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ANGLICKÉHO JAZYKA: ANGLIČTINY**

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Thesis

**PARADIGM SHIFT IN ENGLISH TEACHING:
ENGLISHES**

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Tato stránka bude ve svázané práci Váš původní formulář *Zadáni dipl. práce*
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Jméno Příjmení

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ABSTRACT

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The thesis deals with the topic of comprehension of and attitudes towards accented speech as perceived by secondary school English learners. In the literature review, the reasons for incorporating elements of Global Englishes, into English classes are explained as well as the elements of spoken discourse, teaching listening skills, and learners' attitudes and language identity. The greatest importance is put on approaches to teaching so called oral skills, i.e. listening and speaking alongside with pronunciation, which take into account the global status of English. The conducted research is described in the second part of the thesis. The research, realized by the means of worksheets and questionnaires, explored students' comprehension level and attitudes towards non-native accented speech. Based on the results of the research, it is concluded that the surveyed students improved their comprehension skills, especially in top-down processing tasks; however, no significant changes in attitudes were observed. An interesting correlation between the higher level of comprehension and more positive attitudes arose from the conducted research.

Keywords: accented speech, listening comprehension skills, language attitudes, Global Englishes, English as an International Language

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I. INTRODUCTION

Global Englishes, alongside with other terms like World Englishes (WE), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), English as an International Language (EIL) have been pervading English language teaching (ELT) for a while now. As a part of the globalized world we live in, English has become the predominant language in international communication and as Crystal (2003, p. 5) states, English is “the language most widely taught as a foreign language”. This applies to most Czech schools as well, where English is normally introduced in grade three of primary school at the latest, and is hence the first foreign language Czech children start to learn, followed by German, Spanish, Russian or French later on in grade seven. This setup corresponds to the EU policies about foreign languages, which has set its goal to all EU citizens being able to communicate in at least three different languages. The importance of foreign languages is also anchored in the Czech national curriculum, Framework Education Programme for Basic Education, where the following approach to languages is clearly stated: “[languages] contribute to understanding and discovering facts that go beyond the experience facilitated by the mother tongue. These fields provide a vivid language basis and the prerequisites for the pupils’ ability to communicate within an integrated Europe and the rest of the world.” (Framework, 2007, p. 19).

English is no longer the privilege of native speakers, it has become the lingua franca, meaning speakers of different origins use it as a means of mutual understanding, while neither of them would describe English as their mother tongue. This conflict, or paradigm shift, is described by Rose & Galloway as follows:

The rise of English as a global language has changed the foundations of how the language is taught and learned. The pedagogical implications of the change in the use of English by second language learners have led many scholars to call for a paradigm shift in the field of English language teaching. Scholars have argued that such a shift is necessary to reframe language teaching in order to match the new sociolinguistic landscape of the twenty-first century. (Rose & Galloway, 2019, p. 4)

Due to this paradigm shift in ELT I want to integrate the most up-to-date knowledge into my daily teaching practice and pursue current trends in ELT, including Global Englishes. I am interested in finding out how my A2-B1 students respond to different varieties of English, which are not a standard part of the curriculum they are following, i.e. other than British (BrE) and American English (AmE) . Hence, the aim of this thesis is to identify the learners' responses on two different levels - intelligibility and attitudes.

Two research questions were identified for this thesis:

1. Does controlled exposure to different varieties of English influence the learners' comprehension of different varieties of English? If yes, in what way?
2. Does controlled exposure to different varieties of English influence the learners' attitudes towards different varieties of English? If yes, in what way?

As a theoretical base for the above-described research, the next sections deal with the following areas of interest:

- English as an international language (EIL)
- Intelligibility, comprehensibility of spoken discourse and pronunciation features
- Teaching listening skills
- Attitudes, Language Identity and Motivation.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In the following part, key literature in four areas connected to the research of this thesis is reviewed. Based on the paradigm shift in ELT toward a more global approach inclusive of all varieties and abandoning the native-speaker ideas, the (almost non-existent) role of this concept in the Czech educational curriculum is examined together with other terms and pedagogical implications that are closely related to this ongoing change. Next, in the section on intelligibility, comprehensibility of spoken discourse, and pronunciation features, we look at what it is that makes one's speech more understandable as well as some useful strategies that might increase the level of the learners' understanding – explicit pronunciation training of suprasegmental features, communication strategies as well as a thorough lead-in into a listening task and other listening strategies. And finally, the role of motivation and language identity in attitudes to individual varieties of English is discussed; looking mainly into the self-system theory and also at integrative motivation as possible driving forces behind one's studying English and being part of an international community of speakers of English.

English as an international language

As mentioned in the introduction, the way that the English language is used in modern society has changed to a lingua franca. Although non-native speakers of other languages, who use English as a means of mutual understanding and learned English as their L2, the curriculum and materials are still designed mostly around two predominant models, or varieties, of English, namely the British and the American varieties. This disagreement between the curriculum and the real language use is also criticized by McKay & Brown (2016), who open their book with a fairly strong statement: “The majority of English teaching today is based on the assumption that the goal of learners is to acquire Standard English based on the language spoken by native speakers of English.” (McKay & Brown, 2016, p. XIII). Most of McKay & Brown's following chapters then analyze more closely two central concepts: “Standard English” and “native speaker”, importance of which they call into question, as well as other notions based on their initial assumptions, including new approaches to teaching the four language skills, to grammar and vocabulary instruction etc. Both linguists and teacher trainers acknowledge that learning English to achieve a native-like competency is no longer the ultimate goal of ELT.

In order to achieve a common agreement in a newer approach to both curriculums and teaching materials as well as to amend the attitudes of both ELT professionals and language learners, we need to deal with multiple definitions of the “native speaker” and “Standard English”. Therefore, two possible solutions to the current situation are proposed by McKay & Brown (2016). The first one offers developing a so-called Global English Standard that would recognize several versions of English disregarding dialect while upholding mainly the intelligibility principle. This would lead to a maximization of effective communication. The second one solution, on the other hand, promotes a locally defined EIL(s) (English as an international language) that would be different to every nation allowing for a certain influence of L1.

David Crystal (2003), a classic linguist, also deals with the topic of English conquering the world through its massive influence on other cultures, economies, politics and even geography. However, he mainly talks about English as a Global language (EGL), while other researchers with a more pedagogical background typically use the term English as an International language (EIL). The terms English as a Global language, English as an International language, English as a Lingua franca, English as Means of international communication etc. might seem a little confusing, and while some researchers (e.g. Alsagoff et al., 2012) strictly distinguish between these terms, others use them almost interchangeably, since they are an integral part of the World Englishes discourse.

Until the professional community decides on which way is the way to go, and there is no central policy on this matter, it is a challenge for each one of ESL teachers to rethink their approach and adapt to the above-described changes in their daily classroom practices particularly due to the following reasons:

- a massive heterogeneity of present-day English in terms of phonology, structure, lexis, pragmatics and discourse;
- attaining so-called native-like proficiency is not the ultimate goal for many learners anymore;
- many ELT teachers are L2 speakers themselves and it is impossible for them to fully abandon their L1 influences even as teachers;

- the majority of language exchanges through English occur between two L2 speakers;
- and the cultural basis for ELT has become far more complex with its geographical spread across the globe (McKay & Brown, 2016).

The very first argument of McKay and Brown, English having developed to an extremely heterogeneous language spoken worldwide, suggests that not only teachers but also learners will inevitably encounter different varieties of the language on their path of learning and teaching English. Especially to the learners, this heterogeneity might cause confusion, struggle to learn new vocabulary, spelling difficulties and misunderstandings. The phonological, structural, lexical and pragmatic diversity of English described by McKay & Brown (2016) implies that teachers should be aware of these inconsistencies and familiarize the learners with them. Teachers should also bear in mind that the learners, too, most likely encounter different varieties of English online or in their daily lives, affecting them on all levels - both in understanding and production. Therefore, teachers should be more tolerant to different versions of spelling or pronunciation, not only those suggested by their teaching materials. Although there are many popular materials comparing selected varieties of English, these are still mainly focusing on differences in vocabulary and pronunciation of BrE and AmE, leaving other varieties and L2 English speakers aside.

Low & Pakir (2017) accentuate possible assessment difficulties arising from this fact, when the assessment process and criteria simply cannot follow the traditional native-speaker role model anymore and have become far more complex due to all the influences the learners are exposed to in their everyday life. (Guangwei Hu in Low & Pakir, 2017). Accepting only one possible version of a word or a phrase is certainly not a way to go, although some consistency in spelling, accent or pronunciation still remains favored.

Dealing not only with assessment but also with teaching of the four skills or grammar and vocabulary, Jenkins (2006) suggests possible ways of implementing some EIL principles in every ELT teacher's daily practice: First, in a narrower and a more traditional approach to the World Englishes discourse, she recommends introducing

some typical features of selected inner- and outer-circle varieties (see Kachru, 1992), e.g. typical vocabulary of the Australian, Canadian, New Zealand or Singapore varieties together with the study of facts and life in these countries aiming at the learners' interest and engagement in some "fun facts" (e.g. joey, didgeridoo, kiwi, wet market). Secondly, in a wider, newer and more pluricentric approach to English teaching, exposing the learners to other L2 speakers' discourse and training the ear for heterogeneity. The latter is in fact also the subject matter of the research part of this thesis.

This is based on the fact pointed out by Jenkins (2006), McKay & Brown (2016), Rose & Galloway (2019) and others, that most learners are likely to use English in international communication as a lingua franca, i. e. in interaction with people whose first language is also different from English (Jenkins, 2006). It is even possible for some learners that they will hardly ever communicate with a native speaker of English, while they might use English on a daily basis. In this case, learners should get used to how different English speakers of various L1s sound like; all of whom can be expected to have specific features of "their" English in terms of both accent and grammar, especially at lower levels, their English might be strongly influenced by their mother tongue. (Gass, 2013; Rose & Galloway, 2019). In some cases, minor interference errors do not disturb any mutual understanding, while in other cases the influence of L1 might be so strong that it prevents the communication partner from getting the message across, in other words, violating the principle of intelligibility.

Literature on intelligibility alongside comprehensibility and other key concepts is reviewed in the next section.

Intelligibility, comprehensibility of spoken discourse and pronunciation features

For the purpose of this thesis, we will look at intelligibility and comprehensibility in oral skills, i.e. speaking and listening. In this oral skills team, speaking is the productive skill and listening represents its receptive counterpart. Connecting both of these skills into "oracy", which is a term used by McKay & Brown (2016) to describe the ability to speak and to understand spoken language.

In order to become successful communicators, skilled in oracy, learners need to master the individual components of oracy we shall define here. It is typical that learners, and L2 speakers in general, with enough language confidence, often aim at exchanging

information and communicating no matter the correctness or accuracy of the language they use; this is related to a key feature of oracy – intelligibility, i.e. the actual degree to which an utterance is understood. There are two other terms we need to fully understand what intelligibility means: comprehensibility and accentedness (McKay & Brown, 2016). Comprehensibility has to do with the perceived difficulty or ease of understanding certain utterances as perceived by the listener; while accentedness is how strong the speaker’s foreign accent is perceived to be (Munro & Derwing, 1995, cited in McKay & Brown, 2016).

However, one aspect of intelligibility has not been mentioned yet, and it is the listener’s effort to actually understand. This shared responsibility between the speaker and the listeners is described by both McKay & Brown (2016) and Thir (2020) and it makes us distinguish between several factors affecting pronunciation intelligibility: speaker-related, listener-related and context-related factors.

First, speaker-related factors. These are what international users of English find important for mutual understanding. According to Jenkins, segmentals (e.g. th-sounds, aspiration in p, t, k, vowel length and vowel quality, weak forms) play an important role in shorter conversations, but the longer the speech gets, the more important the suprasegmental aspects become (e.g. nuclear stress, chunking, elision, assimilation, intrusion). Based on this, Thir (2020) concludes and advises helping learners build general speaking habits, such as speech rate or volume rather than excessively focusing on segmental features of pronunciation. McKay & Brown (2016) add that in order for spoken language to be understood, it should bear the qualities of being “natural and normal”. These qualities include the above listed suprasegmentals. Note, however, that there is no mention of grammatical accuracy or accent on this list. McKay & Brown (2016) recommend more explicit pronunciation training focusing on these features most helpful for understanding and de-emphasizing those relatively unhelpful ones (such as the perfect pronunciation of individual phonemes).

Each speaker’s pronunciation also depends on the role model the speaker is inspired by. There has been a disagreement though over the model of English pronunciation that should be taught to L2 speakers (Kelly, 2000). In the past, the ultimate role model was Received Pronunciation (RP) which (although in fact spoken by a very small number of speakers - Jenkins, 2000) still has its influences even now and might be a target model

that some learners will have in mind. It is true that most learners will most likely have such a model they want to mimic or come closer to when it comes to pronunciation, whether this be RP, their teacher, favorite actor or other speakers. It is therefore important to expose learners to as many heterogeneous versions of pronunciation and accents and to allow them to choose this role model for themselves and adapt or mimic it in their own language production.

In terms of language reception, or listener-related factors of intelligibility, the success in communication and mutual understanding highly depend on the familiarity with the speaker, language attitude, L1 background and listener proficiency related to age, aptitude and expertise (Thir, 2020). Whether or not learners, in this context listeners, and familiar with a specific accent as well as whether or not they are used to non-native speech in general, influences their reactions and degree of understanding. It is assumed that more frequent exposure to L1 and L2 speakers of different accents not only trains the ear but also has a positive impact on attitudes, which itself facilitates comprehension, while unfavorable attitudes towards a certain group of people decrease one's understanding, effort and expectations. Another helpful aspect is sharing certain phonological features of the speakers' L1s while the communication itself is happening through English, it makes it easier for two speakers of related L1s to make themselves understood.

The recommendations for classroom practice arising from these aspects are to raise awareness of different accents, to train the ability to adjust one's own speech and to accommodate to the speaking partner, i.e. to pay particular attention to their own pronunciation to remain intelligible; similarly to McKay & Brown, who advise developing the learners' adaptability to their speaking partner, above all else. Learners should be trained to effectively use certain communication strategies, such as: asking for clarification, repetition, slowing down etc. However, these are only applicable in real-life communication, and not listening comprehension exercises based on a video or an audio. In the case of such comprehension exercises, good enough support can be provided through a lead-in phase that precedes the listening task itself, including working with unknown vocabulary or setting the context. Apart from communication strategies, they also advise teaching learners to develop some specific listening

strategies, such as listening for specific information, noticing or listening for gist. More on teaching listening skills will be reviewed in the upcoming section.

Lastly, there are certain context-related factors that might influence one's speech (not being intelligible): signal-related factors and cognitive processing-related factors. The former category includes objective communication circumstances such as background noise, transmission system, i.e. are we talking on the phone, video calling or talking face to face, social context (the more formal the context, the clearer the pronunciation), and what type of setting the communication is happening in (since in dialogical setting negotiating meaning and adjustment is much easier than in monological setting). In cognitive processing we distinguish between two processes: bottom-up, where we build our way up as we listen for individual sounds, leading us to words and finally to overall meaning; and top-down processing, where we rely on the help of extralinguistic and visual context, our world and background knowledge and other aids that all help us anticipate the content of what we are listening for.

In terms of bottom-up and top-down processing while listening, Jenkins' earlier research (2015) suggested that non-native speakers rely too much on bottom-up processing. According to Jenkins L2 listeners can feel frustrated when not understanding all individual words. However, Thir later researched on the issue and found out differently, that even non-native speakers rely on visual support and background knowledge. Thir (2020) measured the understanding of speakers from 81 different L1 backgrounds through orthographic transcription and concluded that contextual information benefits intelligibility for international listeners from the intermediate level upwards. Hence, Thir recommends practicing the skill of contextualizing with learners, i.e. providing a topic cue or an associated term in order to bring them to the frame of mind, but also to teach them to predict and guess based on what has already been said.

Although there are countless ways of pronunciation and listening training strategies that should be applied in ESL classes, we must realize that some features of pronunciation are simply unteachable through explicit instruction. The best that can be done here is to continue exposing the learners to many different varieties of English in order to become informed about the diversity of English pronunciation. Over time, learners are most likely to acquire these features naturally once they are ready (Jenkins, 2006). But most

importantly, learners should not feel forced to imitate any native accent (unless they wish to) and should become aware of linguistic and cultural variation; they can be taught to appreciate the many Englishes there are, and to acknowledge that local varieties are no less appropriate and valuable than the stereotypical role models.

Teaching listening skills

I have already touched on some concepts central to teaching listening in the earlier section, now I will go into more depth in matters like listening strategies, processing and stages of a listening task.

Listening is a receptive skill which does not focus on the language production as such but rather on being able to comprehend what is being said. We distinguish between several listening tasks and strategies, the most profound of which being bottom-up and top-down processing (Wilson, 2008). In bottom-up processing, we focus on individual sounds and words and advance to the meaning of whole utterances. For the purposes of hearing and understanding isolated words, learners should learn to hear the differences between individual phonemes (Kelly, 2000) in order to distinguish different words (e.g. minimal pairs. This training will be very different based on one's L1 influences. For Czech speakers of English specifically, voiced and voiceless consonants at the end of words can be rather problematic (*hard* versus *heart*, *eyes* versus *ice* etc.); while, for instance, for Spanish speakers of English it might be long and short vowels (*bit* and *beat*, *not* and *note* etc). This type of listening is very important in the beginner and elementary stages where learners rely a lot on decoding the smallest units of speech and also creating their pronunciation habits. Therefore, typical tasks for bottom-up listening include noticing, multiple-choice, gapped text, and overall listening for detailed information. However, the more advanced learners become, the more important role is ascribed to context and background knowledge, in other words, to top-down processing. This also depends on the way we step into the listening task itself; without a lead-in, a pre-listening task, it is very difficult to predict what comes next and the only way is to rely on the sounds heard really. Typical tasks in top-down processing are listening for gist, listening for opinions or main ideas.

I have mentioned the importance of a lead-in stage preceding a listening task itself. It is in fact one of the three stages a well-structured listening lesson should follow: pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening stages (Wilson, 2008). Before we even start

playing the recording there should be an informative or a motivational gist helping the learners understand the context and the setting. For activating schemata enabling such predictions, we use a variety of methods, such as brainstorming, visual aids, headlines and keywords. Typical activities for this stage are guessing, discussing over some pictures and making sure learners can predict whether the listening is a documentary about animals or a job interview. Then, we need to create reasons for listening, that is to raise the learners' curiosity, motivation and interest through personalizing, making the purpose more realistic and relevant to them. Is there anything they want to find out about the topic? It is useful to actually voice it in class, learners themselves might generate questions that they want to have answered in the listening section. Still, at this pre-listening stage, we might also pre-teach new vocabulary and complicated pronunciation features in order to prepare the learners and to help them understand. Learners should be taught to use their world knowledge, therefore we familiarize them with the context; but they should also be encouraged to read the task first and to use their linguistic knowledge (e.g. in gap-fills, working with collocations, idioms and predicting word classes), both of which enable them to complete the task with more ease.

In the next stage, it is crucial to consider the listening text itself based on its attractiveness to the learners (Wilson, 2008). It should be gripping, enjoyable but also culturally accessible and discourse relevant. Besides these factors, we should also consider aspects like the density of the text, language level, length, and the number of speakers while choosing a listening text. Wilson (2008) also mentions the accent of the speakers in our listening task and confirms the earlier reviewed statements of other researchers, that learners should gradually be exposed to a variety of accents as they become more proficient.

While we watch films, listen to podcasts and it is generally enjoyable and natural to listen only for pleasure in real life, there are pedagogical reasons backing the use of while-listening tasks, ideally one or two. These tasks help the learners stay focused, give them the opportunity to follow the structure of the text better, and keep them on topic. Another pedagogical reason for including while-listening tasks is to provide evidence of the learners' level of understanding, which should inform further progress in the class and expose possible areas of more practice needed. While-listening tasks

include strategies like listening for gist, listening for detail, selective listening and ignoring irrelevant details, note-taking, approximation with a later check, or even total physical response (i.e. listen and do, such as Simon Says). On the border of the while-listening and post-listening stage, there are tasks like asking for clarification or checking with other listeners before the second listening round.

At the very end, the listening task should be followed by a post-listening stage, which is also the last phase of an effective listening lesson. Here we typically move to a productive skill - speaking or writing. At this stage, it is not only time to check correct answers and summarize the main ideas, it is also time to discuss and to respond to the text - how does it speak to the learners? What are their opinions on the issue? Other strategies applicable as post-listening tasks are for instance information exchange, solving a problem, and creative or critical reconstructions of the text.

Attitudes, language identity and motivation

So far, we have looked at the role of English as an International Language, alongside with some current approaches to pronunciation and listening teaching in connection with concepts like intelligibility and comprehensibility. In the section on intelligibility, I have touched on the influence of attitudes on the level of one's ability to comprehend what other speakers of English are saying. Language attitude is one part of motivation, therefore, the following section reviews the literature about language attitudes, identity and motivation.

Just like every learning process, learning a foreign language requires a certain level of motivation; therefore, this section deals with the main of them. Before addressing those theories specific to L2 learning, I will briefly introduce the most general motivational theory as well: the self-determination theory described by Ryan & Deci (2000) classifies three levels of motivation in any human behavior - amotivation, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Amotivation is a stage with a lack of any motivation, neither powered by inner nor outer motives. On the contrary, if one's behavior (or learning) is driven by external factors, such as rewards and punishments, he or she has extrinsic motivation. If internal factors, i.e. needs, are one's main motor, he or she is internally motivated.

Other approaches to motivation proceed from Ryan & Deci's theory of motivation, pointing out the natural fluctuation between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and complementing the theory by more distinct motives a learner might be driven by. Gardner & Lambert proposed their classification of integrative and instrumental motivation already in 1959 (cited by Nicholson, 2013, p. 277) emphasizing the fact that the students' motivation was partially beyond the teacher's control based on the learner's ultimate reasons for learning a new language. Some students desire to interact with speakers of the target language, and want to become an integral part of the L2 community, their driving power is hence integrative motivation. Unlike others, driven by instrumental motivation, who might not be that interested in the target culture and community, but would rather use the L2 as a tool, an instrument, for achieving a better career, providing a better qualification etc. (Macaro, 2003).

Due to a shift from communicative language teaching to an intercultural approach, integrative motivation has been coming to the fore. Students learn about the L2 culture, and life and are generally interested in the community of the target language speakers, in English-speaking countries. Students who show "a high level of drive on the part of the individual to acquire the language of a valued second language community in order to facilitate communication with that group" (Gardner et al., cited by Nicholson, 2013, p. 278) are more likely to be more successful in L2 learning and also more persistent in learning outside the classroom, surrounding themselves by the target language.

The theory of integrative motivation has since then developed, and other scholars have complemented it with more findings. Zoltán Dörnyei based his self-system theory largely on the previous two motivational theories, combining them into a more complex unit, distinguishing three components (Dörnyei, 2005): the ideal L2 self (all the hopes and aspirations one has about the attributes they would like to possess); the ought-to L2 self (the attributes one believes they ought to possess, unequal to own personal desires); and L2 learning experience (related to the learning environment and experience). According to this theory, L2 learners' key motive is lessening the gap between their actual self and ideal or ought-to self. Comparing Dörnyei's terms with the previous two theories, intrinsic motivation overlaps with integrative motivation and corresponds with the ideal self; whereas extrinsic motivation matches instrumental motivation and can be seen as a part of the ought-to self. In Dörnyei's approach, the natural fluctuation on the

spectrum of motivation means bringing one's ideal and ought-to selves closer to each other, closing the gap between them, and hence internalizing the outer motives to L2 learning.

Unlike the former two theories, Dörnyei takes into account the changes ELT has been experiencing and leaves space for the learners to choose independently which community they want to become part of, what their ideal selves are like. He transforms Gardner's notion of integrative motivation into a more open concept, with regard to English as a global and international language, not restricting the target community to native speakers only, but working with a view of a community of English speakers who all use English as a lingua franca (Nicholson, 2013), regardless of being a native speaker or an L2 speaker. As Dörnyei argues,

by emphasizing the importance of English in the global community and the role international L2 speakers play in that community, teachers can tap into students' instrumental motivations to raise their awareness of their potential future role as English speakers in the globalized L2 community as well as to promote positive images of their ideal L2 Self (1994, cited by Nicholson, 2013, p. 283).

Not only has motivation and identity to do with attainment, but also with a positive classroom environment. Richards & Bohlke (2011) list several rules for creating such an environment in a culturally sensitive classroom, which has been gaining importance in the past few years, as the status of the English language has changed. This may apply even more so to multilingual classes, which in the Czech context there are not that many; however, all teachers should rethink their understanding of the native vs. the global English-speaking community. Teachers should encourage their learners to more "openness and favorable disposition towards other languages and culture, interest in foreign affairs and non-ethnocentric outlook on life" (Yashima, 2002, cited by Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pietrzykowska). As Nicholson (2013, p. 280) emphasizes "no longer is the English language speaker limited to the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and Australia. The second language community now comprises a cosmopolitan community of international L2 speakers, a group that students intend to become members of".

Dealing with attitudes, Cargile & Giles (1998) did research in the Japanese-American context and were interested in the attitudes of native speakers to the non-native speech of four different levels: standard, moderate-accented, heavy-accented, and disfluent. Listeners were evaluating the speaker's possible status (i.e. intelligence, competence, social status), attractiveness (i.e. friendliness, kindness), and dynamism traits (i.e. how active, and energetic the speaker seems). Cargile and Giles concluded that we ascribe personal and social characteristics to speakers based on their accent; they have found that the stronger the accent the more negative attitude on all levels was observed with listeners. Their model suggested that listeners base their judgment on stereotypes and cultural factors. Among the stereotypes listed in their research, associations related to Japanese speakers of English were “ambitious”, “intelligent” or “hard-working”, and associations related to British speakers were “reserved”, and “conservative”. Another research conducted by Lev-Ari & Keysar (2010, cited in Ingvalson et al., 2017) compared the listeners’ perception of native versus non-native accents and showed that the listeners “rated the statements spoken by the native talkers as being more truthful than the statements spoken by the talkers with foreign accents”. The research part of this thesis is partly based on Cargile & Giles in terms of perception of accented speech, but looking at non-native learners listening to non-native speakers without comparison to native speakers (unlike Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010) .

Summary of key concepts

The theoretical part of this thesis aimed at introducing the basic preconceptions needed for an up-to-date approach to teaching listening with regard to the principles of Global Englishes. By looking into the key prerequisites for successful communication in an international context, learning about what makes learners’ speech more understandable for international audience as well as what enables them to understand international speakers of English, and the motivations behind choosing to learn English as an L2, it was clear that there was one idea connecting all these topics – Global Englishes are the new reality of the language classroom, and therefore, modern ESL and EFL teachers should accommodate to this new reality in their everyday teaching practice. One possible way, inspiration and reasoning behind the idea of introducing Global Englishes to our classrooms, specifically in the listening input, is described on the upcoming pages.

III. METHODS

This part describes the actions taken in the research part of this thesis. The nature of the research questions required an actual in-class experiment; therefore, I talk about how I designed the research, the hypothesis based on the above literature review, who my learners are, and the instruments and procedure of data collection.

Action research design

Not only for beginning teachers, but also for experienced professionals, constant teacher development and learning new methods is part of the profession. Scrivener (2011) advocates for continual teacher development through various strategies, including teacher development groups, observed lessons, feedback, reflection and action research.

Action research is, according to Scrivener (2011): “a teacher’s personal study of his/her own teaching or of the students’ learning” (p. 379); in this case, the focus was on the latter. Scrivener (2011) also points out that action research can be very small scale and that in fact any activity teachers do in their work that actively attempts to help them progress is an action research. Giving more structure to it, a table from Scrivener (2011, p. 379) was adapted and filled in (capitalized) with regard to the focus of this thesis:

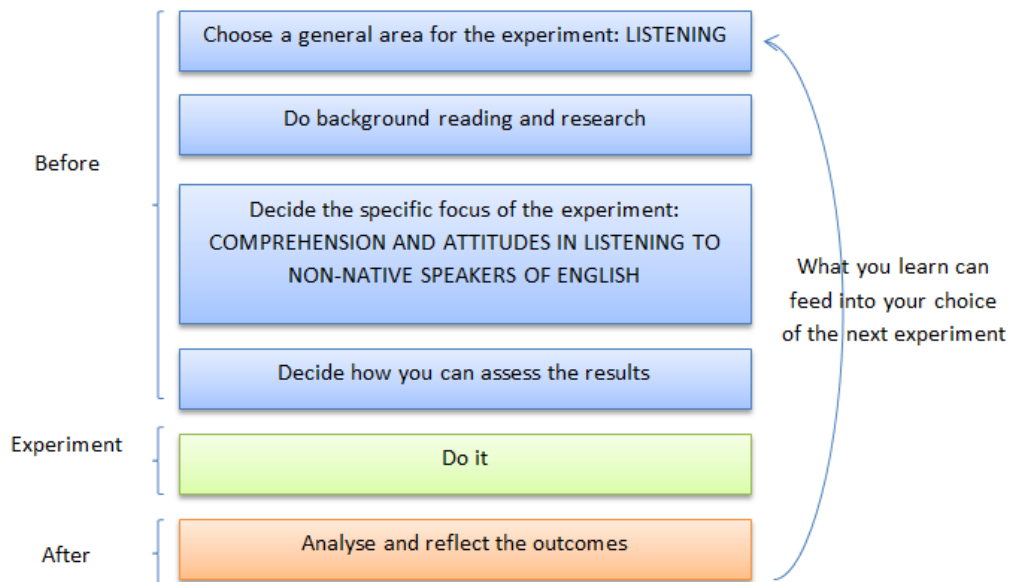


Figure 1: Action research design.

In the preparation stage, a researcher chooses a general area for the experiment, for me this was listening. Then, based on background reading and research, the researcher decides the specific focus of the experiment. For this thesis, it was comprehension and attitudes in listening to accented speech. The last phase of the preparation stage is to decide how results will be assessed. The preparation stage is then followed by the experiment itself and by analysis and reflection of the outcomes.

Aim and hypothesis

The aim of the research was to determine the influences of targeted exposure to non-native varieties of English on the level of comprehension of accented speech and attitudes to accented speech through the comparison of two groups of teenage ESL learners.

According to Jenkins (2000) and Thir (2020), the conditions for successful comprehension are the motivation of the listener to understand, prior experience with the speaker's accent, prior experience with a range of L2 accents, and a developed tolerance of difference, no fear of acquiring the speaker's errors and the ability to signal non-comprehension. The earlier two conditions played a crucial role in this research, while the third one marginally, and the latter one not at all, because the listening tasks used in my research were recordings, not real-life speakers.

Based on these conditions, the following hypothesis was proffered with non-native listeners:

H1: The level of the learners' comprehension will be rather low for the first time since they had not been explicitly and intentionally exposed to non-native varieties of English before the first listening attempt. After a certain period of time with more targeted exposure to accented speech, their level of comprehension will increase compared to their first exposure and compared to the control group.

Based on Cargile & Giles' (1998) conclusions with Americans evaluating more accented speeches more negatively in terms of social status, attractiveness, and dynamism, a second hypothesis was offered:

H2: The group that will be exposed to non-native speakers of English will increase their tolerance of difference and will rank accented speech more favorably compared to their initial exposure and to the control group.

Instruments of data collection, limitations of the research

Listening materials selected for this research came from the website elllo.org which offers free listening activities for different levels, speakers there being both native and non-native speakers. I selected a recording that contains only non-native speakers, namely from Iran and from Vietnam. This recording was used as a starting point for two groups of learners and the same comprehension tasks, including both listening for general ideas (top-down processing) and for specific information (bottom-up processing), were tested out with both groups. Alongside the comprehension test, learners in both groups also completed an attitude questionnaire asking about their assumptions and judgment of the speakers' social status, attractiveness, and dynamism.

For the examined recording, I came up with six general idea tasks and two specific information tasks – four tasks were used in the first attempt and four tasks were used in the follow-up attempt. My listening tasks included a multiple-choice questions as well as open-ended questions examining the learners' level of comprehension of the individual phonemes in accented speech – the worksheets used are attached – see APPENDICES A and B.

I designed a scale-based questionnaire judging the speakers' accents from the perspective of their possible social status, friendliness and energy. There were seven statements for each of the speakers (a man from Iran and a woman from Vietnam) which learners were asked to express their agreement or disagreement with:

1. The male / female speaker is intelligent.
2. The male / female speaker's level of English is very good.
3. The male / female speaker seems friendly.
4. The male / female speaker is energetic.
5. The male / female speaker needs to improve their pronunciation.

6. The male / female speaker speaks fast.
7. The male / female speaker's accent and intonation are very different from what I am used to in English.

The questionnaire also included one open-ended question, where the participants were asked to think of adjectives that they associate with the individual speakers on the recording. This was intended to possibly show what stereotypes learners had about the speakers with regard to their nationality. The original questionnaire contained comprehension questions in English and attitude/opinion questions in Czech, the learners' native language. For the purpose of this thesis, an English translation of the statements was provided; the original worksheets used in class are attached – see APPENDIX C – Attitudes and opinion questionnaire.

This research was limited by the number of participants; and since this only was small-scale research with 30 participants, the responses were analyzed from a qualitative point of view looking at each participant's responses individually. In order to observe a pattern in the impacts of exposure to accented speech with more certainty, larger-scale research would be necessary. Another limitation would be the level of participants, according to Jenkins and Thir, from the intermediate level up, listeners rely a lot on their world and linguistic knowledge which facilitates their understanding of accented speech. It would be interesting to conduct similar research with less advanced participants.

Participants and procedure of data collection

I have selected two groups of secondary school learners who had a similar level of English, the level of individual students ranges between lower-intermediate and intermediate in both groups. This selection was based on my teaching experience with them. All learners attended a grammar school in Pilsen and on average have been studying English for 7-8 years.

For easier orientation in the following parts, I refer to the classes as group A and group B. Group A comprised 15 learners, followed an eight-year program and was in year four; in group B there were 15 learners who followed a four-year program and were in year one. Both groups had three English lessons a week and were exposed to listening tasks on a weekly basis, usually twice a week. I have selected group A to be the exposed

group and group B to be the control group. The material both groups used was Maturita solutions pre-intermediate by Oxford, and the predominant variety in this textbook is British English. However, I would bring many additional authentic materials to class on a regular basis, mainly American English materials. Moreover, the learners themselves would also consume a lot of content in English outside of the classroom, most of which would be AmE, so it can be assumed that most English they would encounter is the American variety.

The first listening was conducted during week 1 of the experiment with both groups. Both groups completed the initial comprehension tasks containing 3 multiple-choice questions and one open question. Then, both groups completed the attitudes questionnaire. Following the initial testing, group A then continued with targeted listening tasks recorded by non-native speakers. In the course of one month, they were exposed to nine more recordings with a total listening time of over 22 minutes. The speakers used in these recordings were from Chile, Nigeria, Germany, Spain, Denmark, and Indonesia; but some were also from England and Australia. Each listening task was accompanied by comprehension questions, after which the learners were also briefly asked about their feelings about specific accents.

On the contrary, group B only completed the initial testing with accented speech, and then continued with their BrE and AmE curriculum. In the course of one month, they too were exposed to the same amount of listening tasks. After one month, they repeated the same accented listening task and questionnaire.

After one month, both groups completed the initial listening task, the very same recording was used, only with different comprehension tasks. The second worksheet contained again three multiple-choice questions and one open question. Additionally, both groups were asked to complete the same attitudes questionnaire again. The level of comprehension, as well as students' attitudes within each group, were compared to each group's initial test and questionnaire. The comprehension level and the attitudes of individuals were also examined.

IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES

In this part, the results of the research are summarized, depicted by diagrams and discussed. Two main areas of interest are in the focus – the level of comprehension and the learners' attitudes towards accented speech. While the comprehension level in the test group improved significantly, only minor progress in attitudes was observed.

Comprehension of accented speech

In the initial test, the level of comprehension was very similar in both groups. The diagrams below show the answers of groups A and B to the four questions.

Question 1: He says people kiss each other _____.

- a) on the cheek b) at a home party c) on the hand

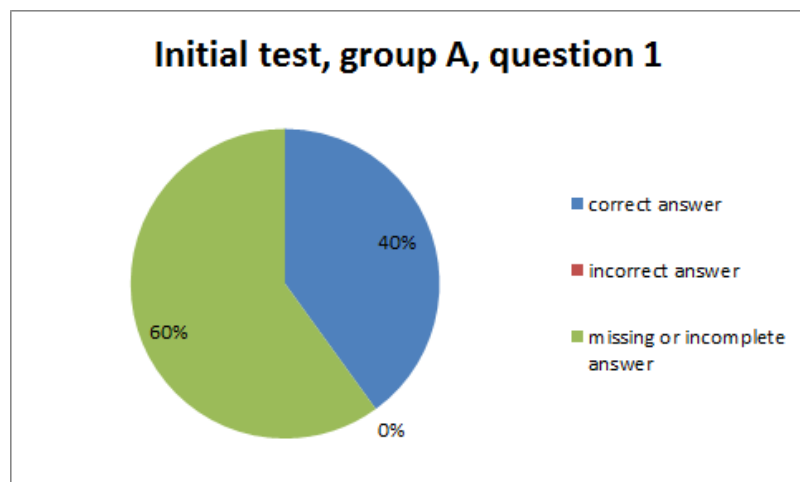


Figure 2: Initial test, group A, question 1.

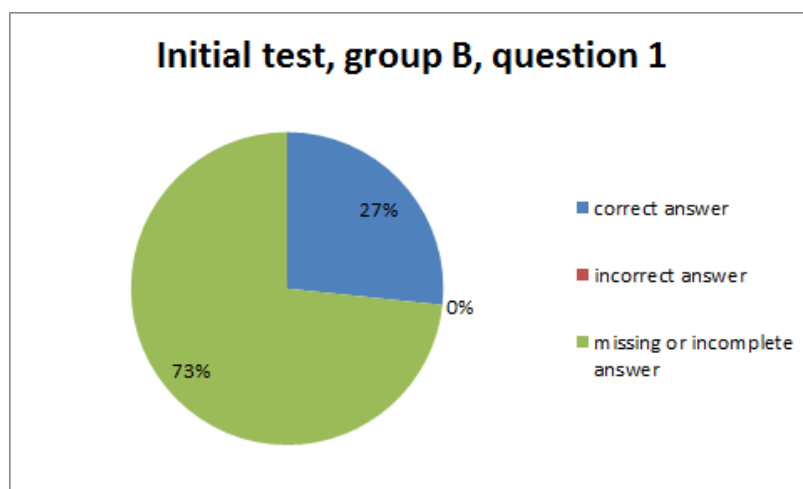


Figure 3: Initial test, group B, question 1.

The correct answer to question 1 is a) and b). No learners missed the question completely; however, only a small percentage of them were able to choose both correct answers, although the fact that more answers were possible was drawn to their attention prior to the listening.

Question 2: In other countries, what is a common way to greet each other?

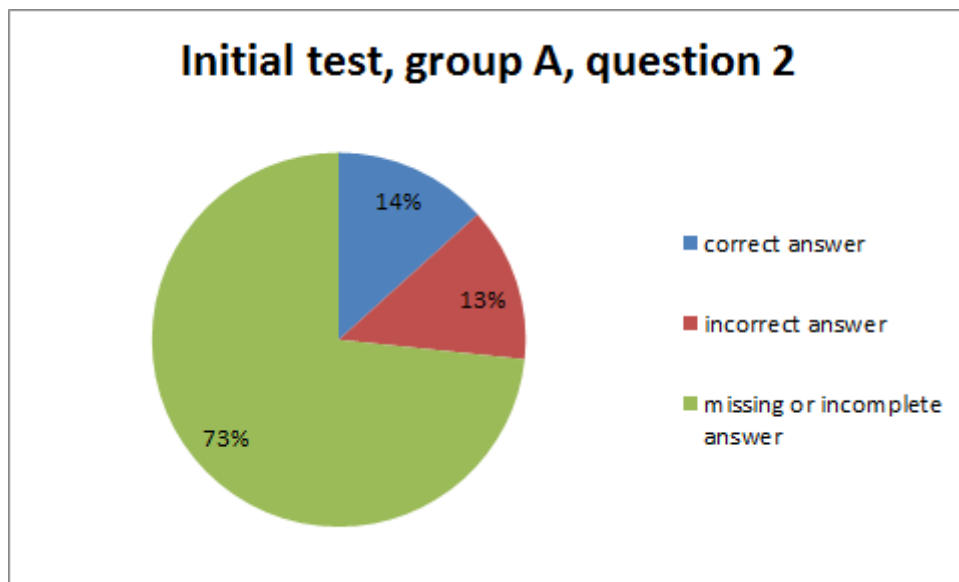


Figure 4: Initial test, group A, question 2.

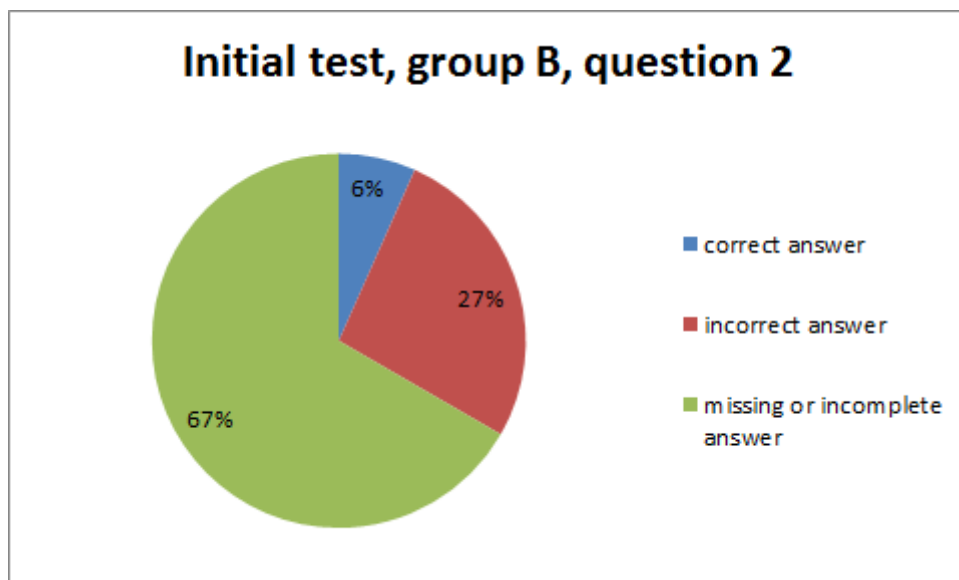


Figure 5: Initial test, group B, question 2.

In this open-ended question, again the results of students from both groups were comparable. Only a few students were able to answer the question correctly stating that

people shake or wave hands. The students' answers were mostly incomplete writing only one of the two options, some students in both groups answered that some people kiss three times on the cheek which was the case in Iran, not in other countries. This shows their understanding of individual words from the recording but missing the overall meaning and context.

Question 3: In Vietnam, it is _____ to hold hands.

- a) rare b) common

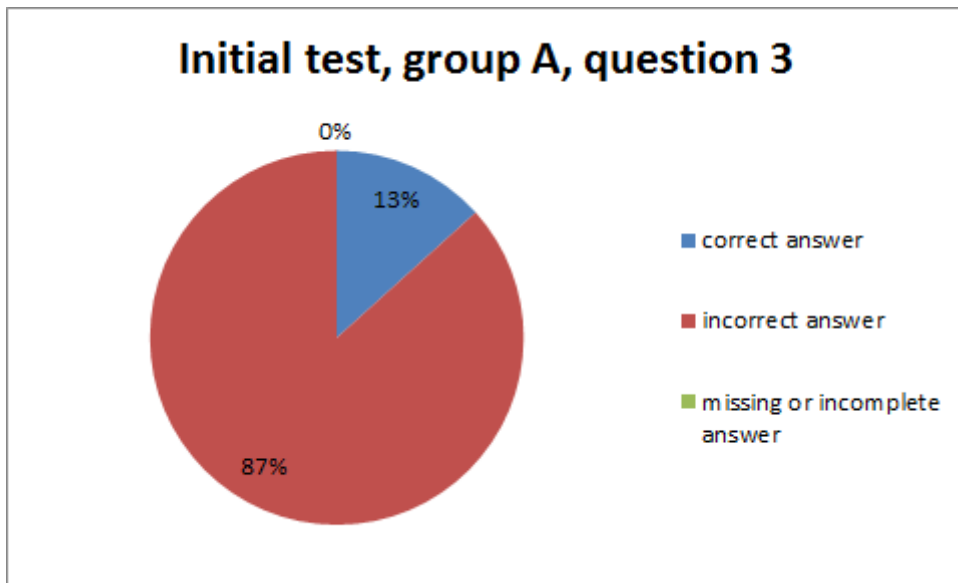


Figure 6: Initial test, group A, question 3.

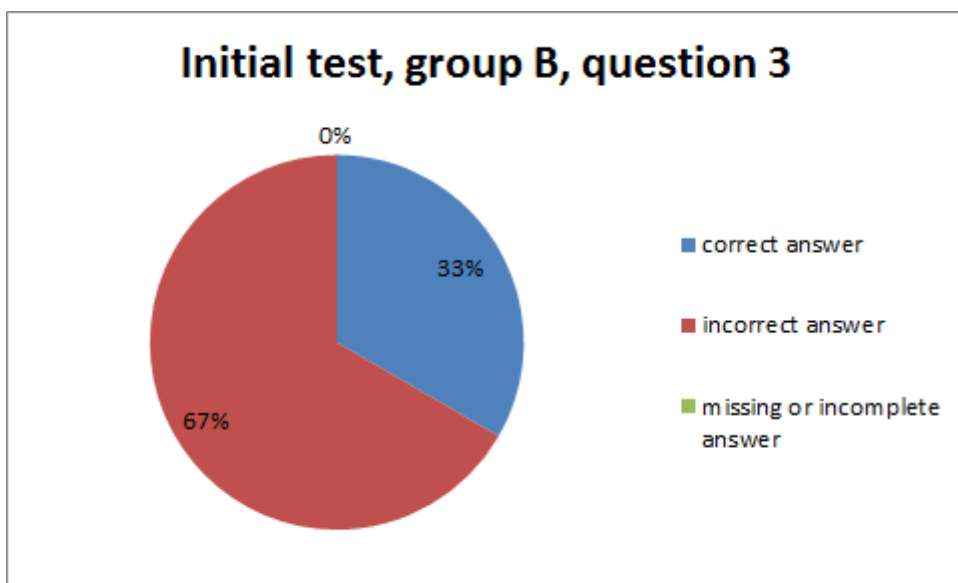


Figure 7: Initial test, group B, question 3.

The correct answer is b) common, which was very surprising for most students. Students from group B were more successful in answering this question; however, still only a third of them answered correctly, in group A it was even less. The students pointed out that this was the most complicated question and that they had difficulties understanding the female speaker as she was very loud.

Question 4: Who does Tu mention?

- a) lovers b) siblings c) classmates

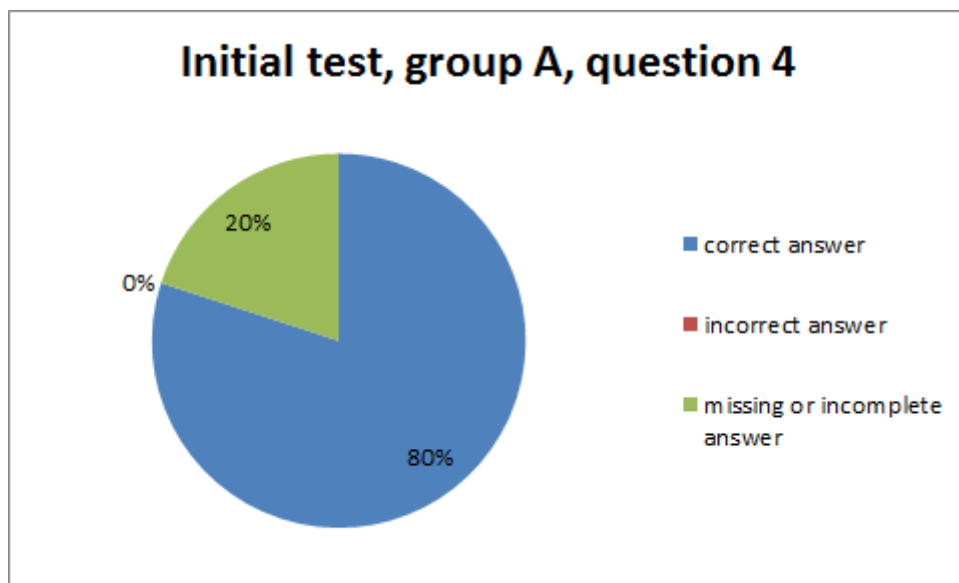


Figure 8: Initial test, group A, question 4.

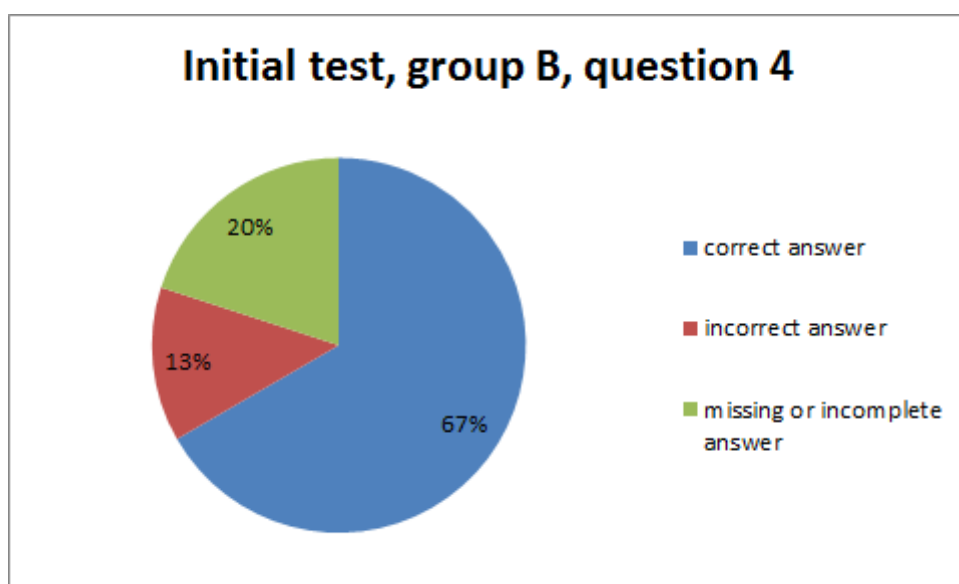


Figure 9: Initial test, group B, question 4.

The correct answer is c) lovers. For both groups, this question was the easiest one, even though it was focused on the same speaker as question 3 which was the most difficult for the learners. Unlike question three though, this question was again targeted at the comprehension of isolated words and not the context like question 3.

The initial testing showed that in both groups, there is a pattern in students' successful answers to such questions that only require noticing specific words, such as questions 4 or partially 1 and 2 where students overheard parts of the correct answer; i.e. the students are quite good at bottom-up processing in listening even to accented speech. On the other hand, the results of question 4 and the fact that most students missed parts of questions 1 and 2 indicates that they are not so successful in top-down processing, i.e. understanding the overall meaning of whole utterances.

The follow-up testing after one month showed significant improvement in group A. The diagrams below show the answers of both groups to another set of questions.

Question 1: When do the Iranian men kiss?

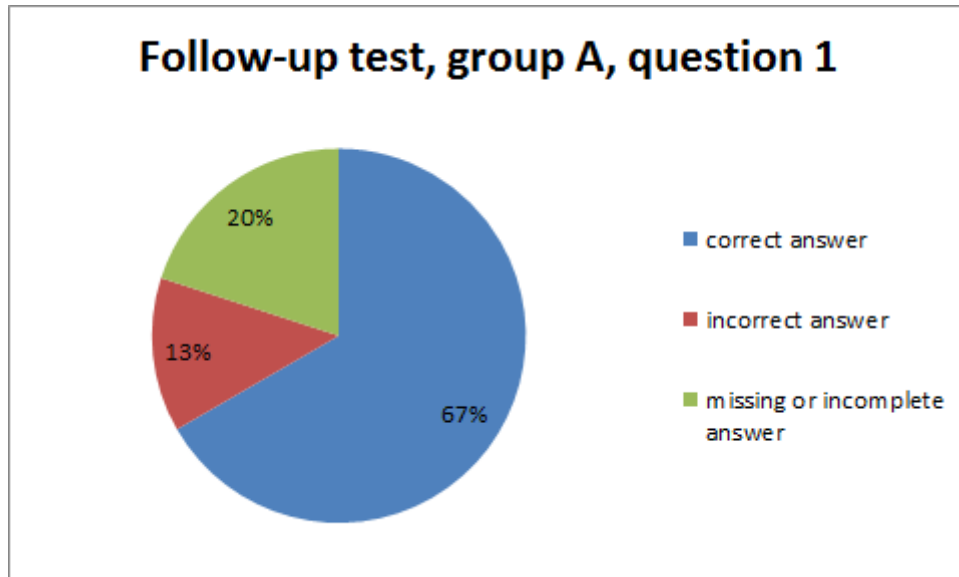


Figure 10: Follow-up test, group A, question 1.

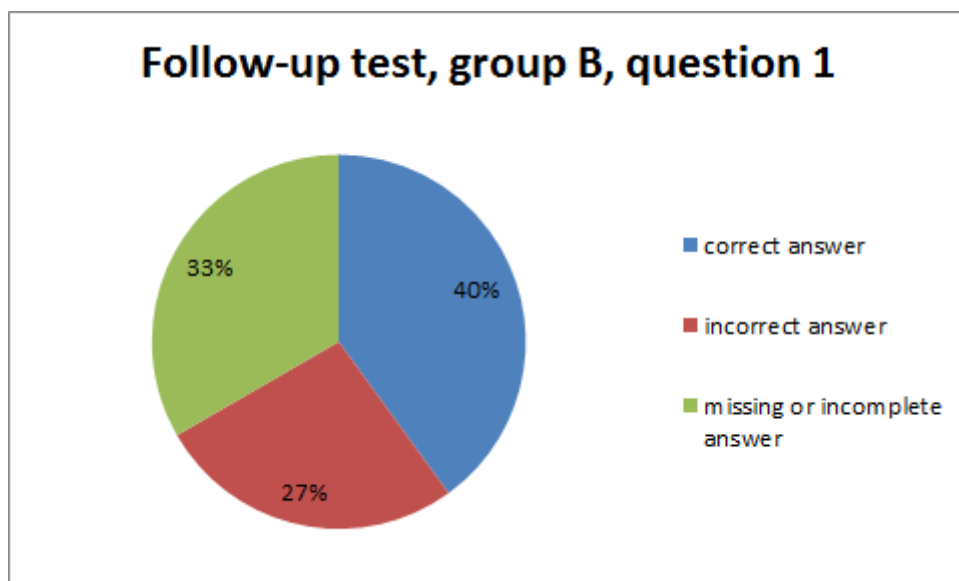


Figure 11: Follow-up test, group B, question 1.

The correct answer to this open question is that the men in Iran kiss for greeting. The success rate of group A is much higher than in group B, the incorrect answers in both groups being mostly caused by confusion and answering the question How many times? rather than When?

Question 2: What do people do in an Iranian city?

- a) shake hands b) hold hands c) slap hands

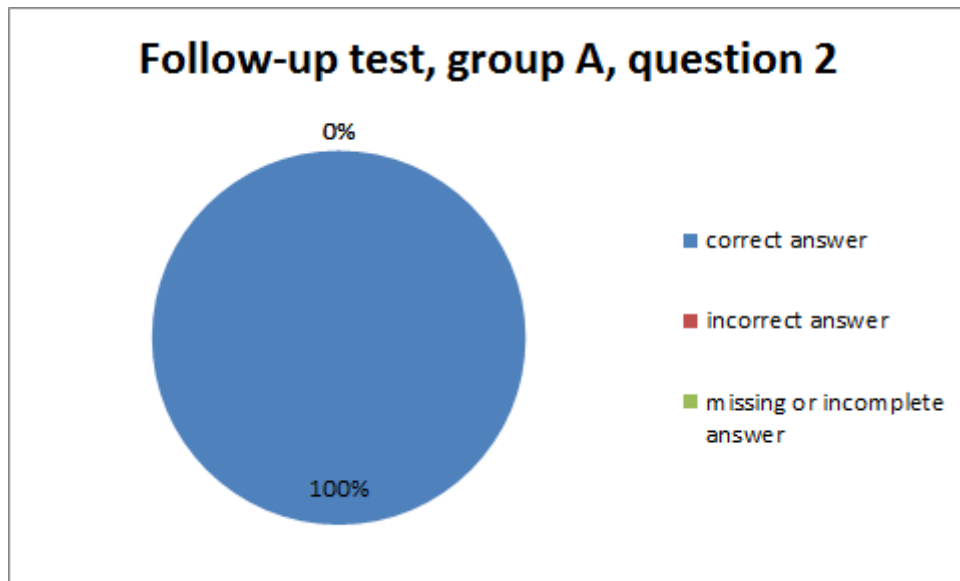


Figure 12: Follow-up test, group A, question 2.

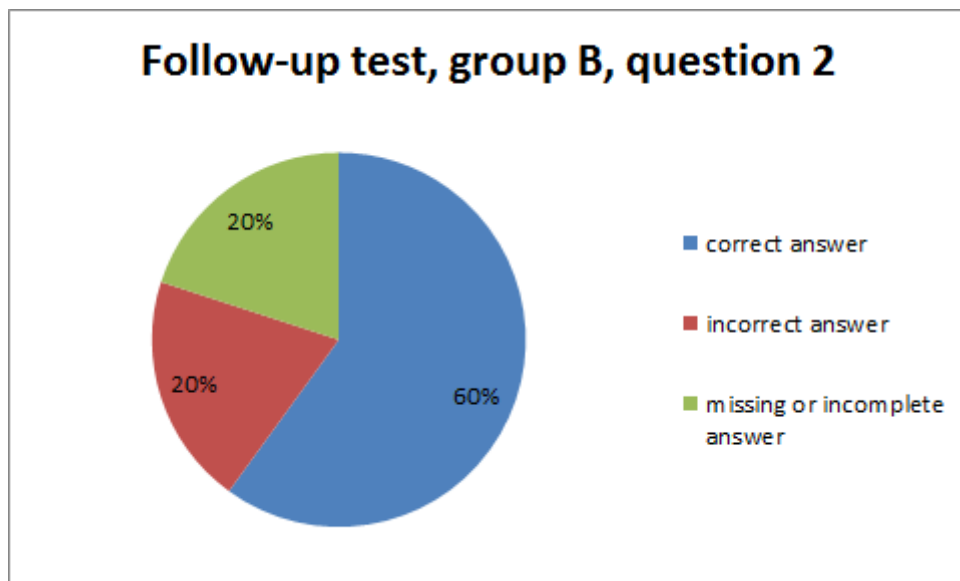


Figure 13: Follow-up test, group B, question 2.

The correct answer to this question is a) shake hands. This question was the easiest for both groups to answer, which could be ascribed to their general knowledge and expectations too. However, there were still some differences between group A and B, group A scoring more correctly than group B.

Question 3: Why was she afraid when she came to Iran?

- a) because she is a lesbian b) because people would think she was a lesbian

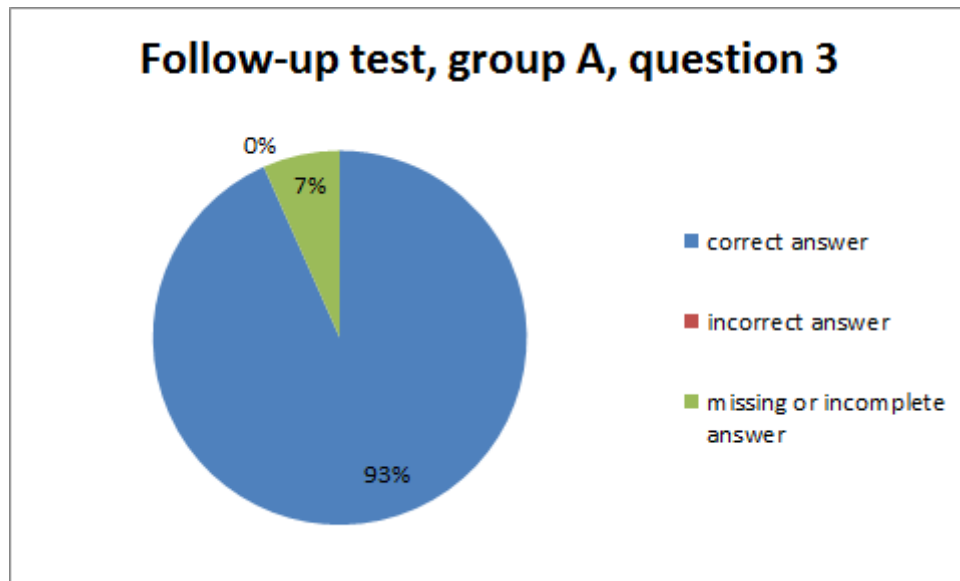


Figure 14: Follow-up test, group A, question 3.

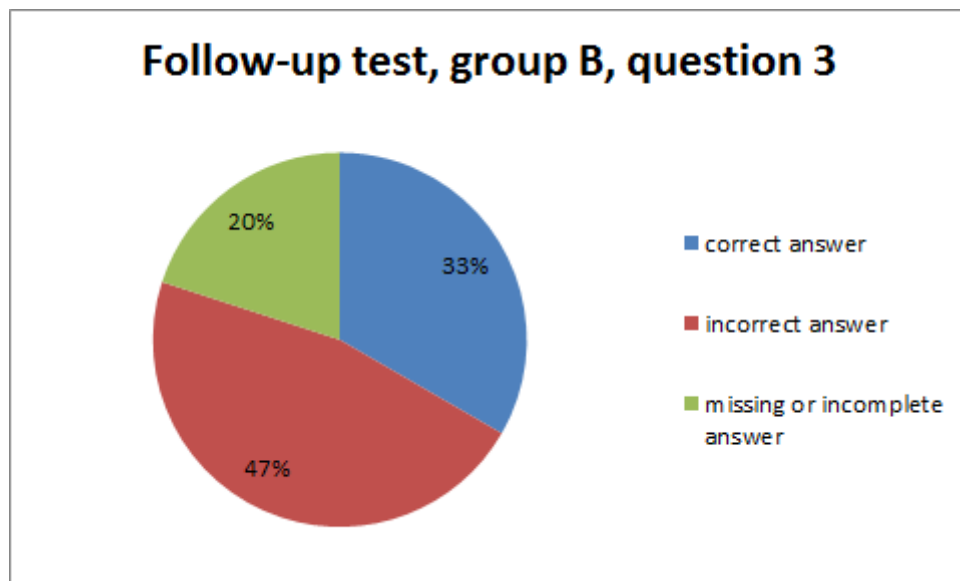


Figure 15: Follow-up test, group B, question 3.

The correct answer here is b) people would think she was a lesbian. The results of this question are quite interesting, given that no students from group A missed the question unlike students from group B. It could be assumed that the answers of students from group B were partially influenced by the stereotypes they have about the speakers. Also, they showed a similar problem to the initial testing, where the students were not able to

get the gist and actually decide about the accurateness of utterances even though they might have overheard and decoded some individual words. On the other hand, students from group A improved their top-down processing skills as it seems from this question.

Question 4: She says females hold hands _____.

a) with men

b) when shopping together

c) on the street

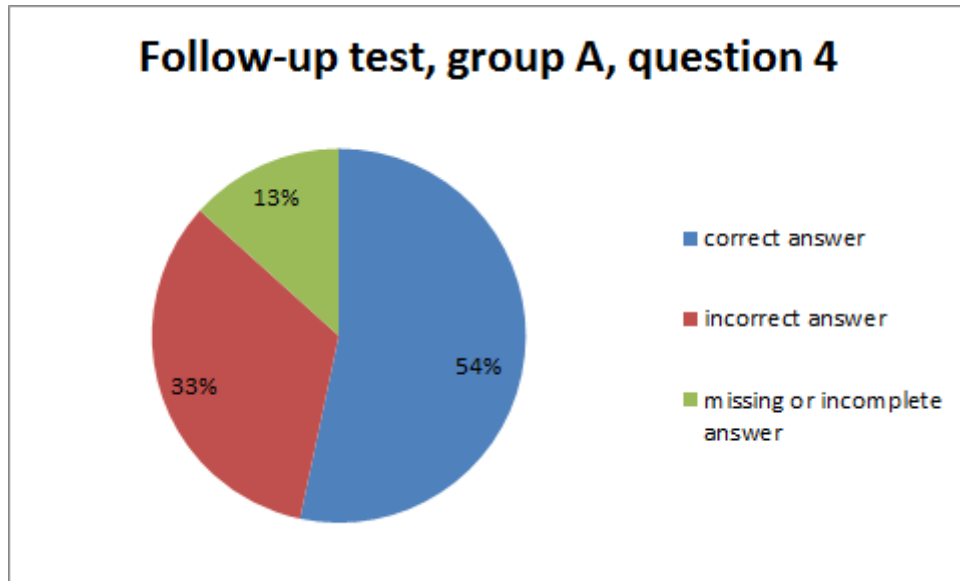


Figure 16: Follow-up test, group A, question 4.

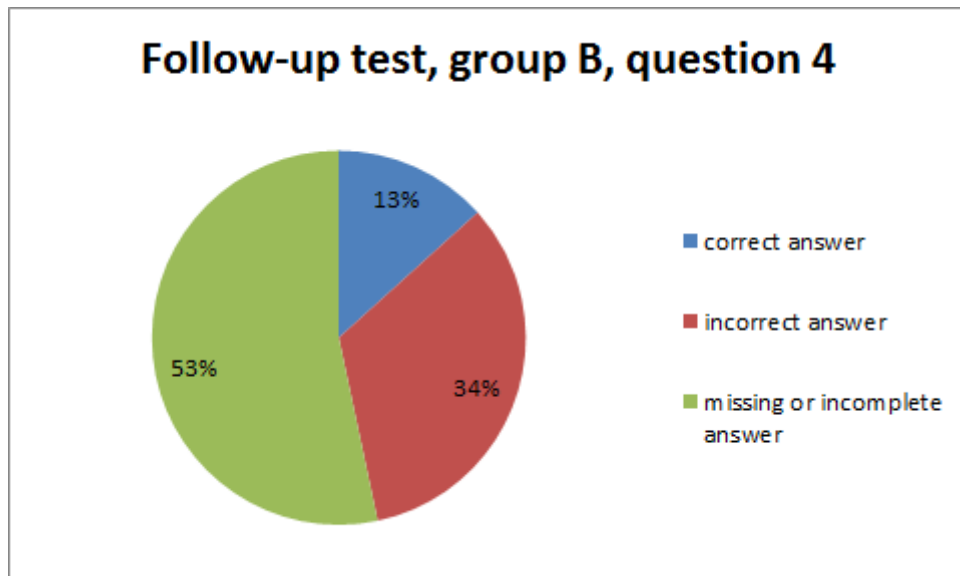


Figure 17: Follow-up test, group B, question 4.

The correct answers here are b) and c). This was the most complicated question for both groups; however, a better result can be seen in group A, where more than half the

students answered correctly. There were certainly some assumptions about the answers students had, since most of those who answered incorrectly said that women hold hands with men. The same issue with top-down and bottom-down processing might have influenced the answers, mainly in group B, who would still rely more on listening for individual words rather than the overall meaning. In this part of the recording, the following sentence might have caused the confusion: “I don’t see many men holding hands, but usually females do it quite often.”

It is remarkable that group A improved their comprehension significantly compared to the control group. This is a result supporting hypothesis 1:

H1: The level of the learners’ comprehension will be rather low for the first time since they had not been explicitly and intentionally exposed to non-native varieties of English before the first listening attempt. After a certain period of time with more targeted exposure to accented speech, their level of comprehension will increase compared to their first exposure and compared to the control group.

The improvement is especially noticeable in questions requiring top-down processing, where there were just minor differences in both groups in the initial test. After more encounters and targeted exposure to accented speech, the differences were much more pronounced. This also corresponds with Jenkins’ and Thir’s findings about the importance of bottom-up processing on lower levels when listening to accented speech.

Attitudes to accented speech

After the comprehension tasks were completed, submitted, and checked, the learners were asked to complete an attitudes/opinion questionnaire evaluating the two speakers they had heard on the recording. They were asked to evaluate the possible intelligence of the two speakers, their level of English proficiency and pronunciation, their energy and pace of their speech, as well as their friendliness, and the degree to which their accent and intonation vary from what the learners are used to.

The questionnaire was conducted twice with both groups, one month apart. The following diagrams show comparisons of students’ answers from both groups and both surveys.

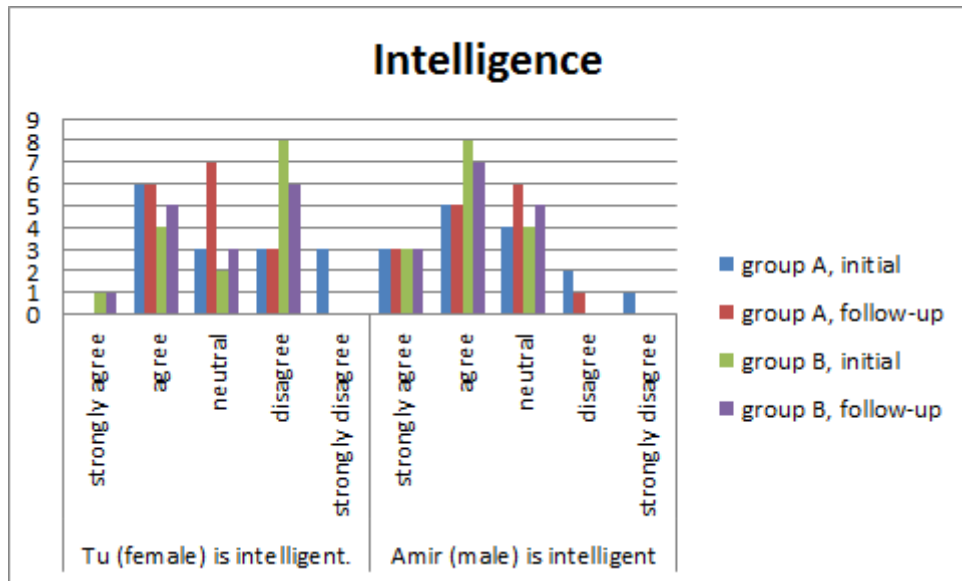


Figure 18: Attitudes – intelligence.

Learners in both groups initially perceived Tu, the Vietnamese woman, as the less intelligent conversational partner compared to Amir, the Iranian man. The biggest shift in perception that happened was towards Tu, which improved slightly more noticeably in group A, where learners turned to a more neutral opinion in the second measurement and no one described Tu as unintelligent anymore.

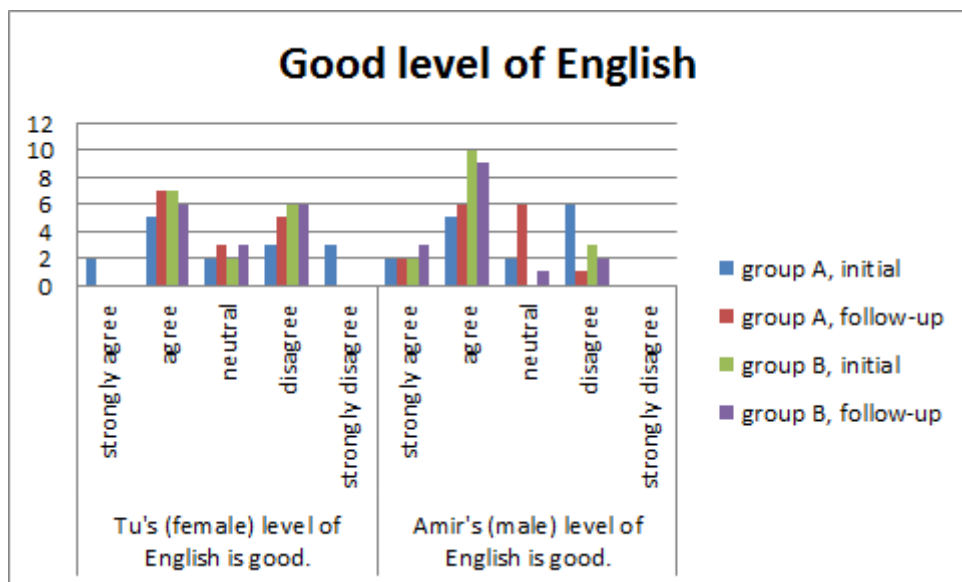


Figure 19: Attitudes – good level of English.

In the next question, the learners were asked to assess the speakers' level of English. Amir was perceived as a better speaker compared to Tu in both groups and

both measurements. No significant differences in attitudes toward the individual speakers were observed neither in the test group nor in the control group.

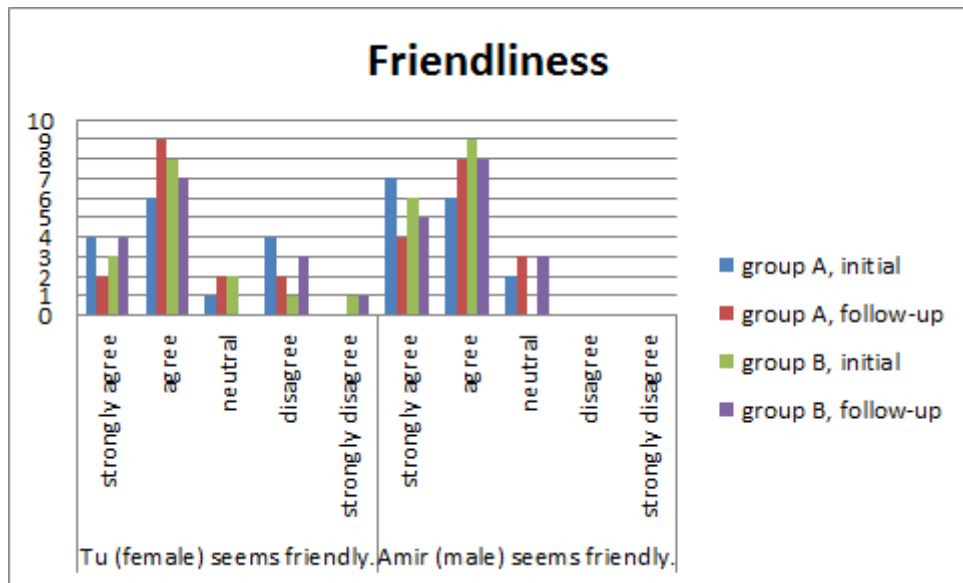


Figure 20: Attitudes – friendliness.

Another examined characteristic was the friendliness of the speakers as perceived by the learners. Learners in both groups described both Tu and Amir as rather friendly; however, Tu, was not pleasant to some of the learners unlike Amir about whom no students said he was unfriendly. Over time, the evaluation did not vary significantly from the initial perception.

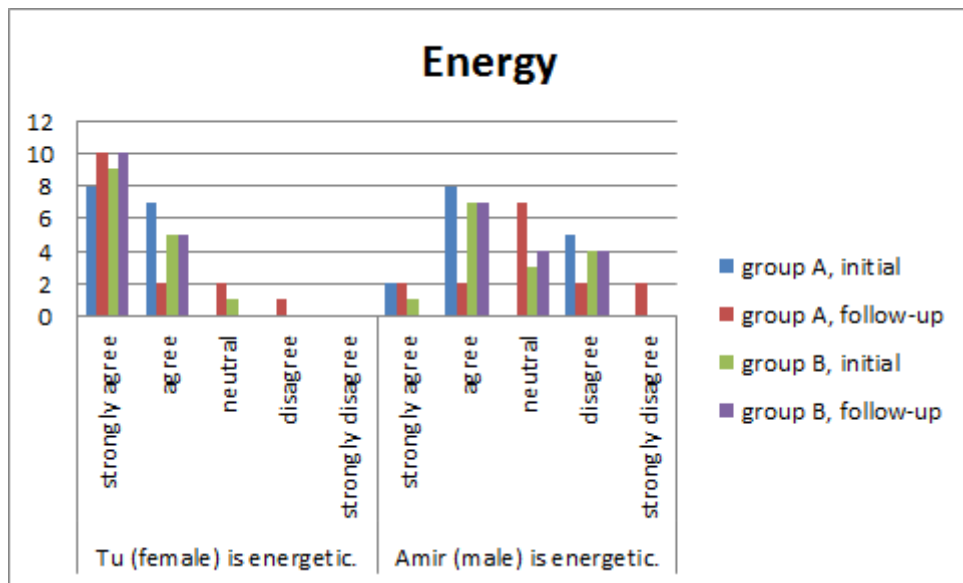


Figure 21: Attitudes – energy.

Next, the learners were judging how energetic Tu and Amir seemed to be based on the way they were speaking. Tu dominated this question, mainly due to her speaking louder and faster than Amir. However, her energy was not perceived in a positive way, which could be seen in the final task, where students also described Tu as talkative and interrupting Amir’s speech.

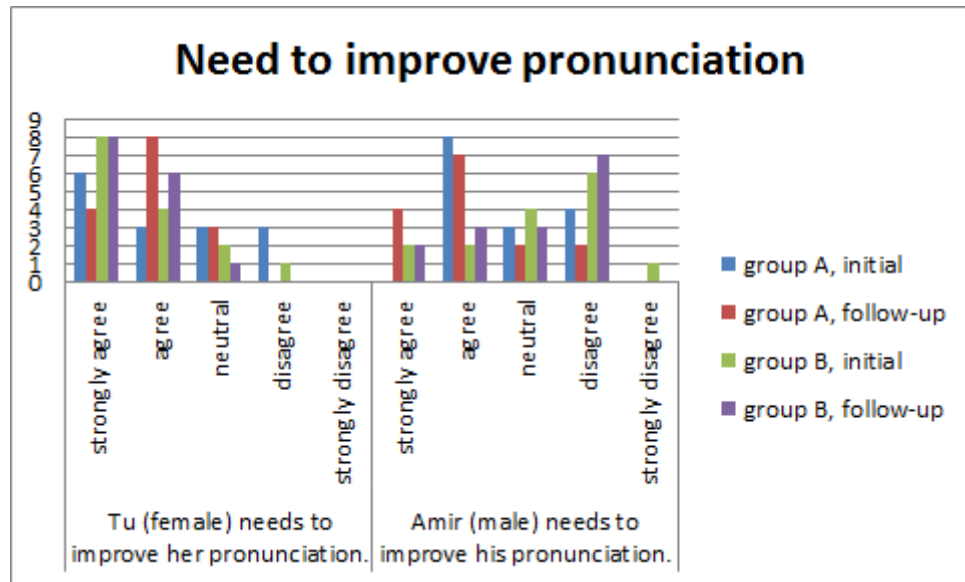


Figure 22: Attitudes – need to improve pronunciation.

Based on the answers to this question, learners in both groups thought that Tu needed to improve her pronunciation much more than Amir. While the attitudes in group B did not change much over time, learners from group A might have improved their understanding of Tu as their opinions became more neutral and they moved from strongly agree to just agree. It can be assumed that they got used to listening to accented speech and did not feel such an urgent need for the speakers to mimic the standard.

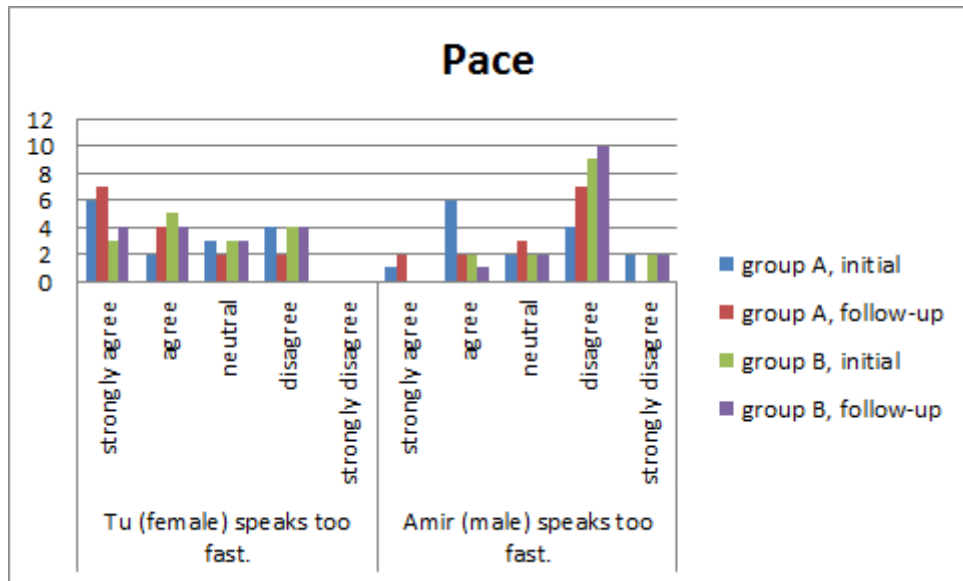


Figure 23: Attitudes – pace of speech.

In another question, the speakers were judged based on the pace of their speech. Most learners thought that Tu was speaking too fast, while only a few had the same opinion on the pace of Amir's speech. While group A found Tu's much more complicated to follow, group B seemed more neutral from the very beginning. Some learners from group A initially also found Amir too fast, which changed in the follow-up measurement. But overall, no remarkable changes occurred in the learners' perception.

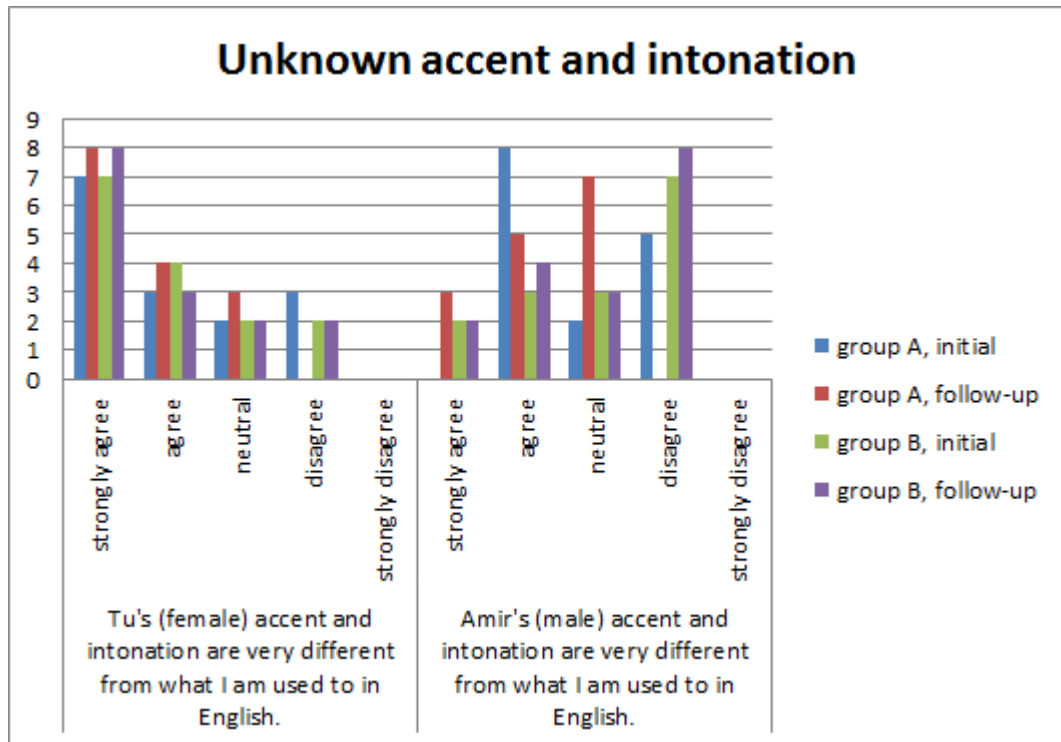


Figure 24: Attitudes – unknown accent and intonation.

The final question of the scale-based questionnaire was examining the extent to which the learners typical encounters with English differ from accented speech. Tu's accent and intonation were perceived as rather different by both groups and the exposure to accented speech in group A really made no significant difference. On the contrary, a surprising result came from group A and their perception of Amir, which became more neutral from both sides of the spectrum.

The last task was an open-ended question asking the learners to use any adjectives to describe Tu and Amir. Group A initially described Tu as:

- kind, nice, and smart;
- but also as loud, noisy, unpleasant, drunk, dumb, annoying, and rash.

Very similar adjectives were used by group B who described Tu as:

- energetic, happy, cheerful, friendly, interesting, kind, and wild;
- but also as loud, weird, talkative, hysterical, dumb, annoying, and noisy.

Likewise, both groups used the following adjectives to describe Tu the second time:

- fine, friendly, loud, impolite, noisy, annoying, energetic, hot-tempered, interruptive, and impatient.

Amir was generally perceived better, group A used the following adjectives when speaking about Amir:

- calm, patient, understanding, rational, chilled, educated, witty, smart, cheerful, relaxed, careful, but also anxious.

In their follow-up questionnaire, they described Amir as:

- kind, friendly, fine, patient, calm, great, tired, slow, chilled, pleasant, and rational.

The answers of group B were almost identical:

- friendly, calm, chilled, happy, nice, boring, clever, funny, and cheerful.

Although there were some minor shifts in the attitudes of group A's initial and follow-up questionnaire, especially in their perception of the speakers' intelligence, pace of speech and the need of pronunciation improvement, compared to group B the changes were rather insignificant. Also, based on both groups' answers in the last open-ended task, their perception was not influenced by exposure to a notable extent. This partially disproves my second hypothesis about attitudes:

H2: The group that will be exposed to non-native speakers of English will increase their tolerance of difference and will rank accented speech more favorably compared to their initial exposure and to the control group.

This was a surprising finding. Even after one month of targeted exposure the learners from group A seemed not to adjust their original beliefs about non-native speakers. I ascribe this fact to two main factors: first, the differences in both speakers in terms of volume and pace; and second, the temper of both classes, their age and taking things more with humor rather than seriously.

Especially with Tu, the Vietnamese speaker, learners were not able or willing to reconsider their original judgment since Tu was a very distinctive speaker. Objectively speaking, she was a much louder and faster speaker than Amir.

Although this supported the authenticity of the listening experience, I would suggest for listening tasks played from a recording that the volume of both speakers was equalized in post-production. Such adjustments would make the listening experience more comfortable for in-class use.

Additionally, on the part of the students, it is necessary to bear in mind that they are two classes of teenagers who try to make fun of most things. Their initial reaction to the first few seconds of the recording could be observed in class: most of them started to laugh and mimic the unknown accent, especially the one of Tu. Therefore, the listening task must have been played multiple times in order to enable the students to start focusing on the comprehension task itself. As shown above, their comprehension level from the initial and the follow-up tests corresponded with my hypothesis. However, filling in the attitudes questionnaire seemed of less importance for the students compared to a comprehension task, and hence, the results might not be perfectly accurate. If such research was repeated, I would suggest conducting the attitudes questionnaire with adult learners and not teenagers.

First attempts versus follow-up attempts

So far, we have looked at the overall group results of both classes from the perspective of comprehension and attitudes. Now the individual types of questions as well as the individual students' answers and progress will be analyzed. Out of the four examined areas of interest, i.e. group A's comprehension, group A's attitudes, group B's comprehension, and group B's attitudes, I will be mainly focusing on the progress of group A in their comprehension, since this area showed the most significant differences between the initial and the follow-up testing.

Firstly, questions of the same type were contrasted, since each worksheet contained two top-down processing multiple-choice questions, one bottom-up multiple-choice question, and one top-down open-ended question. The following table shows corresponding types of questions from the two used worksheets and the success rate of the learners:

Table 1: *Success rate in different types of questions.*

	worksheet I (initial test)	success rate I	worksheet II (follow-up test)	success rate II
Q 1	top-down, multiple-choice	6 out of 15 students	top-down, open-ended	10 out of 15 students
Q 2	top-down, open-ended	2 out of 15 students	bottom-up, multiple-choice	15 out of 15 students
Q 3	top-down, multiple-choice	2 out of 15 students	top-down, multiple-choice	14 out of 15 students
Q 4	bottom-up, multiple-choice	12 out of 15 students	top-down, multiple-choice	8 out of 15 students

The least significant progress was realized in bottom-up multiple-choice questions. The learners were successful in their first attempt already with 12 correct answers out of 15; in the second attempt, however, all 15 students answered correctly to this type of question. Students also improved their skills in open-ended questions, where in the follow-up testing 10 of them answered correctly, and compared to only 2 correctly answered open-ended questions in the initial worksheet. Yet the biggest increase in correctly answered questions appeared in top-down multiple-choice questions, where students originally scored only 6 and 2 correct answers, advancing to 14 and 8 correct answers out of 15 students. This is a striking improvement in their comprehension.

Now the progress of individual students will be examined. Learners in group A were anonymized and numbered from 1 to 15. Then their initial test was compared to their follow-up test and the number of correctly answered questions was analyzed. The following table shows the answers of individual students from group A from their initial test and from their follow-up test. Check marks indicate correct answers and cross marks indicate incorrect, missed or incomplete answers. The last column of the table shows the learners' progress in correctly answered questions.

Table 2: *Progress of individual students*

student	worksheet I (initial test)	worksheet II (follow-up test)	progress
1	✓ × × ✓	× ✓ ✓ ✓	+ 1
2	× ✓ × ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	+ 2
3	✓ × × ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	+ 2
4	× × × ×	✓ ✓ ✓ ×	+ 3
5	× × × ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	+ 3
6	✓ × × ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	+ 2
7	× × × ✓	× ✓ ✓ ×	+ 1
8	✓ × × ×	× ✓ ✓ ×	+ 1
9	✓ × ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	+ 1
10	✓ ✓ × ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	+ 1
11	✓ ✓ × ×	✓ ✓ ✓ ×	+ 1
12	× × × ✓	× ✓ ✓ ×	+ 1
13	× × × ×	× ✓ × ✓	+ 2
14	× × × ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ×	+ 2
15	× × × ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ×	+ 2

It is remarkable that all students improved their comprehension in at least one more correctly answered question. More specifically, in 7 of the students' improvement in one question was observed, 6 students provided correct answers to two more questions compared to the initial test, and the progress of 2 learners even reached three more correct answers.

This small-range statistics clearly proves the impact of exposure to accented speech on individual learners' level of comprehension as well as development especially in their top-down processing skill in listening comprehension tasks. It proved useful to expose

learners to different varieties of English not only for listening training but also for challenging their beliefs about speakers of other languages and cultures overall.

Correlations between the level of comprehension and attitudes,

Unfortunately, only minor changes in the learners' attitudes towards accented speech and non-native speakers of English were observed with this group of learners for one month. It could be assumed that some changes would become more evident over a longer period of time; however, it was possible to find some correlations between the learners' initial and follow-up level of comprehension and their attitudes towards accented speech. For this part, I also analyzed the results of group A only, since it was the target group, I found it irrelevant to compare the results of the control group.

Firstly, weaker students who answered none or only one question correctly had a rather negative approach to accented speech in their initial questionnaire. Four such students evaluated both Tu's and Amir's pronunciation and their overall level of English as bad and they pointed out that Tu's and Amir's speech is very different from what the learners are used to. It was also the same students who used negative adjectives like "drunk, dumb, and annoying" to describe the speakers. In their follow-up questionnaire, these students held on to their initial judgments.

Average students, on the other hand, most of whom answered two questions correctly, had a very neutral attitude towards accented speech. In their follow-up questionnaire, however, it was this group of students who ranked accented speech more positively compared to their original opinions. Two students firstly agreed with the last two statements of the questionnaire (The speaker's accent and intonation are very different from what I am used to in English), which they changed to disagreeing in their second questionnaire. This means they got more used to and trained their ear for accented speech, which was the aim of the action research. The other two students also improved their opinion on Tu's and Amir's pronunciation and their overall level of English.

With students who were rather successful already in their first comprehension task, it was remarkable that they ranked both Tu and Amir in the most positive way from the whole class. Although they said that accented speech differs from what they are used to, they described both Tu and Amir as "kind, smart, friendly, and cheerful". This attitude remained the same in the follow-up testing.

From the above, it is obvious that the higher the comprehension level the better the attitude towards accented speech. Also, because these are students that I know, I can correlate their success rate in these tasks with accented speech with their usual comprehension, attitude, and level of English in our classes. Those learners, whose comprehension level is lower even in standard BrE or AmE listening tasks, were also less successful in tasks used in this research. Similarly, students who typically have no difficulties with standard varieties and whose level is slightly higher, scored higher in this research.

Summary of the research and answering research questions

Out of the two researched areas, comprehension and attitudes, the comprehension level of the testing group improved noticeably compared to their original results and to the control group. On the other hand, attitudes towards accented speech shifted minimally and were more influenced by the level of initial comprehension rather than by controlled exposure to non-native speakers.

The first research question, therefore, could be answered positively. Controlled exposure to different varieties of English does influence the learners' comprehension level of these varieties positively. All students from the test group improved in at least one more correct answer, some in two answers and some even in three answers. Unlike the control group who continued with their standard BrE curriculum, and whose results in both tests were similar.

The answer to the second research question, however, could not be determined so clearly. A few students from the test group showed more tolerance and a nicer attitude toward accented speech, the number of these students is too small to provide an obvious result. Still, the research might signify another interesting link between the learners' attitudes towards accented speech and their level of comprehension. Also, learners remained mostly consistent in their evaluation of the two speakers, regardless of their improvement in comprehension.

V. IMPLICATIONS

As indicated by earlier research and the whole Global Englishes discourse (McKay & Brown, Jenkins, etc.), it is naive to assume that learners will make do with materials based solely on British English materials as is the case now in most Czech curriculums. The modern EFL teacher is obliged to enrich the variety of materials learners encounter in their English classes with the language of non-native speakers not only for the sake of cultural awareness and development of the learners but also for their adjusting to different varieties of English.

The research signifies that exposure to accented speech does increase the level of comprehension even in such a short period of time as one month. Therefore, I would suggest that teachers should incorporate materials available online, and recordings of English speakers of other languages as a completion of their existing curriculum. Raising awareness and training sensitivity and tolerance to various accents and dialects is undoubtedly a skill English learners will benefit from.

Additionally, I believe that even attitudes and life values should be raised at school, tolerance of differences among the most important ones. Although my research did not signify huge improvements in the learners' attitudes, I partially ascribe it to the fact that they are teenage students and were only exposed to different varieties for a short period of time. Therefore, I will continue using accented speech recording in my classes even outside the research and I suggest other teachers do the same. Any follow-up discussions about the learners' encounters with other speakers of English who are not native speakers arise quite naturally and are enriching in knowing the students better and having the option to negotiate global values.

Limitations of the research

As stated earlier, this research was limited by several factors. Firstly, it was small-scale research with secondary school students who do not take things too seriously. This mainly influenced the results of the attitudes questionnaires. Some insignificant hints in support of the hypothesis were visible, however, not convincing enough.

Secondly, not all students received the same amount of accented speech input (above indicated 22 minutes) during the exposure period due to some absences. I managed to complete both key measurements with all students, however, it was not possible to track

back each student and complete all tasks with them. Even still, most of the students experienced 7 to 8 exposures, which then manifested itself in their increased level of comprehension.

A third issue there was with the research was the quality of the recording. As I stated above, I believe that the students would have benefited from an adjusted recording where both speakers' volume was equalized. In view of the acoustics in the classrooms, it was rather inconvenient to play the recording in a way that the volume of both speakers was pleasant to listen to.

Due to all the limitations mentioned above, this research cannot be too generalized, and below are some suggestions for adjusting and/or extending the research.

Suggestions for further research

If similar research was repeated, I would suggest using a different test group, most preferably adult learners on lower-intermediate to intermediate level. Although the level of participants in this research was optimal, their age influenced the attitudes they had towards the whole project, and therefore most likely even its results. Although the results might be more conclusive with adult learners of English, it might be more complicated to demonstrate the benefits of training the ear to various accents of English speakers.

Another option would be to continue with the exposure for a longer period of time with teenage students. I strongly believe that their attitudes should be challenged and developed at school with different influences, and it takes them longer to adjust and rethink their initial opinions.

Something that appeared as a side effect during this research was the correlation between the learner's level of comprehension and their attitudes towards accented speech. It would be interesting to look into this in more detail. For my research, this was just an additional correlation that appeared during the assessment of the students' answers, but I believe that more extensive and targeted tasks could be used to analyze this relationship.

In my research, I was not distinguishing between the individual non-native accents; however, during the post-listening stage when I discussed the students' feelings and

encounters with English speakers of other languages in their real life, which were mostly speakers from other European countries, unlike Vietnamese and Iranian from the used recording. It seemed that the students themselves were convinced that it is important to be able to understand people with different accents in English, although they still mostly look up to the American variety. Future research could address the frequency of encounters with native and non-native speakers in the students' real life, speakers of which languages they most communicate with, and the students' perception of different accents and their level of comprehension.

To conclude, I suggest four possible ways to alternate or extend this research: conduct the research with adult learners, conduct the research for a longer period of time, correlate the attitudes and the comprehension in more detail, and study more closely the specific foreign accents in English the learners' are likely to encounter.

VI. CONCLUSION

I have argued throughout this thesis, both in the literature review and in my own research, that exposing learners to accented speech is of crucial importance in modern ELT and that current curriculums and every day in-class practice should be adjusted to the current trends in the Global Englishes discourse. Specifically, this research aimed to identify if and in what way controlled exposure to accented speech influences the learners' comprehension and attitudes. In particular, I demonstrated that the main improvement between the initial and the follow-up test manifested in the area of comprehension, while very little in attitudes.

Based on a quantitative and qualitative analysis of 30 secondary school students' answers, I came to the conclusion that the test group benefited greatly from exposure to accented speech. Most students in the test group improved by 25 or 50 percent after one month. The results also indicate that the biggest progress took place in top-down processing questions, which corresponds with statements addressed in the literature review, claiming that learners on lower levels initially rely on their bottom-up processing skills when listening to accented speech. Over time, they develop the ability to understand a general idea of the text and not be confused by isolated words they comprehend.

This project challenged conventional ideas and practices at Czech secondary schools, where most curriculums follow materials based on British or American English. I mostly take inspiration from this project in my future everyday teaching practice as the introduction of some elements of Global Englishes to my students ignited a greater will to bring in unconventional materials also to other classes on a more regular basis. In doing so, I believe that my students will accommodate more easily to the globalized English-speaking world with speakers from all different backgrounds, develop their listening skills and negotiation strategies, and last but not least become more tolerant of differences and diversity.

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APPENDIX A. Worksheet I

Touch and Contact – listening I

<https://ello.org/english/1051/1070-Amir-Touch.htm>

Amir and Tu talk about social contact in their home countries between various people.

TASK 1: Listen to Amir and Tu's conversation and answer the following questions. More answers are possible.

1) He says people kiss each other ____?

- a) on the cheek
- b) at a home party
- c) on the hand

2) In other countries, what is a common way to greet each other?

3) In Vietnam it is ___ to hold hands.

- a) rare
- b) common

4) Who does Tu mention?

- a) lovers
- b) siblings
- c) classmates

APPENDIX B. Worksheet II

Touch and Contact – listening II

<https://elllo.org/english/1051/1070-Amir-Touch.htm>

Amir and Tu talk about social contact in their home countries between various people.

TASK 1: Listen to Amir and Tu's conversation and answer the following questions. More answers are possible.

1) When do the Iranian men kiss?

2) What do people do in an Iranian city?

- a) shake hands
- b) hold hands
- c) slap hands

3) Why was she afraid when she came to Iran?

- a) because she is a lesbian
- b) because people would think she was a lesbian

4) She says females hold hands ____ .

- a) with men
- b) when shopping together
- c) on the street

APPENDIX C. Attitudes and opinion questionnaire

TASK 2: On a scale of your agreement, express how much you agree or disagree.

	<i>zcela souhlasím</i>	<i>spíše souhlasím</i>	<i>nevím</i>	<i>spíše nesouhlasím</i>	<i>zcela nesouhlasím</i>
Tu je žena z Vietnamu. Amir je muž z Íránu.					
Tu je inteligentní.					
Amir je inteligentní.					
Tu má velmi dobrou angličtinu.					
Amir má velmi dobrou angličtinu.					
Tu se zdá přátelská					
Amir se zdá přátelský.					
Tu má hodně energie.					
Amir má hodně energie.					
Tu by měla zlepšit svou výslovnost.					
Amir by měl zlepšit svou výslovnost.					
Tu mluví moc rychle.					
Amir mluví moc rychle.					
Tu má akcent a intonaci, která se hodně liší od toho, na co jsem zvyklý/á.					
Amir má akcent a intonaci, která se hodně liší od toho, na co jsem zvyklý/á.					

TASK 3: Jakými přídavnými jmény můžeš popsat:

Tu	
Amira	

APPENDIX D. Dialog transcript

Amir: Maybe it's something I have to mention about Iranians, we don't kiss, of course, on the lips. It's only on the cheek.

Tu: Yes, even on the cheek?

Amir: Yes, on the cheeks.

Tu: Even on the cheeks.

Amir: Well, men in Iran kiss each other on the cheeks.

Tu: What?

Amir: Yeah, just like Italian people. We do that.

Tu: Really? For greeting?

Amir: For greetings.

Tu: In public?

Amir: No, you go in the party, there are like fifty people sitting in the living room, then all of them stand up, and the new guest arrives, and then they shake hands and they have to kiss three times each person on the cheeks. It just takes so long. Sometimes when I'm back from other countries I feel like well, just greet them by just waving my hand, things like that.

Tu: What about holding hands?

Amir: Holding hands? We shake hands. Yeah, definitely, we shake hands.

Tu: You don't like hold hands?

Amir: Ah, hold hands, like a boyfriend and girlfriends holding hands ... well, that really can be done only in the mountainside where it's not so much observed, yeah.

Tu: Oh, you know what? Actually, in Vietnam we hold hands pretty frequent. I don't know why, but I got the habit of holding my mom's hand.

Amir: Oh, OK.

Tu: And, so when I first came here, I was so worried that they would say I'm a lesbian. or something. Yeah, but, we do hold hands a lot.

Amir: Uh, well, when you're saying holding hands are you mean female or males you know or who you're holding hands with?

Tu: Oh, yeah, actually, you know of course lovers hold hands, but usually females. Females, Vietnamese females got the habit of holding hands on the street, you know, going shopping and hanging out, just friends, female friends. I don't see many men holding hands, but usually females do it quite often.

Retrieved from: <https://ello.org/english/1051/1070-Amir-Touch.htm>

SHRNUTÍ

V této diplomové práci se věnuji tématu porozumění a postojů k řeči s akcentem od nerodilých mluvčích angličtiny. V teoretické části se zabývám prvky oboru Global Englishes a jeho místem v moderní výuce anglického jazyka na školách. Také jsou zde vysvětleny základní pojmy z didaktiky výslovnosti a poslechu, které souvisejí právě s řečí nerodilých mluvčích. Poslední teoretická část se zabývá jazykovou identitou žáků a jejich motivací. Největší důraz je kladen na tzv. orální řečové dovednosti, tj. mluvení, výslovnost a poslech s ohledem na obor Global Englishes nebo Angličtina jako mezinárodní jazyk. Praktická část diplomové práce byla uskutečněna pomocí pracovních listů a dotazníků a zkoumala právě úroveň porozumění mluvenému slovu a také postoje k mluvčím angličtiny z různého jazykového pozadí. Z výzkumu vyplynulo, že i za tak krátkou dobu, jakou je jeden měsíc, byli studenti ze sledované skupiny schopni zlepšit své porozumění, nicméně v jejich postoji nedošlo k žádným výrazným změnám. Jako vedlejší produkt výzkumu bylo možné nalézt souvztažnost mezi vyšší úrovní porozumění a pozitivnějšími názory na nerodilé mluvčí.

Klíčová slova: řeč s přízvukem, porozumění mluvenému slovu, jazykové postoje, Global Englishes, Angličtina jako mezinárodní jazyk