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**HOW DO CZECH PEOPLE PERCEIVE  
(NAMELY ENGLISH SPEAKING) FOREIGNERS**

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis summarises the attitude of Czech people to foreigners. In the theoretic part, there is described the connection of languages and culture of other nations with the typical Czech viewpoint on foreigners. It is focused on the practical use of English language as the favourite study subject of Czech pupils. The practical part is based on the public research. This research was based on completion the answers in the questionnaires. It was found out, that Czech people are not afraid to help foreigners in need, but some of them feel limited by the language barrier.

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## INTRODUCTION

Modern age requires the necessity of travelling and connected mixture of all nationalities and cultures worldwide. This recognition of foreign cultures can significantly change the ethnocentric viewpoint of every particular culture towards foreigners. There are many ways, how to experience and perceive the foreign cultures. One of the most easily recognisable is the use of foreign language. Such languages are nowadays learnt at all schools worldwide, every person should know at least some basic words in order to communicate in a foreign language.

But in spite of the possibilities of getting into contact with the foreign nationalities, some people consider foreigners to be dangerous for other cultures of the world. Such people enforce racist tendencies, which can (in the extreme case) affect the whole society in the country.

The main aim of this thesis is to find out, whether the situation is the same in the Czech Republic. This country went through almost fifty years of communistic regime, some of the Czech inhabitants can still remember the conditions of socialist period and sometimes they are influenced with the communistic restriction until these days. The socialistic restrictions can influence their viewpoint of foreigners as well, because in this period foreign languages and foreign cultures were perceived negatively. Another part of this thesis will be focused on the use of foreign language and the ability of Czech people to help foreigners in need.

## **THEORETICAL PART**

### **1. Changes of the modern world and their influence on travelling**

The relationship of Czech native people towards the members of foreign culture nowadays changes identically with the development of modern world. Development of the infrastructure, significant inventions, processes and technologies make it possible to connect all the continents of the world and shorten not only the distance, but minimise the time, required for getting from one place to the other as well. The saving of time contributes to the increasing popularity of travelling as a free time activity.

#### **1.1 The practical use of gained cultural knowledge**

There are many reasons that make the travelling so popular. The number of visitors, who try to gain some new information about the typical cultural habits and the culture of the country they visit, is probably the most typical one. Travelling is popular especially among the generation of young people, who very often travel abroad in order to gain some new experiences with the foreign languages – they can use their language knowledge while working in the fields or branches, orientated in the issues of foreign languages. But the use of languages is not limited only by the branches of pedagogy or everyday communication. Průcha segmented the possible areas of “intercultural psychology use” (closely connected to the use of languages) in his book *Intercultural psychology*:

*“Konkrétně řečeno, interkulturní psychologie je svými poznatky užitečná zejména v těchto oborech praxe:*

- *Diplomacie a zahraniční politika*
- *Mezinárodní obchod a turismus*
- *Příprava odborníků pro práci v zahraničí*
- *Výcvik manažerů a personalistů českých firem zaměstnávajících cizince*
- *Příprava lékařů a zdrav. personálu pro péči o pacienty odlišného etnického původu*
- *Příprava pracovníků státní správy pro jednání s cizinci, žadateli o azyl aj.*

- *Příprava učitelů na edukaci ve třídách a školách s etnicky heterogenní populací žáků a další. [Specifically said, the intercultural psychology – together with its knowledge- is useful especially in these fields of practise:*
- *Diplomacy and foreign policy*
- *International business and tourism*
- *Training of the specialists for working abroad*
- *Training of the managers and human resources officers in the Czech companies, employing foreigners*
- *Training of the medical practitioners and other medical staff, who takes care after the patients of different ethnical origin*
- *Training of the administrative workers, negotiating with the foreigners, asylum applicants etc.*
- *Training of the teachers in education for the classes and schools, which have the ethnically heterogeneous population of pupils and others.]” (Průcha; 9–10)*

The study of languages abroad can be regarded as the first occasion for getting familiar with the culture of any foreign country. But especially with children, we can not distinguish their awareness about the possibilities of the further language use. During such visit, people could not gain only the language knowledge – they could make themselves aware of the typical cultural habits within the foreign cultures. If we mention the connection of language and culture, we may not be sure, what does the term „culture“ mean exactly. Morgensternová mentioned the interesting description of culture and its main issues:

*“kulturu lze přirovnat k ledovci plovoucímu na širém oceánu. Na první pohled vidíme jen malou část, jakýsi vrcholek nad vodou, a neuvědomujeme si skryté části. Možná tušíme, že se pod vodou v hlubinách něco skrývá, ale je obtížné poznat a pochopit hlubší vrstvy. Stejně tak je to s poznáváním cizí kultury. [culture can be compared to an iceberg, floating at the wide ocean. At the first sight we can see just a small part, a top above the water, and we don't realise the hidden parts. We might guess, that there is something hidden in the depth under the water, but it's hard to distinguish and realise the layers. And the situation with the discovery of foreign cultures is exactly the same.]” (Morgensternová; 7).*

### 1.1.1 What does the term culture include

More precisely, Průcha describes the two main viewpoints, reflecting the term “culture” with the focus on the typical cultural properties of all the nations worldwide. This statement describes the approximate arrangement of the cultural layers, mentioned above:

*“Podle širšího pojetí zahrnuje pojem kultura všechno, co vytváří lidská civilizace – tedy jednak **materiální výsledky** (artefakty) lidské činnosti, jako jsou např. obydlí, nástroje, oděvy, plodiny, průmysl, dopravní a telekomunikační systémy, jednak **duchovní výtvory lidí**, jako je umění, náboženství, morálka, zvyky, vzdělávací systémy, politika, právo aj. Podle užšího pojetí (uplatňovaného v kulturní antropologii a také v interkulturní psychologii) je pojem kultura vztahován spíše k **projevům chování lidí** – tedy kulturou určitého společenství se míní jeho zvyklosti, symboly, komunikační normy a jazykové rituály, sdílené hodnotové systémy, předávané zkušenosti, zachovávaná tabu. [From the wider viewpoint, the term culture includes everything, that human civilisation produces – it means on one hand the **material products** (artefacts) of human activities, for example the abode, tools, clothes, crops, industry or the systems for traffic and telecommunication; on the other hand it includes spiritual products of humans, as an art, religion, morality, habits, education systems, politics, law and so on. From the narrower viewpoint (which is dealt with in the cultural anthropology as well as the intercultural psychology) the term culture refers mostly to **the manifestation of human behaviour** – its habits, symbols, means of communication and language habits, shared value systems, transferred experiences or the maintained taboos can be meant with the culture of particular community].” (Průcha;45)*

This statement proves that every foreign culture has its typical features and traditions, which are preserved in a particular area. Sometimes it is hard to determine the whole amount of typical cultural items – detailed study requires months of exploration and sometimes they can reach high costs as well. In spite of this many companies worldwide still invest in the research within foreign tribes worldwide.

## 1.2 Scientific research within foreign cultures

One of the most frequently used methods of research is the personal experience in the form of scientific expeditions. The popularity of scientific expeditions, dealing with the

research of foreign cultures is nowadays increasing. Even Morgensternová in her book *Intercultural psychology* agrees that “*pro získávání poznatků o cizích kulturách je nejlepší přímá a nezprostředkovaná zkušenost, která nám umožňuje konfrontaci s cizí kulturou [for achieving the knowledge about foreign cultures, the direct and immediate experience which enables us the comparison of foreign culture, is the best.]*.” (Morgensternová; 62)

In spite of recommending the direct exploration into foreign countries, Morgensternová is aware of the psychological effects, connected with the visit to unknown places: “*I zkušený cestovatel se nevyhne etnocentrickému pohledu, při kterém cizí kulturu hodnotí podle své vlastní [Even the experienced traveller can not avoid the ethnocentric viewpoint, which means that he evaluates the foreign culture according to his own]*.” (Morgensternová; 62)

### **1.2.1 How can the ethnocentrism affect our perception of foreign cultures**

The ethnocentric viewpoint is typical for the Czech people, who decided to travel abroad. Therefore they compare local culture and the typical cultural habits of native citizens to their own culture very often. If Czech people could choose foreign country, where they want to spend their holiday, they mostly choose south European countries (Croatia, Greece, Italy, Spain), whose way of life is different to life in the Central Europe. In such countries people prefer relaxed and independent way of life; they are not limited by schedules, strict rules or punishments.

If a tourist from Czech Republic comes to the country like this, he can not be used to deal with local cultural habits, which can in the end lead to misunderstanding or even complains (nowadays there are many funny stories, where the tourist complain about their bad experience on their holiday – almost all of these embarrassing situations are caused by the misunderstanding between the members of two different cultures). Obviously the communication conflicts can not be excluded, but at least the Czech people should try to change the way, they perceive foreign cultures and eliminate the ethnocentric viewpoint towards the members of every foreign culture.

Unfortunately, the ethnocentric viewpoint can not be fully avoided, because the development of every culture is still in progress. Every culture in the world is still going through its development and sometimes even the native citizens can hardly guess what is right or what is wrong. In her book, Morgensternová affirms, that:

*“Dnešní společnost klade velké nároky na jedince v soukromé i profesní oblasti jeho života. Dochází k neustálým sociálním změnám, přičemž k těm nejvýznamnějším patří stále častější setkávání a prolínání rozdílných kultur, které se dotýká čím dál většího množství lidí [Today’s society places demands on the individual in the private and also in the occupational sphere of their life. The continual social changes are still in progress, to the most significant one belongs the more frequent meeting and blending of different cultures, which includes the increasing number of people].” (Morgensternová; 87)*

The increasing number of people and mixture of various foreign cultures can later lead to intercultural conflicts. How can the intercultural conflicts affect our perception of foreign nationalities and their cultural habits will be described later.

### **1.3 Foreign languages and their connection to the culture**

Probably the most easily recognisable feature of every culture in the world should be its native language. It is well-known, that some of the languages are quite limited in their communicative function. This type includes especially the languages of primitive tribes, whose culture is less developed than the culture of major population. Such languages are spoken only in the specific cultural area, but on the other hand, this is the main reason, why the “primitive languages” are so rare and very valuable from the viewpoint of cultural heritage.

#### **1.3.1 International languages and their communicative use**

The rest of languages is not strictly limited through the area, time or the community of native speakers in which they are used. These languages, which are almost unlimited in the way of their use became so called international languages, which means that they enable contact between people from various language areas, without the necessity of learning the third language, that is much more widespread all over the world and can be understood by both participants of the discourse.

For example, if a student from an African country comes to study to the Czech Republic, it can take him too much time to learn at least some words in Czech language. And obviously, the Czech people can hardly speak the language of African communities. But the African student can communicate with the native Czech people through English language,

because with the development of the modern world, the number of English speaking people is still increasing and the English language is already taught at the level of nursery schools.

In spite of their use being sometimes not very clear and understandable, the international languages also help to avoid the misunderstanding between participants and they are also of high moral significance. You can hardly help a foreigner without having at least general knowledge of some foreign language, which can cause the effect of an insult. The relationship between language knowledge and the politeness in behaviour depends on the typical character properties of every foreign culture, because *“etiketa je jedním z pozorovatelných rysů kultury a je výrazně kulturně specifická [the etiquette is one of the recognisable features of culture and it is considerably culturally specific].”* (Morgensternová;121). Our perception of moral rules is formed since childhood, but mostly develops during the process of socialisation – getting into contact with other members of society, learning how to respect general rules and the system of awards or punishments. The behaviour significantly affects the future perception of foreigners.

### **1.3.2 Intercultural communication, intercultural competences**

The communication skills are also considered as necessary part of every culture, at the level of multiculturalism we use the term *“interkulturní komunikace [intercultural communication]”* (Morgensternová; 114) Morgensternová describes the intercultural communication as

*“druh komunikace které se účastní příslušníci odlišných kultur. Vyznačuje se tím, že účastníci komunikace narážejí na rozdíly ve vzájemných komunikačních stylech a na rozdílné vnímání a chování [the way of communication, in which the members of two different cultures takes part. It is characterised by the differences in the reciprocal communication styles, perception and behaviour, which the participants may run into].”* (Morgensternová; 115)

The main aim of intercultural communication resides in avoiding the misunderstanding within language use and to prevent the intercultural conflicts. Intercultural competences also help the travellers to adapt themselves in the foreign environment and to prevent so called “intercultural shock” – difficult adaptation, stress and homesick tendencies, appearing while long stay abroad (sometimes by the return from the visit of foreign country as well).

### 1.4 English language and its use in the everyday life

There are many concrete international languages, but English is probably the famous one, which was proven by the statement that “*Ve školách vede jasně angličtina, kterou se učí přes 90% dětí*” [In Czech schools English, which is learnt by more than 90% of children, is in lead.]” (Blahovcová; 44) This fact is quite obvious, because in comparison with other languages there are no complicated grammar features, the vocabulary is much easier to remember because some words can be the same or at least similar to other languages, for example to German language.

And the last but not least, there is relatively high number of English speakers. English Commonwealth includes sixteen countries, where English became the main official language and whose population is approaching the population of Chinese speaking people. Obviously we should take the speakers, who can communicate in English despite not being their native language, into account. The more surprising are the results of a research, taken in the Czech Republic there is relatively a low number of people, who could without any difficulties understand foreign languages:

“*Podle výzkumu Institutu pro sociální a ekonomické analýzy se anglicky “docela dobře” domluví jen 27% lidí, německy pak 22%. Z toho vyplývá, že se českým školám nedaří předávat žákům základy nutné ke zvládnutí jiné řeči než češtiny. [According to the research of Social and Economic Analysis Institute, only 27% of people can make themselves “quite well” understood in English, 22% in German language. Which implicit, that Czech schools can not hand the basic knowledge of any other foreign language than Czech over to the children.]*” (Blahovcová; 44)

The authors of this research recommend changing the methods of foreign languages teaching, they also want to motivate Czech people to practise their language skills, while studying abroad:

“*Studium jazyků v cizině má mnoho výhod. Hlavní je, že člověk užívá cizí řeč neustále. ... Díky tomu se například žák během měsíčního pobytu v zahraničí naučí tolik, kolik by se učil rok na jazykové škole v Česku. [The language study abroad brings many advantages. The most important one is that people use the language constantly. They are talking to the tutors*

*during their classes, they speak with their classmates, who come from various countries and they also have to communicate with the family, they are living with. ... Owing to this the pupil is for example able to learn as much as within one-year study at the language school in Czech Republic during the language study abroad.]” (Blahovcová; 45)*

These times English became one of the most popular languages in the Czech Republic - from the historical viewpoint Czech and English languages came through the significant historical development at all their levels – phonetic and phonological, morphological, syntactical, lexical and stylistic. Minor changes in both language systems are still in progress until these days. Almost every generation of children and students is nowadays supposed to learn at least the basis of this language.

English is very popular especially by young people, who are supposed to use English language within their study or work. But sometimes they base their everyday activities on the active use of English languages – they listen to songs with English lyrics, they watch movies with English subtitles or read books in original English versions and some of them even try to look for a part-time job in some of the English speaking countries. The everyday active use, together with the perfect language knowledge in English can fully influence the relationship of Czech people towards foreigners.

The research, described in the magazine *Vlasta* deals with the issue of language teaching and the language skills of Czech native people. The results of this research were unexpected, because it was found out that *“Až 54% Čechů by se v cizině ztratilo a neumělo by si říct o pomoc. Neumějí totiž ani jeden cizí jazyk. Nedomluvílo by se ani 23% vysokoškoláků, kteří se cizí řeč učili po celou dobu studia. [Up to 54% of Czech people would get lost abroad and could not ask for help, since they can't speak any foreign language. Either 23% of university students, who learn foreign language during their studies, would not make themselves understood.]”* (Blahovcová; 44)

Relatively high number of university students, who are unable to speak any foreign language is quite surprising, but if we deal with the division into the branches of their study, we should take the students, who do not study primarily foreign languages into account. This article also does not deal with the issue of age. It is well-known that the language of elderly people and children, who do not attend the primary school, can not speak any foreign language or they are not used to it. But nowadays the number of special language classes in nursery schools is increasing.

Some people agree with the opinion, that children should not be forced to learn any foreign languages in the early age, because primarily they have to adapt themselves to communication in Czech as their native language. The children, by whom the English language would be taught too early, can hardly become the rightful bearer of Czech culture. But what else can make the Czech people change their perception of foreigners?

## 2. What influences our viewpoint towards foreigners?

As Morgensternová claims in her book, the perception of intercultural differences is formed since childhood. Therefore it's always necessary to use so called intercultural competences:

*“Nechápeme pod slovem competence pouze souhrn znalostí dovedností a schopností, které se dají získat či naučit. Rozumíme pod tímto termínem i prohloubení určitých osobnostních rysů, které vedou k tomu, že se člověk v interkulturní situaci osvědčí [The term intercultural competences do not describe only the set of knowledge, skills and abilities, which can be gained or learned. With this term, we also mean the deepening of particular character features, which lead to the effective behaviour in the intercultural situation].”*  
(Morgensternová; 9)

The competences could be gained since childhood – included in the character of children - or learned. Nowadays the trend of multicultural nursery schools is increasing; therefore the children can form their intercultural competences since their early age by the contact with the children of foreigners.

### 2.1 Intercultural competences – further description

In her book, Morgensternová deals with three main areas, in which the intercultural competences can be divided. The first area of typical intercultural competences includes so called “cognitive competences.” The cognitive competences includes *“reálný pohled na sebe sama, kulturní identita, poznatky o cizí kultuře, předcházení předsudkům, stereotypům, tolerování odlišností [real viewpoint of oneself, cultural identity, the knowledge of foreign culture, avoidance of preconceptions or stereotypes, tolerance of dissimilarities].”* (Morgensternová; 13) Affective competences are based on the emotional character of every person. They include *“interkulturní senzitivita a adaptabilita, empatie, interpersonální vztahy*

*a jejich prožívání [the intercultural sensitivity and adaptability towards foreign culture, empathy, interpersonal relationships and the experiences with them].” (Morgensternová; 14)*

Behavioral competences refer to the communication between the members of two (or more) foreign cultures. The behavioral competences include “*umění interkulturní komunikace, řešení interkulturních konfliktů/problémů, schopnost kooperace a práce v interkulturním týmu [the skills in intercultural communication, the solution to the intercultural conflicts/problems and the ability of cooperation and intercultural team-work].” (Morgensternová; 14)* These are the main character properties, which every person is presupposed to use, while contact with the foreigners during visiting some of the foreign countries, where they try to recognise individual cultural specifics.

## **2.2 Historical development in the Czech Republic, its influence of language learning**

Until these days, the use of international languages in the Czech Republic is influenced by the period of Communism. One of the rules, which were limiting the progress in the use of foreign languages, was the prohibition of travelling into so called “west” countries. This strict rule was banned at the turn of the years 1989 and 1990 – after the Velvet revolution Czech people began to import the products from foreign countries and together with these products, they began to acquire the base English words. Through the base words, they started to identify a new culture and its typical features. Similarly the foreigners now could take the opportunity to recognise the culture of the Czech Republic as one of the post communist countries. Morgensternová describes the historical tendencies in the Czech Republic:

*“dnešní Česko je výsledkem po staletí trvajících historického procesu, v němž byli Češi a Moravané vystaveni nesčetným kulturním vlivům jiných národů a etnik, se kterými žili na jednom území nebo se s nimi jinak dostali do kontaktu v průběhu různých dějinných období [today’s Bohemia is the result of the historical process, which takes many centuries and during which the Czech and Moravian people were exposed to the innumerable cultural impacts of other nationalities and ethnics, with which they share the common area or they got into contact with them during the progress of various historical periods].” (Morgensternová; 101 – 102)*

Since 1989 Czech people have not still been able to cope with the influx of foreigners, their national consciousness is influenced by the political changes of communist period. Even

Průcha paid attention to the use of the intercultural psychology and the research among foreign cultures during the communistic period:

*“Česká nepříznivá situace, pokud jde o nedostatečný rozvoj interkulturní psychologie, je zřejmě důsledkem toho, že v období socialismu nebyly interkult. Rozdíly ve společnosti vítaným předmětem věd. bádání – i když v sovětské vědě se jim dost velká pozornost věnovala nejen ze strany etnografů, ale i psycholingvistů a sociolingvistů. Proč se ale interkulturní psychologie u nás nerozvinula po roce 1989, zůstává nejasné. [The unfavourable situation in Czech Republic, as for the insufficient development of intercultural psychology, is probably the consequence of the intercultural differences in the society not being the welcome matter of scientific research during the period of socialism – even if in the soviet science not only the ethnographers, but also the psycholinguists and sociolinguists paid attention on it. Why does not the intercultural psychology develop by us after 1989 remains unclear].” (Průcha, 21)*

In spite of the contradictory expressions, Průcha still sustained the optimistic future outlook:

*“Dnes se však o její důležitosti sotva dá pochybovat – vzhledem k multikulturní situaci v ČR a ve světě – a tak se nyní interkulturní psychologie bude jistě konstituovat jako vědní obor i u nás [But today we can hardly doubt its importance – because of the multicultural situation in the Czech Republic as well as in the world – therefore the intercultural psychology will nowadays surely constitute as a scientific field in the Czech Republic as well].” (Průcha; 21)*

### **2.2.1 The remainders of Socialism in today's time**

During the communist period, everything, that has come from abroad was considered inappropriate and all the people, more or less deliberately, were following the rules of the Socialist government and social standards. The era of communism has been over for just twenty years, but the relationship of Czech people and foreigners is still reserved. We are still convinced that what comes from abroad is necessarily inappropriate, unusual or atypical. And this is the same way, that Czech people treat the foreigners. They are aware of the cultural divergence and they mostly respect the racial distinctive features, but they are not much sure about their behaviour in the presence of a foreigner. This kind of manners can be based on

various circumstances: psychological features of individual personality, the cultural milieu or the lack of basic language knowledge.

### 2.3 Preconceptions, racism and intercultural conflicts

The interdiction of travelling in the socialist era is reflected in the behaviour of Czech people, who easily yield to the preconceptions about foreigners. The preconception can be defined as a kind of first-sight-vision that the native people constitute while meeting the foreigners. But from the psychological viewpoint, the preconceptions are considered to be a kind of a perception malfunction. If we get to know the concrete person closely, we can sometimes find out, that the impression does not correspond with the real character of the foreigner. Průcha documented the connection of multicultural societies and intercultural conflicts in his book.

*“Dnes téměř neexistuje země či stat, v němž by žili příslušníci pouze jednoho etnika. Naopak, ve většině zemí Evropy i jiných kontinentů žijí multietnické společnosti tj. takové populace, které jsou tvořeny příslušníky 2 nebo více etnik, rasových, náboženských či jazykových skupin s více či méně odlišnou kulturou. Jen v málo případech je toto soužití zcela harmonické, ve většině zemí v tomto soužití vznikají spory, třenice, či dokonce nepřátelské vztahy [Nowadays, there is almost no country or a state, where only the members of one ethnic group live. Contrarily, the multicultural groups – populations made up by the members of two or more ethnical, racial, religious or language groups, having more or less different culture – are living in most of the European countries as well as on the other continents. Just in a few cases, this coexistence is completely harmonious, in most countries the arguments, squabbles or even the hostile relationships occur].” (Průcha; 22)*

The extreme cases of intercultural conflicts can lead to the propagation of racism and xenophobia. In general these terms describe the hate and racial prejudice of the natives towards foreigners and members of other ethnic groups. Xenophobia and racism are considered one of the most serious problems of modern world. Fortunately, many organisations, dealing with the issue of multiculturalism, start their projects which should support the integration of foreigners in Czech Republic.

Recently, at the end of the year 2011, there was quite a discussed cause of the protest against Roma inhabitants in the North Bohemia. This situation shows that in Czech Republic

(as well as in any other country) it is sometimes hard to enable the coexistence of more ethnical groups. Mostly the people treat foreigners in a positive or reserved way; the extreme cases of racism are quite rare in the Czech Republic, but they are not excluded, because of very sophisticated system of Czech racist groups. Many of the Czech people still can not imagine that they could become the victims of intercultural conflict during their visit of a foreign country.

The question whether the members of other nationalities are more aggressive towards Czech people is under the research, but obviously there are at least several supporters of racist groups or even racist parties in every country of the world. Therefore all the states worldwide try to establish the rules that will strictly affect every external sign of potentially dangerous racism and xenophobia. According to Morgensternová:

*“cizinci si často stěžují, že Češi neumí řešit konflikty a raději je nevidí a přehlížejí. Často se objevuje výraz “vyhýbání se konfliktu” který je výrazným rysem české kultury. V české kultuře stále převládá jakýsi tradiční pohled na konflikty, který spočívá v tom, že konflikt je nežádoucí a škodlivý a je spojován především s negativními pojmy, jako jsou násilí, destrukce, iracionalita apod. Příčiny tohoto jevu vidíme opět ve způsobu výchovy a způsobu vzdělávání, který v minulosti v naší společnosti převládal [the foreigners often complains, that Czech people are not able to solve the conflicts, more likely they don't see the conflicts or ignore them. Very often the term “avoiding conflict” appears, this term is considered the noticeable feature of Czech culture. There still prevails the traditional viewpoint on conflicts, which is based on the conflicts being somehow undesirable, detrimental, and connected mostly with the negative feelings of violence, destruction, irrationality etc. The causes of such phenomena could again be seen in the way of education, which prevails in Czech society in the past].” (Morgensternová; 70)*

The influence of the communist regime implies to be undoubtful. But the conflicts between the members of different ethnical groups are unfortunately still presented in the society worldwide, even until these days.

### 3. Multiculturalism at the level of pedagogy

The development of travelling and the ability of intercultural blending are closely connected with the necessity of compulsory education of foreigners. Sometimes we need to set up the special multicultural class or the class for the members of foreign majorities. Such classes can form the basic contacts with the foreigners since childhood. But what are the rules, needed for the founding of such class?

#### 3.1. The rules for minority education

The conditions for education of majorities are different. One of the first issues worth paying attention is the educational language in the multicultural class. Generally said:

*“Vyučovací jazykem je jazyk český. Příslušníkům národnostních menšin se zajišťuje právo na vzdělávání v jazyce národnostní menšiny. Ministerstvo může povolit vyučování některých předmětů v cizím jazyce. ... Obec, kraj, popřípadě ministerstvo zajišťuje pro příslušníky národnostních menšin vzdělávání v jazyce národnostní menšiny v mateřských, základních a středních školách, a to v obcích, v nichž byl v souladu se zvláštním právním předpisem zřízen výbor pro národnostní menšiny, pokud jsou splněny tyto podmínky. [Czech is the educational language, but the right for the education in foreign language is provided for the minority members. The Ministry of education can permit the education in a foreign language ... The concrete village, regional authority or the Ministry of education can provide minority language education in the villages, where the committee for majorities was established and where the following conditions are fulfilled].” (Mošna; 28)*

The most important condition, in which the education in a minority language can be enabled depends on the number of minority members in a particular village:

*“Třídou příslušného ročníku mateřské školy lze zřídit, pokud se ke vzdělávání v jazyce národnostní menšiny přihlásí nejméně 8 dětí s příslušností k národnostní menšině, třídu základní školy lze zřídit, pokud se ke vzdělávání v jazyce národnostní menšiny přihlásí nejméně 10 žáků s příslušností k národnostní menšině. [The nursery school class grade, using the minority language can be set up, if at least eight children will claim the allegiance to the minority, the elementary school class can be set up with at least ten children, who will claim the allegiance to the minority; the nursery school or elementary school class can be set up, if*

*all the classes will involve the exact average number (at least 12) of the minority members in one class. The high school class grade can be set up if at least 12 pupils provide their nationality. If the terms are not fulfilled, the headmaster can, in cooperation with the founder, determine the subjects, that will be learned bilingually – in Czech language and in the minority language].” (Mošna;28). Generally said, the average number of foreign nationality students is included in the number from 10 – 15. The conditions for establishing minority classes in Czech schools are precisely described in The Educational Law.*

### **3.2. English as the language of education**

If we focused ourselves on the possible use of English as one of the minority languages in education, we can find out, that this language is not used primarily for this purpose. The function of modern English lessons is to make people, through the interesting form of education, learn at least some basic vocabulary, which enables them to use the language in practice. English teaching (as well as in the case of any other foreign language) should be funny and interesting. But in Czech society prevail the opinion, that:

*“ kromě (ne)kvalitních učitelů ovlivňuje žáky i způsob výuky cizího jazyka. A tak vzniká nechuť k učení. Na našich školách se pořád prosazuje tzv. gramaticko – překladová metoda, která klade důraz na zvládnutí gramatiky, překlady a je pro ni typický nezajímavý drill. [Except the (low-) high-quality teachers the pupils are influenced with the way of learning foreign language. And on this the aversion towards learning is based. At the Czech schools the grammatically-translating method, paying attention on the grammar mastering, translations and for which the uninteresting drill is typical, still comes in.]” (Blahovcová; 44)*

This method of teaching is regarded rather boring and not very useful, this is why the language study travels are recommended as one of the most popular form, how to improve and practise the language skills.

### **4. The research in Pilsen and its methods**

A survey, whose aim was to compare the general knowledge of English language among Czech native speakers, took part in March 2012 in Pilsen. The research was based on the use of questionnaire, which is quite easily understandable for the speakers.

## 4.1. The questionnaire

Čábalová brings the precious definition of questionnaire: “*Dotazník je způsob písemného kladení otázek a hromadného získávání písemných odpovědí. Patří mezi nejjfrekventovanější výzkumné metody. [The questionnaire is written way of asking the questions and the collective retrieval of written answers. It belongs to the most used research methods].*” (Čábalová; 14) Every questionnaire has to contain its special structure, which is based on three main parts:

“*vstupní část (jméno či název zadávajících, autorů dotazníku, vysvětlení cíle dotazníku, pokyny k vyplnění dotazníku), vlastní otázky (položky), poděkování respondentovi (osobě vyplňující dotazník) za spolupráci [the introductory part (including the name of people assigning the research, the name of authors, the explanation of research aims and the instructions how to fill in the questionnaire), the questions (items) itself and the acknowledgement for cooperation to the respondent (a person, filling in the questionnaire)].*” (Čábalová; 14). It depends on the author and level of formality, whether we should strictly keep this structure, but most of the questionnaires are based on this structure (or a bit changed, but with almost the same schema as the original questionnaire).

### 4.1.1. The questions and their general description

In this case, the research contains, except basic personal data (gender, estimated age and the highest achieved education) several main questions to answer:

- 1) In brief summarise your attitude to foreigners? How do you perceive the preconceptions of Czech native people towards majorities?

This question (as well as the following) seems to be too general. This was probably the main reason for adding some possible types of answers, which could help me to gather enough of the possible data. This question includes four possibilities to answer:

- a) My relationship towards foreigners is positive; I refuse the preconceptions at all.
- b) My relationship towards foreigners is quite positive. I am glad to help foreigners, if I could, but I do not seek them myself.

- c) My relationship towards foreigners is quite negative. I try to reduce contact with the foreigners to the lowest possible extent
  - d) My relationship towards foreigners is negative, I am prejudiced towards foreigners.
- 2) Which of the European or world nationalities is, in your opinion, the most racist or xenophobic?

The main purpose of the open question number 2 was to consider individual opinions of questioned people. The cooperation with questioned people is very useful for gathering all important data about the world nationalities and the relationship of Czech people towards foreigners. In the end, all the questionnaires were appraised, compared and incorporated in this thesis. We may get back to the results later, in the practical part.

- 3) Do you think that Czech people are still influenced by the prohibition of travelling, which was established during the period of communism?
- 4) Have you ever studied any foreign language? If yes, which one was it and how long have you studied this language?

The questions number 3 is intended mostly for the generation of people, living during the Communist period. The results of this question can be somehow deduced in advance, but undoubtedly the individual stories, told by the contemporary witnesses of Communistic period can bring some useful information, influencing their relationship towards foreigners.

The question number 4 is focused on the use of languages. The use of language is an imperative aspect for the perception of foreign cultures and their members. The results of this question can inform us about the nationalities and languages, which are more or less acceptable by Czech people. As well as the previous one this question is based preferably on the individual opinions of questioned people, but in this case it was not limited by the age of the participants, although the elderly people sometimes do not learn any foreign language. All the remaining questions include the set of possible answers:

5) How would you appraise your personal language knowledge?

- a) Excellent – I can communicate without difficulties in various languages (spoken as well as written language, specific professional terms), I can manage to translate even difficult text in a foreign language, my vocabulary is approaching vocabulary of the native speaker, I use foreign languages professionally within my job.
- b) Good – I can speak several foreign languages. I can communicate in the spoken form as well as in the written form, although I do not know all the specific professional terms. My vocabulary is sufficient, I can translate easy texts. I took my graduation leaving exams in a foreign language.
- c) Average – I have some basic knowledge in one or two foreign languages, I could make myself understood in the case of need, my vocabulary is average, I can translate short texts in a foreign language.
- d) Insufficient – I can not speak any foreign languages (I can translate just some individual words). If I understand, I can translate single words. My vocabulary is insufficient.

6) Do you use any of the foreign languages within your job or study?

- a) Yes, daily or almost daily. I am pursued in it within my job, I often travel abroad.
- b) Yes, from time to time
- c) No

7) Would you be able to help a foreigner in the case of need? And why do you think you would/would not?

- a) Yes – I am not prejudiced towards foreigners, my language skills for the communication with foreigners are sufficient.
- b) More likely yes – If a foreigner addresses me, I'll be glad to help them.
- c) More likely no – I would be able to help a foreigner, but I do not have adequate prerequisites for this (social, language skills)

d) No – I would not help to a foreigner from the various reasons

According to Čábalová, there exist at least four main types of questions, used in the questionnaires:

*“1. Uzavřené otázky – nabízí hotové odpovědi, respondent pouze označuje vhodnou odpověď’.*

*2. Otevřené otázky – neurčuje alternativní odpověď’, dává prostor k vlastní odpovědi.*

*3. Polozavřené otázky – nabízejí alternativní odpověď’ s následným prostorem pro vysvětlení.*

*4. Škálované otázky – nabízejí odstupňované hodnocení jevu*

*[1 - closed questions (such questions offer the possible answers to the respondent, he just marks the appropriate answer), 2 - open questions (this type does not determine the alternative answer, but it provides the scope for his own answer), 3 - semi-closed questions (they offer the alternative answer, but at the same time, they give us the opportunity of further explanation), 4 – scale questions (they offer the evaluation scale for the particular phenomena)].” (Čábalová; 14)*

Within the research among Czech native people the open questions were used. The use of such questions is deliberate, because the representative sample of the members within every gender and age group should be used in this research. To be easily converted into the calculation in percents, the number of 100 was appointed as a basic quantity of questioned people. Every questionnaire contains its advantages, but also its disadvantages. The main advantage of questionnaire research is relative simplicity, time consumption of the research and the easy application amongst the representative sample of people. Its main disadvantage is the unreliability of answers and the instability of the representative sample.

#### **4.2. Research of a foreign culture and the psychological reaction of questioned people**

From the psychological viewpoint, there are three main kinds of reactions on being asked by the foreigner. Positive reaction is used by the speakers, who can understand at least the basic phrases in a foreign language, mostly by the young people and adults. Such people have no problem with the comprehension and therefore their advice is clear, correct and of course very helpful to the foreign person.

Reserved reaction is used by people, who are not sure about their use of the foreign language. For many various reasons, they very often hesitate if they should talk to a foreigner (lack of language knowledge, fear). This kind of reaction is used by elderly people, whose knowledge of English is not very good. The most dangerous one is an aggressive reaction,

which can lay the foundations of xenophobia and racism. The psychological viewpoint can be used to observe the reaction of Czech native speakers towards foreigners, because to find out how do Czech people react, if they meet a foreigner, asking them for help, is the main aim of this research.

#### 4.2.1. Salvation of the intercultural conflicts

No matter, how incident-free the coexistence of two (or more) nationalities in one area is, the intercultural conflict can appear in almost every situation. In her book, Morgensternová admits, that:

*“Konflikt je zpravidla vnímán negativně. Avšak společnost v níž by konflikt nebyl přítomen je asi sotva představitelná. Z toho vyplývá, že konflikt musí obsahovat něco, co je pro každou společnost a její vývoj životně důležité. ... Podobně jako percepce je i komunikace neodmyslitelnou složkou každého konfliktu. Bez komunikace ke konfliktu nemůže dojít a stejně tak bez ní není možné jeho řešení (latinská předložka cum a od ní odvozená předpona com- mají význam “s, spolu”, vyjadřují tedy existence min. 2 prvků, dvou stran. [Mostly the conflict is perceived in a negative way, but the society, in which the conflicts are not presented, can be hardly imagined. It means that the conflict should contain something that is vitally important for the society and its development. ... As well as the perception, the communication is also the important part of every conflict. Without communication the conflict is impossible to begin and at the same time it is impossible to solve them (the Latin preposition cum – and the derived prefix com- have the meaning of “with, together”, which express the existence of at least two participants)].” (Morgensternová; 124, 128)*

The increasing possibility of travelling and contact with the foreign nationalities augments the danger of intercultural conflicts:

*"Migrace nabývá v současném světě obrovských měřítek. Do jednotlivých zemí přicházejí kulturně odlišní imigranti či uprchlíci a při jejich včelňování do populace hostitelských zemí se vyskytují různé problémy psychologické povahy na obou stranách – jak u imigrantů, tak u obyvatel domácích. Jde zejména o problem akulturace a integrace, o problém etnických postojů a stereotypů aj. [The migration nowadays achieves a huge scale. Culturally different immigrants or refugees come to the particular countries and while their integration into the hosting country, many problems of the psychological disposition occurs on both sides –*

*immigrants as well as native citizens. These are mainly the problems of acculturation, integration, ethnical attitudes and stereotypes etc.]” (Průcha; 22)*

In the modern world, the intercultural conflicts are based on the level of politics (political regimes and revolutions, nuclear weapons, fight for the particular area), rather than the arguments of ethnical cultures. But these conflicts are not so important for the media, informing about the international conflicts.

Therefore the involved states should content us with the salvation at their own level. The best alternative, how to solve the international conflicts is to accept the different features of a foreign culture, as Morgensternová recommends: *“Ukazuje se, že těmto konfliktům lze zabránit nebo je alespoň oslabovat jsou-li při vyjednávání respektovány kulturní odlišnosti jednajících partnerů [It is shown, that such conflicts can be avoided or at least depreciated, if the cultural differences of the negotiating partners are respected while the talks].”* (Průcha; 24) The intercultural conflicts can reflect the relationship of foreigners worldwide towards the features of Czech culture.

## **5. How do the foreigners perceive Czech culture**

Sometimes it is very interesting to find out, how do foreigners react while visiting the Czech Republic or how do they perceive the Czech people and their typical character properties. The answers may seem funny to native Czech people, because in this case the members of our nationality prefer the ethnocentric viewpoint. They are sure about the knowledge of their own national culture, but the foreigners are mostly unable to recognise the typical features of Czech culture. Therefore the answers are regarded unreliable for the purpose of research.

### **5.1. Results of the research among foreigners**

This article describes research of the agency Czech Tourism, which took part in December 2010:

*“Tazatelé oslovili 4500 respondentů v Německu, Polsku, Velké Británii a Itálii. ... Podle výsledků průzkumu mají nejhlubší znalosti obyvatelé severní Itálie, v jižních částech země povědomost o Česku klesá. ... V průzkumu Čechům často doporučovali: „Více se smějte!“*

*[The questioner asked 4500 people from Germany, Poland, Great Britain and Italy. ... In Italy, the knowledge of the Czech Republic depends on the region – according to the results of this research, the inhabitants in the north of Italy have the deepest knowledge about the Czech Republic, while in the southern parts of the country, the awareness of the Czech Republic is decreasing. ... In this research, the Italians very often recommended to the Czech people: Laugh more!]*” ([Http://www.novinky.cz/cestovani/226301-jak-ceskou-republiku-vnimaji-v-zahranici-polaci-maji-rozhled-britove-uz-tapou.html](http://www.novinky.cz/cestovani/226301-jak-ceskou-republiku-vnimaji-v-zahranici-polaci-maji-rozhled-britove-uz-tapou.html))

*“Obyvatelé Velké Británie mají o České republice minimální povědomí. Někteří respondenti se dokonce domnívali, že Česká republika je přímořským státem. Ti, kteří znají alespoň naše hlavní město, si Prahu spojují především se zábavou [The British are minimally aware of Czech Republic, some of them even claimed, that the Czech Republic is a coastal state. Those, who know at least our capital city, connected Prague mostly with the fun...”* ([Http://www.novinky.cz/cestovani/226301-jak-ceskou-republiku-vnimaji-v-zahranici-polaci-maji-rozhled-britove-uz-tapou.html](http://www.novinky.cz/cestovani/226301-jak-ceskou-republiku-vnimaji-v-zahranici-polaci-maji-rozhled-britove-uz-tapou.html)) This fact is not unexpected, because of the distance between those two states and the reciprocal intercultural conflicts.

*“Naopak velmi dobré znalosti o České republice odhalil průzkum v Polsku, kde si respondenti nejčastěji vzpomněli na Prahu a vyhlášené lyžařské areály [The research discovered very good knowledge of the Czech Republic in Poland, where the respondents very often remember Prague and the renowned ski-premises].”* ([Http://www.novinky.cz/cestovani/226301-jak-ceskou-republiku-vnimaji-v-zahranici-polaci-maji-rozhled-britove-uz-tapou.html](http://www.novinky.cz/cestovani/226301-jak-ceskou-republiku-vnimaji-v-zahranici-polaci-maji-rozhled-britove-uz-tapou.html)). In this case the role of distance is very opposite. Poland and Germany borders the Czech Republic, many tourists from the adjacent countries come to visit our country and this is how they can gain the knowledge about the typical cultural habits of Czech people.

The viewpoint of German people refers to the Czech Republic as one of the countries, that was influenced with the former communist regime: *“Považují Česko za chudou, postkomunistickou, či rozvojovou zemi a neumějí si představit, že se za posledních 20 let nějak výrazně změnila. Stále mají v povědomí informace o okrádajících taxikářiích, nedobré pověsti Václavského náměstí, často vycházejí pouze ze svých návštěv českého pohraničí [They consider our country to be poor, post communist or developing county and they can not imagine, that our country has somehow changed during last twenty years. There are still the informations about robbing taxi drivers or the low reputation of the Wenceslas Square in*

*their mind, very often they base their experiences on the visit of border regions].”* ([Http://www.novinky.cz/cestovani/226301-jak-ceskou-republiku-vnimaji-v-zahranici-polaci-maji-rozhled-britove-uz-tapou.html](http://www.novinky.cz/cestovani/226301-jak-ceskou-republiku-vnimaji-v-zahranici-polaci-maji-rozhled-britove-uz-tapou.html)). Unfortunately, most of the foreigners associate the Czech Republic with the negative phenomena: crimes, high prices, discrimination etc. From the positive phenomena, they are mostly aware of sport, cultural monuments and typical Czech cuisine.

The attitude of German tourists seem very interesting, because mostly they give us the impression of funny, friendly or sociable people. But on the other hand, they are renowned for their strictness, thoroughness or aloofness. These character properties can influence Czech people in a negative way, because mostly the members of our culture are not used to respect them, the people consider them to be strange.

The research on the Internet websites was focused on the interview with foreigners and their relationship towards the Czech Republic in general, its culture, interesting sights and the character properties of Czech native people. All of these conditions can influence their evaluation of our country, which can later be reflected in many aspects, from the choice of their holiday destination, to the choice of international business partners.

## **5.2. The relationship of Czech administrative workers toward foreigners**

On the other hand, there exists a special kind of research, which is based especially on the issues of administration, foreign policy and immigration. Such survey, focused on the way, how do the administration workers in the Czech Republic treat foreigners, was published in May 2011 in Mladá Fronta Dnes newspaper. This research is called “*The Migrant Integration Policy Index survey*”, within this research “...*autoři srovnali podmínky pro život migrantů v 31 státech Evropy a Severní Ameriky [the authors compared the conditions of the life of migrants in thirty-one states of Europe and North America].”* (ŠVEC; 5)

The results of Migrant Integration Policy Index survey are really unexpected: “*Podle mezinárodní studie o vztazích států k cizincům je Česko pod průměrem. Cizinci tady nemají skoro žádná politická práva. Navíc si stěžují na šikanu od úředníků, kteří mají relativně volnou ruku při rozhodování o pobytech [According to the international study, dealing with the relationship of individual countries towards foreigners, the Czech Republic is below the average. The foreigners have almost no political rights. Furthermore they complain about the*

*bullying by the officials, who are relatively unrestricted, while deciding about the sojourn].”* (ŠVEC; 5)

In the following quotation, we should clarify the countries, taking the initial places, in connection to the political rights of foreigners and the way that the administrative workers treat foreigners and asylum applicants from. It also contains the positive fact about the Czech Republic and the evaluation within international research:

*“Kdyby si lidé z Ruska, Afriky či Asie, kteří se rozhodnou hledat štěstí v některé z evropských zemí mohli zvolit mist pro život, asi by nejčastěji volili Švédsko nebo Portugalsko. Právě tyto země jsou k cizincům nejpřívětivější. Česko skončilo na podprůměrném devatenáctém místě prakticky za všemi západními zeměmi. Byť – vyjma Slovinska – v čele všech postkomunistických zemí [If people from Russia, Africa or Asia, who decide to try one’s luck in any of the European countries, could choose a place to live, they would mostly choose Sweden or Portugal. Just these countries are the most affable toward foreigners. The Czech Republic ends up at the nineteenth place, which is below the average. Though – except Slovenia – at the head of all post communistic countries].”* (ŠVEC; 5)

### **5.2.1. Personal experiences of Oksana Rizak, an Ukrainian lawyer**

To mention at least one example of a foreigner, who is able to handle the complains of foreigners, bullying by the Czech administrative workers, the newspaper run an utterance of an Ukrainian lawyer Oksana Rizak:

*“Její klienti si stěžují, že zdejší úředníci, kteří povolují pobyty, si k nim dovolí to, co by si k Čechům nedovolili. Vědí totiž, že cizinec se nemůže bránit. O mnoho víc než v okolních zemích je totiž vydán úředníkům na pospas – zákon jim umožňuje víceméně subjektivně rozhodovat o tom, jestli jeho pobyt povolí, či nikoliv. ... Nejde však jen o přístup úředníků. Cizinci v Česku na rozdíl od vyspělého světa například nemají téměř žádná politická práva. Lidé ze zemí mimo EU tady nesmějí volit, vstupovat do stran a nejsou zváni ani do poradních orgánů, které se věnují přistěhovalectví Česko je v této oblasti na předposledním místě [Her clients complain, that the officials in the Czech Republic, who permits the sojourn, dare to the foreigners, what they would never dare towards native Czech people. They know that the foreigners can not defend themselves. The foreigner is – much more than in other countries – issued to the officials, because the law allows them to decide, more less subjectively, whether*

*they permit his sojourn or not. (...) The approach of the officials is not the only point here. For example the foreigners in Czech Republic – unlike the developed world – have almost no political rights. People from the countries out of the European Union can not vote here, they can not join the political parties and they are even not invited to the consultative bodies, dealing with the immigration. In this branch, Czech Republic is on the penultimate place].” (ŠVEC;5)*

### **5.3. How do Czech companies increase their reputation**

Fortunately many organisations nowadays deal with the issues of immigration, foreigners and foreign policy. In his article in Mladá Fronta Dnes from the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2011 Petr Švec has noticed, that *“Zlepšit obrázek Česka v očích cizinců se snaží několik neziskových organizací. Třeba IQ Roma oceňuje firmy, jež cizince zaměstnávají. ... Oceněním se firmy mohou prezentovat navenek a také jsou k nim vstřícnější úřady práce či státní instituce udělující granty [several non-profit organisations try to improve the reputation of Czech Republic towards foreigners. For example IQ Roma awards the companies, which employ the foreigners. (...). With such award, the companies can present themselves outwardly and also the employment offices or the authorities, dealing with grants are much more obliging towards them].” (ŠVEC;5)* The award can contribute to the increasing satisfaction of foreigners, who can perceive Czech culture much more positively. The question is, whether the awards can influence the interest of the whole Czech society, not only the local companies dealing with the issue of foreigners and immigrants. The approach of Czech citizens to the employing of foreigners can be deduced from the included diagram (pic.1). In Czech Republic exists some organisations, helping the foreigners in need. Some of them are primarily specialised on the regions, affected by the natural disasters, epidemical diseases or war conflicts, the others try to deal with the law and human rights. From the famous ones working in Czech Republic, we should mention The Red Cross, Adra or Člověk v tísni (the two of the last mentioned celebrate their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in this year). Such organisations are nowadays very popular and they help to solve the issues of foreigners in every country worldwide.

### **6. The use of languages in the representative functions**

In September 2011 the newspaper editors of Mladá Fronta Dnes conducted a research, dealing with the formal use of English language by Czech politicians and deputies. This

research brings quite a surprising finding: *“Poslanci zahraničního a evropského výboru reprezentují Česko jako diplomaté. Přesto někteří z nich nedokážou komunikovat ani v angličtině. V testu MF DNES uspěli jen tři z devíti zákonodárců. Dvě figurantky, které vystupovaly jako anglicky mluvící novinářky, se dovolaly sedmi poslancům a jednomu senátorovi. Zkoušeli s nimi udělat krátký rozhovor... [The deputies of European and alien parliament represent Czech Republic as the diplomats. Nevertheless some of them can not communicate in English. In the test of MF DNES only three out of nine legislators succeeded. The two volunteers, who pretended to be English speaking journalists, have called seven deputies and one senator. They tried to make a short interview with them...]”* (MF DNES; 1)

### 6.1. Topic of the interview

For the interview, they have chosen typically political issue, which has been frequently discussed by Czech politicians as well as native public. To summarise the linguistic features, useful for the interview we should mention, that *“Šlo o téma, které vyžaduje souvislejší projev, ale nikoliv znalost těžkých odborných termínů [the topic required the coherent speech, but it doesn't require the knowledge of complicated technical terms].”* (MF DNES; 1) Generally said, the political topics require the particular level of communication skills in English, sometimes it should be based on the specific terms, used in the field of administration, control and policy, so that the politicians can prove their language skills, while representing the Czech Republic abroad. The necessity of the language skills among politicians is documented even by the author of the article: *“... pro poslance zahraničního výboru je angličtina nutností [For the alien parliamentary committee is English absolutely necessary].”* (MF DNES; 2)

### 6.2. Results of the political research

The results of the survey have proven that sometimes the language skills are not equal to the representative functions of Czech politicians: *“Dvě poslankyně (...) na dotaz v angličtině nedokázaly zareagovat a později přiznaly, že anglicky neumějí. Dodaly, že ovládají jiné cizí jazyky. ... Dva zákonodárci tvrdili, že mají špatný signal, a proto nerozumějí. ... Tři poslanci prokázali dobrou znalost angličtiny, tři příliš nepřesvědčili, dvě poslankyně nedokázaly mluvit vůbec [The two women-deputies were not able to react to the question in English, later they confessed that they can not speak English. They also added that they can*

*speak other foreign languages. ... Two legislatives claimed that the phone signal was insufficient and therefore they didn't understand. ... Three deputies prove efficient knowledge of English, three didn't prevail, two women-deputies weren't able to speak at all].” (MF DNES; 1-2). In the modern age, English or other foreign language skills are the necessary aspect of all people applying for the job (and not only in the chief positions).*

## **7. The issue of foreigners and immigrants in Pilsen**

On the 27th October 2011 Česká Televize has broadcasted a report about the increasing influx of foreigners in Pilsen: *“V Plzni přibývá cizinců. Vozí je tam pracovní agentury na sezónní práce a město se obává rostoucích potíží. Podle řady lidí jsou problémy s cizinci už neúnosné. S ministerstvem vnitra se proto radnice podílí na projektu, který má situaci s migranty zmapovat a také pomoci řešit atmosféru mezi plzeňskou veřejností [The number of foreigners in Pilsen is increasing. They are carried to Pilsen by the working agencies, outsourcing the seasonal jobs; therefore the city governance is afraid to be facing the difficulties, connected with the foreigners. In the opinion of many people, the issues of foreigners are insufferable. The city governance, together with the Ministry of Interior, participates in the project that should conduct a survey of the immigrant's situation, and also should help to solve the atmosphere among the public in Pilsen].”* (<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10118379000-udalosti-v-regionech/211411000141027/video/>)

There is just an estimation of the number of immigrants, living and working in Czech Republic. Sometimes, it is really difficult to count all the foreign citizens, because *“o lidech z takzvaných “třetích zemí” je sice vedena statistika, problém je ale s občany Evropské unie [there is an exact evidence of people, who come to the Czech Republic from so called “third world countries”, but the problem resides in the European Union citizens].”* (<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10118379000-udalosti-v-regionech/211411000141027/video/>), who are subordinate to the rules of Schengen area and therefore, they can live and work in every European Union country, without the necessity of customs evidence.

### 7.1. Life conditions of the migrants in Pilsen

Although this report deals mostly with the experiences of Romanian and Bulgarian manufacture workers, we can easily imagine the life conditions of immigrants. These conditions may later reflect on their relationship towards Czech culture and Czech nation in general. It means, that if the immigrants mostly “*místo tučného výdělků živoří v nelidských podmínkách [eke out a living in a subhuman conditions instead of the high income].*” (<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10118379000-udalosti-v-regionech/211411000141027/video/>)

they will still complain about the indifference of Czech administration, which (sometimes unwittingly) allows the employers to treat the foreigners as the members of an inferior nationality or race. In the extreme cases, this acting can lead to the conflicts, described in a report: “*Podle lidí, kteří jsou s cizinci v denodenním kontaktu je situace vážná a podobný scénář se může kdykoliv opakovat [According to the people, who are daily in the contact with foreigners, the situation is very serious and such conflict can happen again anytime].*” (<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10118379000-udalosti-v-regionech/211411000141027/video/>)

### 7.2. The attitude of city supervisors

The second part of the report describes the project that should improve the situation of foreigners as well as the local citizens. “*Projekt integrace cizinců se v následujících měsících zaměří na monitoring problémových oblastí, ale také na Plzeňany. Magistrát chce, aby veřejnost věděla, že situaci řeší. [Within the next months, the project of foreigners’ immigration will be focused on the observation in the problematic areas as well as the Pilsen inhabitants. The municipality of Pilsen wants the public to be aware, that the officials try to solve this situation].*” (<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10118379000-udalosti-v-regionech/211411000141027/video/>). Even in Pilsen there exist many organisations today, dealing with the issues of immigrants, immigration policy and their integration into major society and it would be surely interesting to observe their progress in solving this situation. The attempts for improving the situation of foreigners in Pilsen appear in June 2012, which can be proved by the report from the webpage <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10118379000-udalosti-v-regionech/212411000140606/video/>. This report also describes the connection of multiculturalism and medical services. Medicine is one of the significant areas, where

intercultural knowledge and intercultural competences can be used. On the other hand, we can focus on the reserved approach of foreigners towards Czech institutions or individuals.

## **PRACTICAL RESEARCH**

### **8. How do Czech people perceive foreigners – results of the research**

The second part of this thesis will be focused on the practical research among Czech people, who were asked to fill in the questionnaire about their relationship toward foreigners. The foreigners do not create the inconsiderable constituent of the population of every region of Czech Republic, as it is proven in the picture 1. The results of the research will be described in the following chapter.

#### **8.1. Personal data of questioned people**

First part of the research was focused on the personal data. This data included rough estimate of the age as well as the information about gender and the highest achieved level of education. In total we had 64 questionnaires at the disposal; out of this amount 14 could not be appraised, because of the missing data (mostly personal data, used for the comparison within this research). All the answers were determined according to the various possibilities of answers: the minimal age of 15 years up to the maximal age 50 years and above, female and male gender, primary, secondary and university education. According to this data we may find out, that the questioned people were mostly aged 15 – 25 years (17 out of 50), the women prevail the men in a ratio of 36 to 14. In the sphere of highest achieved education, we may found out that the largest part of questioned people consists of those, achieving secondary education, ended by the school leaving exam.

#### **8.2. The reactions of Czech people**

Czech people mostly do not have the decided attitude towards foreigners. Out of 50 questioned people 42 perceive the foreigners positively or quite positively. Specifically 37 people claimed, they perceive the foreigners quite positively and 5 entirely positive. In the answers, referring to this question, Czech people mostly agree with the fact that they do not have to be negative towards foreigners, until the foreigners do not provoke the intercultural

conflict. Czech people in general admire the foreigners, especially Vietnamese people for their diligence, they disapprove Roma people, who in their opinion raise their children only to be lazy, not to work and receive social benefits. Some of the Czech respondents even think that there is too much foreigners working in Czech Republic, as it is shown on the picture 4. Most of the Czech people have personal experience with the foreigners, some of the questioned students were working in the organisations dealing with the issue of foreigners (language schools, guiding, working abroad) or they even have their friends among the members of different nationalities. Therefore Czech people perceive the majorities positively and in the case of need, they would be glad to help the foreigners. 8 of the questioned people claimed, they perceive foreigners quite negatively, but later they were more specific – most of them would be glad to help a foreigner in need, but they are limited by their insufficient language skills.

### **8.3. Racism and xenophobia in the Czech Republic**

The question about racism and xenophobia was probably the most surprising one, since Czech people perceive Czech nation as one of the most xenophobic and racist ones in the Europe. Other nations worldwide, considered racist or xenophobic were: German, Arabic and Muslim, French, Slovak, Chinese, Americans, Russians, Jude, British, nations of the “third world”, Roma and Magyar nation. This enumeration affirms that Czech people are focused primarily on the countries, where most of the foreigners come from. They tend to condemn the preconceptions towards foreigners, on the other hand they want the foreigners to respect Czech rules and help to build the cultural values within Czech society.

Some people mentioned an interesting example, referring to the racist nationalities, since every nation is essentially racist and the extremists can be found in every country worldwide. They are also aware of the fact, that the individuals and groups of foreigners can be dangerous, but not the whole nationalities. We have not other choice but agree with this opinion, because modern age requires circumspections, and nowadays people worldwide use this attribute even in their perception of foreign cultures. More interesting fact is that Czech people are not influenced by the period of socialism, when the possibilities of travelling to the exotic countries and mixture of foreign cultures were limited. They agree with the fact, that the people were depended on the family incomes, rather than the political regime. The generation of elderly people is, in their opinion, influenced by the period of communism. Therefore they can yield to the preconceptions more easily than the generation of young

people, who can orientate themselves in the world. They also added that because of being influenced by communistic regime, Czech people stigmatize other nations. Such stigmas could create the base for preconceptions and racism.

The connection of preconceptions and political system can be applied even in the modern age. Some of the questioned people agree with the fact, that the preconceptions are influenced by modern political system. In their opinion Roma people would not work, because they are afraid of losing their social benefits as their only income, Vietnamese people are sometimes too diligent and this is why they occupy the job positions, that were originally made up for Czech people. The result of their statement is following: If we change the way of thinking, we could cope with the issue of foreigners. Of course Czech society should support the opportunities of foreigners, but it sometimes takes a long time.

#### **8.4. The use of foreign languages in the Czech Republic**

This part of the practical research almost affirms the results of above mentioned research, published in the magazine Vlasta. Most of the people in the Czech Republic learn German, English or Russian language. We do not have to take the Czech language (as the native language) into account. Out of 50 people 12 learn German, 12 English, 10 Russian and 4 French as their only language. Some people mentioned the fact, that they learn more than one foreign language in this questionnaire. The most popular combination of the languages, they study is Russian and German. This language combination is learnt by 11 out of 29 people, studying more than one language. This question was free to answer, so that I could find some atypical example of the languages that Czech people use. The most unusual one was Hebrew language, Latin and Greek language. I was also interested in the average time, they learn the foreign language: most of them, specifically 35, learn the foreign language from six to ten years, mostly the students who begin to learn the first foreign language at the primary school.

#### **8.5. The ability of Czech people to help the foreigners in need**

The students, as well as the adults can use foreign languages during their study or in their job. Most of the questioned people more or less use the foreign languages within their study or their job every day or just occasionally. 26 of the asked respondents use some of the foreign languages daily or at least sometimes by reading materials in a foreign language or

within communication with foreign companies. 24 people never use foreign languages while studying or in their job. Each person agreed with the fact, that everyone is responsible just for themselves and those, who keeps endeavouring to communicate in a foreign language, could make themselves understood in this area.

In general Czech people consider their language skills to be average: they have the basis of some foreign languages and they could somehow communicate with the foreigners. 41 of the questioned respondents would help the foreigners. Specifically said, 14 of them would definitely help the foreigner, while 27 would be hesitating before they dare to answer. Only 7 people consider their language skills to be outstanding or at least very good, while 26 regarded these skills to be just at the average level. 17 people explicitly confess, their communicative ability is not sufficient enough, especially the students, who noticed the deterioration while studying in a large city.

The respondents, who answered, that they would not be able to help foreigners in need mostly mentioned their insufficient language skills. On the other hand some of them would try to communicate with the foreigners by all the possible means, just to help them. There is a recognisable trend in the Czech society – Czech people are not afraid to share their opinion, they explicitly acknowledge their negative relationship towards foreigners. 9 people answered, they would not help foreigners, or they would not even try. As mentioned above, sometimes this is caused by their insufficient language skills rather than the racist tendencies. In spite of this some people explicitly confess, they are not pleased to be in contact with the majorities and try to avoid it as much as possible.

## SUMMARY IN CZECH

Hlavním úkolem této bakalářské práce bylo zjistit, jaký vztah mají Češi obecně k příslušníkům cizích národností. Zaměřila jsem se zejména na uplatnění předsudků a jazykové bariéry v jejich chování. Důležitým aspektem byla situace, v níž by byl občan České republiky nucen pomoci příslušníkovi jiné národnosti (například pokud by cizinec hledal určitý objekt ve větším městě, kde se vyznají pouze jeho obyvatelé).

Obecně platí, že Češi vnímají cizince spíše pozitivně, zdůrazňují však důležitost dodržování českých norem a zákonů. Zároveň by byli ochotni pomoci cizinci v případě nouze, někteří z nich by i v případě nedostatečných jazykových znalostí by dokázali nalézt vhodné komunikační prostředky.

Respondenti, kteří cizince vnímají spíše negativně tak nečiní z rasistických pohnutek, většinou se v těchto případech odvolávají na jazykovou bariéru, nebo jiné sociálně-psychologické rysy, které jim brání v komunikaci s cizinci. I v tomto výzkumu se však objevují názory, že příslušníci některých menšin ohrožují českou kulturu (Romové nejsou vychováni k práci, Vietnamci díky své pracovitosti zabírají Čechům pracovní místa).

Celkově však tento výzkum potvrdil obecné mínění o vztahu občanů České republiky a příslušníků cizích národností.

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## **The results of the political test**

How do the legislatives of European and alien committee speak English.

### *Dobří angličtináři [Efficient English speakers]*

*David Šeich (ODS)*

*Václav Kubata (TOP 09)*

*Jan Hamáček (ČSSD)*

### *Not very convincing results [Nepříliš přesvědčivý výkon]*

*Jan Florian (ODS)*

*Gabriela Pecková (TOP 09)*

*Vladimír Dryml (ČSSD)*

### *Unable to speak [Neumějí]*

*Renáta Witoszová (TOP 09)*

*Hana Orgoníková (ČSSD)*

### *Refused the test [Test odmítl]*

*David Vodrážka (ODS)*

### *How do they approach foreigners*

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Points</i>
1	Sweden	83
2	Portugal	79
3	Canada	72
4	Finland	69
5	Netherlands	68
6	Belgium	67
7	Norway	66
8	Spain	63
9	The USA	62
10	Italy	60
11	Luxembourg	59
12 - 13	Germany	57
12 - 13	Great Britain	57
14	Denmark	53
15	France	51
16 -17	Greece	49
16 - 17	Ireland	49
18	Slovenia	48
<b>19 – 20</b>	<b>Czech Republic</b>	<b>46</b>
19 – 20	Estonia	46
31	Latvia	31

*Note:*

80 – 100 pts. *Convenient*

60 – 79 pts. *Mildly convenient*

41 – 59 pts. *Fifty-fifty*

40 and less *Inconvenient*

(Zdroj: POKORNÝ, Jakub a Radka ŘÍMANOVÁ. Speak Czech, please! Poslanci se potýkají s angličtinou. *Mladá Fronta: DNES*. 2011, roč. 22, č. 213, s.2.)

## THE FULFILLED QUESTIONNAIRE

## Jak Češi vnímají cizince – veřejný průzkum

Věk: 37

Pohlaví: ŽENA

Nejvyšší vzdělání: SS ✓

1) Zformulujte stručně váš postoj vůči příslušníkům cizích národností. Jak vnímáte předsudky občanů České Republiky vůči národnostním menšinám ?

- Mám pozitivní vztah k cizincům. Zcela odmítám národnostní předsudky.
- Spíše pozitivní vztah. Pokud mohu, rád/a cizincům pomohu, jejich společnost však nevyhledávám.
- Spíše negativní vztah. Snažím se omezit kontakt s cizinci na nejmenší možnou míru.
- Mám negativní vztah k cizincům, trpím předsudky vůči jiným národům

2) Který z evropských či světových národů je podle vás nejvíce xenofobní či rasistický ?

*snad žádný, myslím že xenofobní jsou všechny v různých zeměch.*

3) Myslíte si, že jsou Češi stále poznamenáni zákazem cestování v době komunismu ? NE

4) Studoval/a jste někdy cizí jazyk ? Pokud ano, jaký a jak dlouho ?

RJ - 8 let  
NJ - 4 roky  
AJ - 10 let

5) Jak byste celkově ohodnotil/a své jazykové znalosti ?

- Vynikající – bez problémů se domluví, umím komunikovat v různých světových jazycích (mluvený i psaný projev, odborné termíny), zvládám i překlad těžších cizojazyčných textů, má slovní zásoba se blíží úrovni rodilého mluvčího, jazyky využívám profesionálně i ve svém zaměstnání
- Dobré – ovládám několik cizích jazyků, umím komunikovat v mluveném i psaném projevu, přestože neznám odborné termíny mám dostatečnou slovní zásobu, umím předkládat jednodušší cizojazyčné texty, maturoval/a jsem z cizího jazyka
- Průměrné – mám základní znalosti jednoho až dvou cizích jazyků, v případě potřeby bych se dokázal/a domluvit, mám průměrnou slovní zásobu, umím překládat krátké cizojazyčné texty
- Nedostatečné – neovládám žádný světový jazyk (případně znám pouze některá jednotlivá slova); pokud jim rozumím, umím přeložit pouze jednotlivá slova; má slovní zásoba je nedostatečná

6) Využíváte cizí jazyk při svém studiu / zaměstnání ?

- Ano, denně nebo téměř každý den (věnuji se mu profesionálně, jsem často v zahraničí)
- Ano, občas
- Ne

7) Uměl/a byste pomoci cizinci v případě nutnosti?

- Ano – netrpím předsudky, mé jazykové schopnosti pro komunikaci s cizinci jsou dostatečné
- Spíše ano – pokud mě cizinec osloví, rád/a mu pomohu
- Spíše ne – byl bych ochoten cizinci pomoci, nemám k tomu však patřičné předpoklady (jazykové, sociální, charakterové)
- Ne – cizinci bych z různých důvodů nepomohl/a

Proč jste se rozhodl/a právě pro tuto odpověď ?

*rád/a pomohu  
v nouzi komunikaci, pokud mohu :-)*

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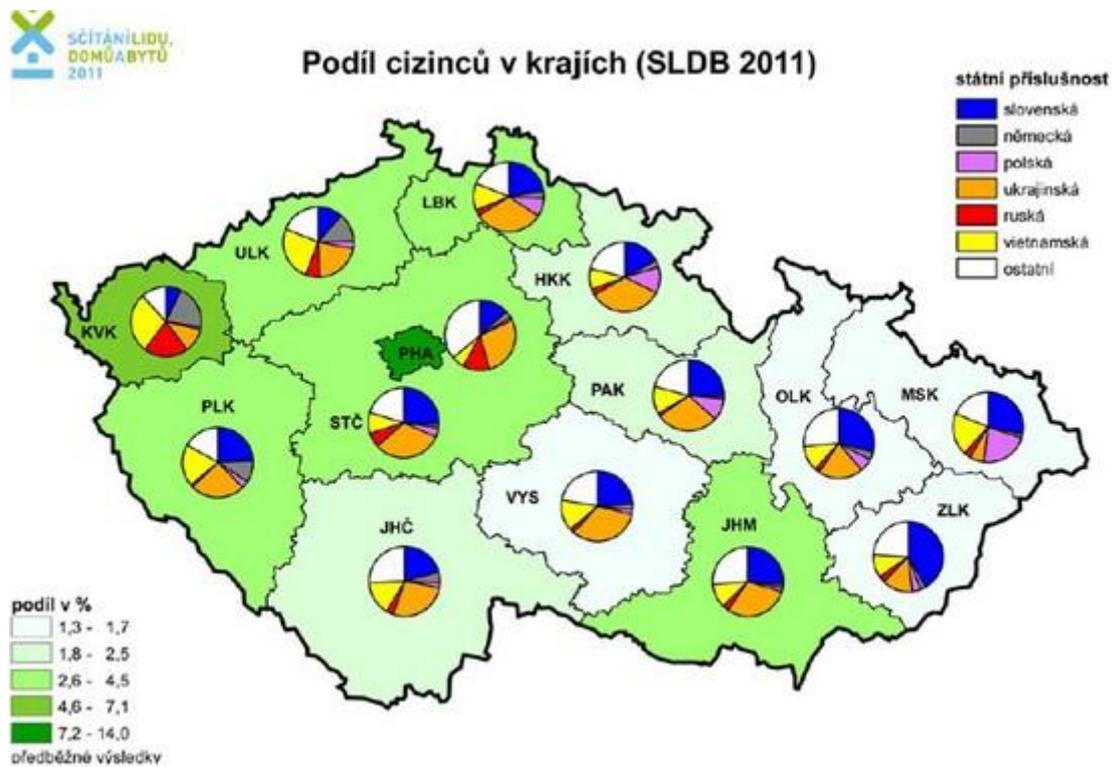
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Picture 1 – The regional amount of foreigners (according to the nationalities) in year 2011

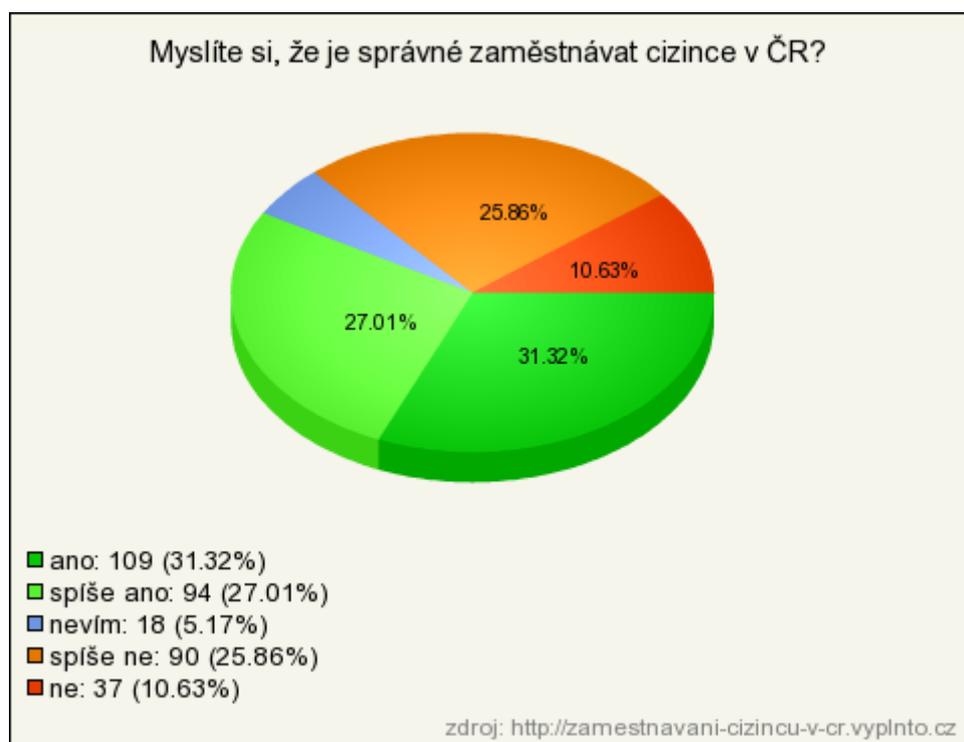
Picture 2 - The attitude of Czech people towards employing foreigners

Picture 3 - Some examples of organisations helping foreigners in need

Picture 4 – Are there too much foreigners working in the Czech Republic?



Pic.1: The regional amount of foreigners (according to the nationalities) in year 2011  
(Zdroj: <http://www.novinyvm.cz/3065-predbezne-vysledky-scitani-lidu-domu-a-bytu-2011.html>)



Pic.2: The attitude of Czech people towards employing foreigners

Pic. 3. - Some examples of organisations helping foreigners in need.



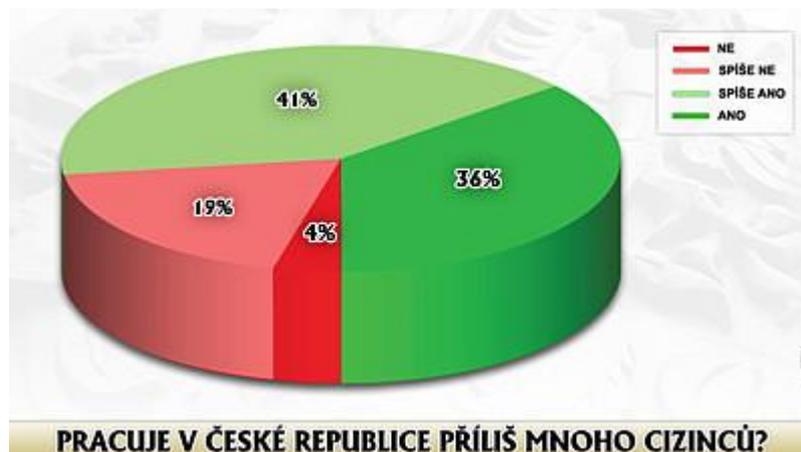
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Pic. 4 – Czech people contend, there is a lot of a foreigners working in the Czech Republic.

(Resource:[http://obrazky.cz/detail?q=cizinci&offset=1&limit=20&bUrlPar=filter%3D1&resNum=1&ref=http%3A//www.seznam.cz/&resID=H85rkiuTZlfUbg1kiQINe\\_RWZANtYIW23ydDHN3bY0&imgURL=http%3A//media.novinky.cz/233/322337-top\\_foto2-w6ax7.jpg&pageURL=http%3A//www.novinky.cz/ekonomika/267998-v-tuzemsku-pracuje-prilis-mnogo-cizincu-mysli-si-cesi.html&imgX=400&imgY=225&imgSize=24&thURL=http%3A//media4.picsearch.com/is%3FH85rkiuTZlfUbg1kiQINe\\_RWZANtYIW23ydDHN3bY0&thX=128&thY=72&qNoSite=cizinci&siteWWW=&sId=B-NBX\\_EnwA5Bbs4AxSSY](http://obrazky.cz/detail?q=cizinci&offset=1&limit=20&bUrlPar=filter%3D1&resNum=1&ref=http%3A//www.seznam.cz/&resID=H85rkiuTZlfUbg1kiQINe_RWZANtYIW23ydDHN3bY0&imgURL=http%3A//media.novinky.cz/233/322337-top_foto2-w6ax7.jpg&pageURL=http%3A//www.novinky.cz/ekonomika/267998-v-tuzemsku-pracuje-prilis-mnogo-cizincu-mysli-si-cesi.html&imgX=400&imgY=225&imgSize=24&thURL=http%3A//media4.picsearch.com/is%3FH85rkiuTZlfUbg1kiQINe_RWZANtYIW23ydDHN3bY0&thX=128&thY=72&qNoSite=cizinci&siteWWW=&sId=B-NBX_EnwA5Bbs4AxSSY))