obecné povědomí o tomto lingvistickém jevu.

Zrádná slova rozebraná v teoretické části a mnohá další jsou použita v teoretickém oddílu. Rozbor cvičení dokázal, že lidé pracující v zahraničí chybují ve *falešných přátelích* více, než respondenti z ostatních skupin. *False friend* spojující všechny skupiny bylo slovo *abstinent*.