

# **Linguistic Interaction between English-Speaking Families and Foreign Au-pairs: The Case of Czech and Slovak Speakers in England**

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Bachelor's thesis  
2018



**Tomas Bata University in Zlín**  
Faculty of Humanities

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Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně  
Fakulta humanitních studií  
Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur  
akademický rok: 2017/2018

## ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Denisa Chrástková**  
Osobní číslo: **H14313**  
Studijní program: **B7310 Filologie**  
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi**  
Forma studia: **prezenční**

Téma práce: **Lingvistická interakce mezi anglicky mluvícími rodinami a zahraničními au-pairs: Příklad Čechů a Slováků v Anglii**

Zásady pro vypracování:

**Shromáždění a studium odborné literatury**  
**Formulace cílů a specifikace metod práce**  
**Vytvoření dotazníku a distribuce mezi korespondenty**  
**Sběr a vyhodnocení dotazníku, interpretace výsledku**  
**Formulace závěru**

Rozsah bakalářské práce:

Rozsah příloh:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Seznam odborné literatury:

**Cox, Rosie. 2015. Au Pairs' Lives in Global Context: Sisters or Servants? Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.**

**Roach, Peter. 2012. English Phonetics and Phonology: A Practical Course. 4th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.**

**Trudgill, Peter. 1999. The Dialects of England. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell.**

**Trudgill, Peter. 2000. Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society. 4th ed. London: Penguin Books.**

**Yule, George. 2010. The Study of Language. 4th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.**

Vedoucí bakalářské práce:

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Konzultant:

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Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur

Datum zadání bakalářské práce:

**10. listopadu 2017**

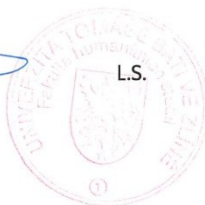
Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce:

**4. května 2018**

Ve Zlíně dne 8. ledna 2018



doc. Ing. Anežka Lengalová, Ph.D.  
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## ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá tematikou, zda vycestování do zahraniční země jako au-pair pomůže ke zdokonalení cizího jazyka, v tomto případě angličtiny. Teoretická část vysvětluje definice pojmů au-pair, akcent a dialekt, hypotézy osvojování si druhého jazyka a pojem jazyková imerze. Dále jsou zde zahrnuty normy úrovně B1 anglického jazyka podle Společného evropského referenčního rámce pro jazyky. Praktická část se zaměřuje na výzkum anglických dovedností, jako jsou čtení, poslech, psaní a mluvení u vybraného vzorku respondentů. Zabývá se také sociálně – kulturním prostředím všech respondentů.

Klíčová slova: au-pair, Češi, Slováci, anglický jazyk, osvojování si cizího jazyka, Anglie

## ABSTRACT

This bachelor's thesis examines whether travel to a foreign country and work there as an au-pair helps to improve a foreign language speaking skill, in this case English. The theoretical part explains the terms au-pair, accent and dialect, and language immersion as well as hypotheses concerning second language. It also contains standards of the B1 level of English language according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The practical part focuses on research of English skills such as reading, listening, writing and speaking. It also focuses on the socio-cultural environment of all respondents.

Keywords: au-pair, Czechs, Slovaks, English language, foreign language acquisition, England

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank to PhDr. Katarína Nemčoková, Ph.D. for her support, guidance and kind attitude during the writing of this bachelor's thesis. I would also like to thank Mgr. Hana Bellová, B.A. for being my supervisor and supporting me throughout the thesis process. Last but not least, thanks go to my family and boyfriend for the support during my studying and my writing of this thesis.

**CONTENTS**

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>I. THEORY .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1 AU-PAIR .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1.1 TYPES OF AU-PAIR.....</b>	<b>14</b>
1.1.1 AU-PAIR .....	14
1.1.2 AU-PAIR PLUS.....	14
1.1.3 MOTHER'S HELP .....	14
1.1.4 NANNY.....	14
<b>1.2 AU-PAIR IN ENGLAND.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>1.3 BECOMING AN AU-PAIR.....</b>	<b>15</b>
1.3.1 AN AU-PAIR AS A STUDENT.....	16
1.3.2 AN AU-PAIR AS UNEMPLOYED PERSON .....	16
<b>1.4 MY OWN EXPERIENCE AS AN AU-PAIR.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2 ENGLISH SKILLS.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>2.1 COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR     LANGUAGES.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>2.2 B1 READING SKILLS .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>2.3 B1 LISTENING SKILLS .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2.4 B1 WRITING SKILLS .....</b>	<b>19</b>
2.4.1 WRITTEN INTERACTION.....	20
<b>2.5 B1 SPEAKING SKILLS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
2.5.1 SPOKEN INTERACTION .....	20
<b>3 ACCENTS AND DIALECTS .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>4 STUDYING OF LANGUAGE.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>4.1 HYPOTHESIS OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION.....</b>	<b>24</b>
4.1.1 THE ACQUISITION-LEARNING DISTINCTION.....	24
4.1.2 THE NATURAL ORDER HYPOTHESIS.....	25
4.1.3 THE MONITOR HYPOTHESIS .....	25
4.1.4 THE INPUT HYPOTHESIS .....	26
4.1.5 THE AFFECTIVE FILTER HYPOTHESIS .....	26
<b>4.2 LANGUAGE IMMERSION.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>II. ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>5 PRELIMINARY STAGE OF RESEARCH.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>5.1 THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>5.2 HYPOTHESES .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>5.3 METHODS.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>5.4 TYPE OF RESEARCH.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>5.5 THE RESPONDENTS .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>5.6 COLLECTING OF DATA .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>5.7 THE FIRST PHASE OF DATA COLLECTING.....</b>	<b>31</b>



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5.8 THE SECOND PHASE OF DATA COLLECTING.....	31
6 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS .....	32
6.1 QUESTION NUMBER 1 .....	32
6.2 QUESTION NUMBER 2 .....	33
6.3 QUESTION NUMBER 3 .....	34
6.4 QUESTION NUMBER 4 .....	35
6.5 QUESTION NUMBER 5 .....	36
6.6 QUESTION NUMBER 6 .....	37
6.7 QUESTION NUMBER 7 .....	38
6.8 QUESTION NUMBER 8 .....	39
6.9 QUESTION NUMBER 9 AND 11.....	40
6.10 QUESTION NUMBER 10 AND 12.....	42
6.11 QUESTION NUMBER 13.....	44
6.12 QUESTION NUMBER 14.....	45
6.13 QUESTI NUMBER 15.....	46
6.14 QUESTION NUMBER 16.....	47
6.15 QUESTION NUMBER 17 .....	48
6.16 QUESTION NUMBER 18 .....	49
6.17 QUESTION NUMBER 19.....	50
6.18 QUESTION NUMBER 20.....	51
CONCLUSION .....	53
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	55
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	58
LIST OF FIGURES .....	59
LIST OF TABLES .....	60
APPENDICES.....	61

## INTRODUCTION

One of the most sought-after experiences in the globalized world, especially for young people, is a stay abroad. Every year, many young people travel to foreign countries because they want to expand their horizons, learn about new cultures, earn money or improve their second language skills. This thesis investigates second language improvement with a specific focus on English. When young people decide to travel, they face many challenges. This thesis maps the issues connected to travel and stay in England. How to organize the travels and what kind of job is possible to find in England are just some of the questions answered here. Due to the wide range of possibilities of travelling to England without any restrictions for Czechs/Slovaks there are many who decide to take this opportunity.

The main aim of this thesis is to examine how a work stay in England influences English proficiency of young women and men who decide to gain work experience in England. In the last decades it has become especially popular with young people to work as au-pairs. Such work offers, among other benefits, many new experiences, such as getting to know other cultures and people and the improvement of English language skills. Becoming an au-pair in England is not difficult, and no exorbitant costs are related. That is why England is the most frequent European target destination for many au-pairs. This thesis aims to be a starting point for understanding how an experience such as an au-pair in England is a tool for the improvement of English.

The thesis is divided into a theoretical part of 4 chapters and a practical part of 2 chapters. The first chapter covers the term au-pair. It outlines the classification of different types of au-pair, and it explains the process of becoming an au-pair when the future au-pair is a student, and when that person is unemployed. The last part of the first chapter describes the own experience of the author. The second chapter specifies the level of English skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing) of Czech students after high school graduation. The third chapter deals with the differences between accent and dialect, which is important for the further investigation of specific regional varieties of English that au-pairs may encounter. The fourth chapter describes hypotheses of second language acquisition according to Stephen Krashen, and the term “immersion”, connected with second language learning.

The practical part first states the methods which have been explored in the research before and during the data analysis. Then it examines the questionnaire collected from

Czech/Slovak au-pairs in England. Finally it analyzes the answer to each question of the questionnaire survey and summarizes and interprets the obtained results.

Ultimately, the thesis proves that the most efficient way how to acquire English language skills for young non native speakers is to travel to foreign country, in this case England and work there as an au-pair.

## **I. THEORY**

## 1 AU-PAIR

Domestic help is a welcome relief for many families in which many domestic duties limit the ability of family members to dedicate their productive energy to earning family income. However, not every family solves their problems with limited time resources by hiring a help. According to Cox (2015, 30) it may be due to the currently prevailing philosophy of social equality or due to the cost of a domestic help, which can absorb a significant part of a family budget. The solution can be a special type of domestic help, an au-pair.

Differences between au-pair “A young foreign person, typically a woman, who helps with housework or childcare in exchange for food, a room, and some pocket money.” (Oxford Dictionaries 2018) and domestic helper are, among others, that the au-pair is considered by the British government as a person who is gaining experience through cultural exchange in foreign country. An au-pair is also cheaper, as the families pay less to her/him for their help than to domestic helper. Nowadays, many English families seek au-pairs to help with childcare, household chores and care for elderly (Cox 2015, 30). According to the UK Government, an au-pair is neither considered as a student nor as a worker or an employee. It is a connection of these two terms together, thus making a new special category. The Council of Europe (1969, 2) states that the main aim of an au-pair placement is to temporarily host an au-pair in a foreign family in exchange for specific services. Young people who become au-pairs (currently both young men and woman) have many reasons why they choose England, e.g., improving English language and professional skills, and gaining better knowledge of the country.

Families and au-pairs should be in an equal relation. The idea is supported by the term *au-pair*, adopted from French, which means “equal” (Búriková and Miller 2010, 49). The host families should consider an au-pair as a part of their family. An au-pair is not a domestic helper; it is more like an older sister or brother of children who are taken care of (Hempshell 1998, 11).

Although the age of an au-pair depends on requirements of family, some exceptions are possible. “The person placed ‘au-pair’ shall not be less than 17 or more than 30 years of age” (Council of Europe 1969, 2). An au-pair is a part of the host family; she/he shares their family lifestyle. The host family should provide to the au-pair a separate room, food, pocket money which is paid weekly and at least one free day every week (Council of Europe 1969, 2 - 3).

## **1.1 Types of Au-pair**

Several types of au-pair contracts exist. What kind of au-pair a host family chooses depends on their requirements (Hempshell 1998, 11).

### **1.1.1 Au-pair**

The most common type of au-pair is a foreign person who lives with a host family. The au-pair is considered as a family member who receives weekly pocket money for their services to the family. These services are light household chores, childcare and babysitting (UK Government 2017). All of these services should not take more than 25 – 30 hours per week. Payment of pocket money should be £70 - £90 per week (Childcare 2017). The au-pair should have the possibility to attend an English language course and travel to different cities in their free time (UK Government 2017).

### **1.1.2 Au-pair plus**

An au-pair plus is a foreign person who lives with a host family. The au-pair uses a foreign language to communicate with the host family. An au-pair plus has a similar description as an au-pair. Differences between these two types are, that an au-pair plus is allowed to work more hours per week (30 – 35) and should earn more pocket money, approximately £90 – £120 per week (Childcare 2017).

### **1.1.3 Mother's help**

According to Justaupair (2017), “mother's help” is classified as a person who is a foreigner with fluent English or a native English-speaking person, who is more than 20 years old. This person is expected to take care of children while parents are at work. Mother's help are asked to help with household chores, occasional babysitting, cooking for children and shopping. They should have already had some experiences with taking care of children, and they should be able to drive a car when needed, the car being provided by the family. Mother's help work from 8 to 10 hours per day and her/his salary is £150 – £200 per week.

### **1.1.4 Nanny**

Hempshell (1998, 13) claims that a nanny is a professional person who takes care of children of different ages. Justaupair (2017) describes a nanny as a person with childcare qualifications and experiences. The nanny is responsible for the children, and no house chores are required apart from those connected with the children. According to the UK Government (2017), a nanny is considered as an employee. Families, which are the

employers, pay the nanny between £250 – £400 per week, depending on how much time is needed (Justaupair 2017).

## 1.2 Au-pair in England

Many young women and men from European countries want to travel to England for work. Cox (2015, 28) writes that England is one of the most common destinations for being an au-pair. The main aim is typically improving the English language. England is considered the best destination to learn English. Another reason is exploring the English cities and countryside. The most exciting for most of the foreign au-pairs is London, the capital of England. Búriková and Miller (2010, 49) claim that after 2004, when the Czech Republic and Slovakia joined the European Union, au-pairs coming from the two countries no longer needed a visa. Nowadays, the au-pairs from the Czech Republic and Slovakia can live in England without any restrictions. Au-pairs from Slovakia are one of the largest groups of au-pairs in England (Búriková and Miller 2010, 49).

## 1.3 Becoming an au-pair

For foreigners who want to become an au-pair there are three possible ways of choosing their host family. The first possibility is that the potential au-pairs choose the host family via websites especially created for au-pairs and host families. These websites are, e.g., Aupairworld.com or GreatAuPair.com.

According to the Aupairworld (2017), the first step is to complete the registration process on their website and complete a questionnaire. The Aupairworld works as a free of charge website for au-pairs; families pay a monthly fee. Au-pairs can exchange emails and personal messages with potential families and they can get to know each other. Au-pairs can use these websites as long as they want and they can send a personal message to any available family. After some time when host families and au-pairs have chosen each other, they start to prepare a schedule for the au-pair stay. The au-pair stay arranged via websites has no official contract agreement but Aupairworld recommends use *the official European au pair contract*.

The second possibility of finding a family is specifically risk-free for potential au-pairs in terms of not finding the host family by themselves. A person interested in becoming an au-pair can use numerous Czech agencies, which help them to find a host family in England. Examples of agencies which mediate au-pair stays in England are Student Agency or Coolagent. Coolagent claims that their coordinators help the potential au-pair find a host

family. The first step is to complete an application form and the rest of the process is organized by the agency. In this case, the application form is more extensive than on the previously mentioned websites. Au-pairs must enclose a medical certification, police clearance certificate, a copy of their driving license, a collage of pictures with kids or family and two references. When the agency finds a family for the au-pair with equal preferences for each other, they can organize a phone or Skype call to get to know each other. The charge for agency services must be paid by both the host families and the au-pairs. The charge for the au-pair placement depends on the duration of the au-pair stay. Agencies prefer long-term stays for 12 months, but they are able to mediate shorter stays for 3 – 6 months. According to Student Agency (2017), the mediation of a long-term stay costs approximately 2,000 – 3,000 CZK, and the mediation of a short term stay costs approximately 4,000 – 5,000 CZK. The third type of mediation of the au-pair stay is via Facebook groups, e.g., Aupairs (CZ/SK), Au-pairs in... and many others. Nowadays, there are many Facebook au-pair groups. The members of au-pair groups are primarily potential au-pairs, current au-pairs and experienced people who already finished their au-pair careers. The potential au-pair must have their own personal Facebook page and must join one of these groups. The mediation of an au-pair stay works on a principle where the current au-pair who is leaving their host family “offers” the host family to other au-pairs. The current au-pair shares basic information about the host family in the au-pair group and potential au-pairs contact either the current au-pair or the host family. All information that the current au-pair shares in the group is agreed upon by the host family.

### **1.3.1 An au-pair as a student**

Czech/Slovak students can travel to England to work there as au-pairs. Many students become au-pairs during the school summer holiday when classes do not take place. Besides the previously mentioned steps, students who became au-pairs need other documents before their travel, e.g., travel insurance, the au-pair/host family agreement (if required) and the flight/bus ticket.

### **1.3.2 An au-pair as an unemployed person**

When Czech/Slovak students do not want to continue in tertiary education after their secondary school graduation and do not immediately find a job, they must register with a Job Centre. According to Pololáník (2016), the Job Centre covers the health insurance of all registered persons in the Czech Republic or Slovakia. Documents that have to be completed before the travel are identical to the documents for au-pair as a student with one



exception, namely the cancellation of registration with the Job Centre (the cancellation of health insurance paid by the Job Centre). According to Edita (2013), travel insurance can be bought from any insurance company in the Czech Republic or Slovakia.

#### **1.4 My own experience as an au-pair**

I became an au-pair during my studies at university. My motivation was to improve my English skills, especially speaking. I found all information on the Internet pages - websites of agencies, personal blogs of current au-pairs and in Facebook groups specially made for au-pairs. On one hand I knew that I wanted to go to England because of the language. On the other hand, England is also interesting as a country by itself. I could choose between two options, which were finding a family via agency or finding a host-family by myself. According to many positive references from current au-pairs I chose to find a family by myself. I could stay just during summer holidays when classes do not take place at the university. I started to look for a host family quite early, in January. I sent many personal messages to host-families; in the end one host-family contacted me and we found a match. We exchanged e-mails and organized two Skype calls. At the end of April we agreed that I would come to England as their au-pair. During my au-pair period, I was still a student so I did not need to solve any issues with Job Centre in the Czech Republic. My departure was in mid-May. My first days in England, particularly in the town of Cotgrave, were hard for me. English spoken in the Czech/Slovak schools by Czech/Slovak teachers is different from English in England. People speak with dialect according to the area where they live and it confused me many times. Lack of proper vocabulary, e.g. names of kitchen tools, was quickly obvious to me. I practised my speaking skills primarily with children and friends but also with the host parents. After 3 months with this family and a complete language immersion I noticed the first improvements. I deepened my knowledge of vocabulary, I got used to sentence structures, I was able to better understand speech of English people and I was able to easily communicate with them.

## 2 ENGLISH SKILLS

According to the Národní ústav odborného vzdělávání [National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education], further referred to as NUOV (2005, 37), Czech students of secondary education finish their studies by passing appropriate exams. The proof of their studies is Final Exam Certificate and Apprenticeship Certificate. Secondary school graduates can start to work or continue in a follow-up study. Another category of students who finish their secondary education by passing appropriate exams is the one in which students pass the Secondary School-Leaving Exam. The proof of their studies is the Secondary School-Leaving Certificate. This category of students can start to work or apply to continue their tertiary education.

One of the subjects examined in School-Leaving Exam is the second language, which is English in most cases. Zormanova (2015) claims that 90% of students in Europe have studied English as a second language. The Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy [Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports] further referred to as MŠMT (2014, 4) prescribes that the level of English language after graduation of secondary education is B1. Requirements for all levels are defined the by Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

### 2.1 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

“The Common European Framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe.” (Council of Europe 1871, 1). The Framework delimits level of language skills which helps measuring each stage of learner’s progress. The Framework describes what each language learner needs to know and which skills and knowledge needs to develop in order to communicate effectively (Council of Europe (1971, 1).

According to the MŠMT (2014, 6-9) second language skills are divided into receptive activities – reading and listening; and productive activities – speaking and, writing.

### 2.2 B1 reading skills

A student can read and understand factual texts according to his/her interests and field of study. The reader of the written text receives and processes information which is produced by one or more authors (Council of Europe 1871, 68-69). According to MŠMT (2014, 7) used texts in state school, leaving exams are written in many different styles which are

conversational, official, newspapers and literary style. Students should comprehend main ideas of text and situations which are described, they should find and recognize specific information and understand simple instructions about everyday reality.

### **2.3 B1 listening skills**

Council of Europe (1971, 66) states that the so called aural reception contains activities where each student receives and processes a spoken text. The spoken text is realized through audio recordings which are produced by one or more speakers. According to Celce - Murcia (2001, 71-72) listening skills are taught through four different perspectives which are: *listening and repeating* (to help learners to listen and then imitate language), *listening and answering comprehension question* (to understand speech), *task listening* (to use the information from speech), *interactive listening* (to develop critical thinking, listening and efficient speaking skills). Council of Europe (1971, 66) claims that students should comprehend factual information related to job or everyday reality, including leisure activities and interests. MŠMT (2014, 6) identifies styles of audio recordings which can be conversational, official, newspapers and literary. Council of Europe (1971, 65) specifies audio recordings which include instructions, information, radio or TV recordings, public meetings or lectures and overheard conversation. MŠMT (2014, 6) claims that audio recordings are spoken in standard pronunciation and dialect. The speed is in accordance with common everyday situations. Students should be able to recognize the main meaning of the text, specific information and orientation directions.

### **2.4 B1 writing skills**

Council of Europe (1971, 61) claims that the student produces a written text which is received by one or more readers. This text should connect familiar situations within writer's field of interest and also it should link shorter elements into a clear and linear text. Written texts may include some of these activities: making notes, writing a personal or business letter, articles for newspapers and completing questionnaires. According to MŠMT (2014, 8) the student should be able through the written text to describe places, people, his/her experience, feelings which are for instance a surprise, pleasure or disagreement and he/she should be able to express his/her thoughts, apology, invitation and others. The student should know how to explain a problem, ask for information, opinion and others.

### 2.4.1 Written interaction

Council of Europe (1971, 82-83) claims that the producer of text interacts through written activities. Those activities can be in the form of exchanging notes when spoken interaction is not appropriate, exchange of e-mails, letters, agreements, contracts or amendments and in form of on-line conferences. The producer of written text should be able to impart his/her ideas on a specific topic, write information or ask about them if he/she needs and explain problems. He/she should know how to write a personal letter with all requirements.

## 2.5 B1 speaking skills

Council of Europe (1971, 58) states that the so called oral production contains activities which a speaker produces and one or more listeners receive. Speakers should clearly and reasonably describe a variety of situations according to their interest. Spoken production should be presented as a straightforward and linear text. According to Celce - Murcia (2001, 105) speaking skills are in classes provided in nonacademic level and they contain basic interaction with teacher, telephone calls, greeting, talking with friends and families and others. MŠMT (2014, 9) states that speakers can make visible pauses during the conversation which can be caused by thinking about the use of grammar. During spoken communication is used Standard English.

Main spoken topics which are related to state school leaving examination are divided into four areas:

1. *Personnel* – family, friends, leisure time and interests.
2. *Public* – services, culture, sport, mass media, transport.
3. *Education* – school events, schooling.
4. *Work* – part time job, career, professions.

According to these topics, the student should be able to describe and introduce places, people and experiences. The student should be able to express and explain his/her own ideas, thoughts, feelings, problems, directions, plans and other spoken texts which provide to recipient uncomplicated information.

### 2.5.1 Spoken interaction

Council of Europe (1971, 73-74) states that the language user communicates alternately as a speaker and listener with one or more participants. During the interaction are examined both reception and production strategies. MŠMT (2014, 10) reasons that the level of formality during the spoken interaction is selected according to the situation. Student

should immediately respond to communication which is addressed to him/her. According to Council of Europe (1971, 73), situations of spoken interaction should be for instance: informal discussion, interview, co-planning, casual conversation and others. Celce - Murcia (2001, 107) considers also *role plays* as one of the most important situation of the spoken interaction. MŠMT (2014, 10) states that the student should be able to verify and confirm information, express feelings and opinions, answer questions, have a conversation about familiar topic.

#### ***2.5.1.1 Interaction between student and native speaker***

Council of Europe (1971, 75) states that a speaker of B1 level is able to have a conversation with a native speaker about everyday reality even though he/she will need to ask for repetition of specific word phrases or words.

### 3 ACCENTS AND DIALECTS

Many foreign speakers who are in England for the first time are dismayed by the English they hear. The English native speakers speak different English if it is compared with the one the Czechs and Slovaks have learnt by Czech or Slovak teachers in Czech or Slovak schools. Accents and dialects used by native speakers represent a difficulty to understand English by non-native speakers. According to Hughes, Trudgill and Watt (2005, 1), foreign speakers immediately notice the differences of pronunciation but also differences in vocabulary and grammar.

Roach (2009, 3) argues that the accent is recognized through people's pronunciation of a specific language. The accents depend on geographical location, on the age of the speakers, on social backgrounds or on different types of education. Another variety of language is the dialect. Dialect is distinguished by pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure.

The most prestigious accent of English studied in language courses around England is Received Pronunciation. According to British Library (2017), Received Pronunciation is recognized as an accent of English. Abbreviated as RP, it is commonly termed *Queen's English, Oxford English or BBC English*. However all of the names are a bit fallacious. The Queen speaks in a unique form of the English language. Oxford as a university or a city and BBC as an institution are nowadays not limited by one accent. RP does not include any hints about a speaker's geographical location but it reveals hints about speaker's education and social background. Roach (2009, 4) reasons, that the differences of English accents are mostly made between northern and southern part of England. There are lot of accents and dialects in England but the division along regional boundaries is not that precise.

Standard English is the dialect which is used by influential and well educated people. The population using it is a minority. Trudgill (2000, 6) claims, that the speakers mostly combine Standard English with many regional accents. Trudgill (1999, 4) states that Standard English has also some differences between northern and southern part of England. For instance:

South: "I won't do it." "We haven't seen him."

North: "I'll not do it." "We've not seen him." (Trudgill 1999, 4)

South: "You need your hair cut."

North: "You need your hair cutting." (Trudgill 2000, 7)

Trudgill (2014) mentions that regional dialects are divided into two different kinds and they are traditional dialects and mainstream dialects. Mainstream dialects include the Modern Nonstandard Dialects and the Standard English Dialect. Mainstream Dialects are mostly connected with the south-east area of England, areas which have become English speaking lately, areas which include young people speech or middle-class and upper-class people. Trudgill (1999, 5-6) states that the pronunciation is much more significant for Mainstream Modern Nonstandard Dialects than grammar. For instance:

“She’s not coming” and “She isn’t coming” (both Standard English)

“She ain’t comin” (nonstandard) (Trudgill 1999, 6).

Traditional dialects are spoken with minority of the English inhabitants and they mostly occur in rustic areas of England. Traditional dialects are different from Standard English and also from each other, it means that other speakers can be easily confused and have difficulty to understand them for the first time. For instance:

“She bain’t a-comin” or “Hoo inno comin” or “Her idden comin”, which means: “She’s not coming.” (Trudgill 1999, 5).

## 4 STUDYING OF LANGUAGE

The ability to learn second language depends on many factors. One of them is age of the second language learners; the ability varies dramatically with the learner being a child or an adult. According to Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2003, 379) adults who are second language learners, more often endeavour to achieve the native level of the second language, but in majority of these learners it is impossible to achieve it, especially in pronunciation. Learners mostly have the accent and they make many mistakes which are related to the word order or form of words. Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2003, 379) hold the opinion that “success may depend on the range of factors, including age, talent, motivation and whether you are in the country where the language is spoken or sitting in a classroom five mornings a week with no further contact with native speakers.”

### 4.1 Hypothesis of second language acquisition

According to Schutz (2017), there are five main second language acquisition hypotheses which were found by Stephen Krashen. These hypotheses are the Acquisition-Learning distinction, the Natural Order Hypothesis, the Monitor Hypothesis, the Input Hypothesis and the Affective Filter Hypothesis.

#### 4.1.1 The Acquisition-Learning Distinction

The Acquisition-Learning Distinction is, according to Schutz (2017), one of the most principal hypotheses in Krashen’s theory. Krashen (2009, 10) claims that there are two different ways how to develop skills in a second language. The first type is language acquisition: this process is almost identical with the process of developing language ability of the first language of children. During the language acquisition, the language acquirer does not realize that he or she is acquiring language. The acquirer realizes just the fact that he or she communicates through the language. The language acquisition is considered as a subconscious activity because the acquirers do not consciously realize the rules of the first language learning. The acquirers “feel” that the grammatical sentences are right and that the mistakes are wrong. The second type of developing skills is learning. Schutz (2017) reasons that language learning is produced through directions and it is composed of conscious knowledge of rules of grammar of the second language. Krashen (2009, 10) believes that the acquirer should know these rules of grammar and he or she should be able to talk about them.



Krashen (2009, 10) also claims that the distinction between children and adult acquisition-learning is that adults will not be able to accomplish the native level of a second language as same as children, however the adults have also the ability to acquire a second language not just learning it.

#### 4.1.2 The Natural Order Hypothesis

Krashen (2009, 12) points out that the acquisition of the grammatical structure is natural and expectable. The duration of development of the grammatical structure depends on each acquirer. Some of them acquire these grammatical structures earlier and some of them need more time. According to Brown (1973, 410) children during their first language acquisition learn some grammatical structures earlier than others within six months to one year.

#### 4.1.3 The Monitor Hypothesis

Schutz (2017) evaluates the Monitor Hypothesis as the correlation between language learning and language acquisition, which is basically the result of grammar which was obtained by learner. Krashen (2009, 15) states that there are very specific ways in which learning and acquisition are used. Acquisition is responsible for fluency and it commences the utterance in the second language. On the other hand, the function of learning is to check and correct the form of the utterance before the speaker produces any of them. Krashen (2009, 16) also states that there are three conditions which a learner of a second language has to obtain.

1. *Time* – users of second language need to have adequate time for rules or in other words grammar of the second language.
2. *Focus on form* – the user of a second language needs to think about the correct form of the second language utterance.
3. *Know the rule* – the grammar rules of the second language. According to the fact that language structure is really complex, the user does not need to know necessary all rules.

Krashen (2009, 17) reasons that those 3 rules are better used with a simple grammatical structure of English which is syntactically simple structure of sentence, and sentences without movements which do not change the position of the sentence members. Krashen's point of view is that the Monitor uses information which the learner has to learn and not information which the learner acquired.

Krashen (1978, 177) supposes that there are 3 different groups of second language learners.

1. *Over-Users* – learners, who always use Monitor. These learners are incessantly checking their utterance and it causes a constant interruption of utterance. The utterance is not fluent. As Schutz (2017) points out that these learners are, from a psychological point of view, introverts.
2. *Under-Users* – learners, who do not use their knowledge of the second language. Those learners who do not use the Monitor even when it is permitted (Krashen 1978, 180). As Schutz (2017) points out these learners are, from a psychological point of view, extroverts.
3. *The optimal Monitor User* – learners who use Monitor suitably.

#### 4.1.4 The Input Hypothesis

Krashen (2009, 21) examines the Input Hypothesis and states that it relates to acquisition, not learning of a second language. Yule (2010, 192) reasons that the input has to be understandable for the learner because the learner needs to understand what he or she is processing. Krashen (2009, 21) states that the learner is able to acquire only in situations when the language structure is *little beyond* of his or her level of the second language. Hatch (1978, 433 - 435) investigates input hypothesis. Her conclusion is the learner of a second language firstly acquires the meaning of utterance and later he or she acquires the structure. Krashen (2009, 21) writes that it happens because the learners of a second language do not use just linguistic competence but also extra-linguistic information, overall context and knowledge which were gained during learners life. Another part of the Input Hypothesis is that the input during the language acquisition must include the level  $i$  which is current level of acquirer, to  $i+1$  which is the next level, to make it understandable for the acquirer. When the acquirer understands the input then  $i+1$  will be provided. The fluency of utterance cannot be immediately taught. The time has a big role in the speaking, it depends only on the acquirer of the language when he or she will be able to hear and understand the input more accurately.

#### 4.1.5 The Affective Filter Hypothesis

Krashen (2009, 31) states that, there are some factors which are related to the second language acquisition. Those factors can be divided into 3 categories.

1. *Motivation* – if the learner has motivation he or she can acquire the second language better. According to Yule (2010, 192) motivation is one of the most important factors. He divides motivation into *instrumental motivation*, which is important for the learner in order to achieve other goals, for instance complete

school graduation or read scientific articles; and the second type of motivation is *integrative motivation* which is important for the learner in order to participate in social life. The learner who takes the risk and tries to communicate even with mistakes tends to be more successful.

2. *Self confidence* – if the learner has self-confidence and good self-image he or she can acquire the second language better.
3. *Anxiety* – if the learner has low anxiety in classroom or generally as a person then he or she can be able to acquire the second language better.

All three factors are related to language acquisition, not learning.

## 4.2 Language immersion

The language immersion is a process of using a foreign language environment to aid second language learning. As such it is closely connected to how au-pairs learn and improve their English – by being exposed to English in everyday life.

In a technical sense, Pacific Policy Research Centre (2010, 1) states that language immersion is a teaching method, usually used in overall class activities and instructions. According to Bostwick (1998, 9) in case of immersion all school subjects (e.g., geography, math or composition), or at least half of them are taught through foreign language. The foreign language becomes medium rather than subject of curriculum. Pacific Policy Research Centre (2010, 1) claims that the students of immersion can start their studies through the immersion in any age and with any level of the second language. Pacific Policy Research Centre (2010, 2) specifies three main types of immersion which are total immersion, partial immersion and two-way immersion.

1. *Total immersion* – during the total immersion there are almost all subjects taught in the second language.
2. *Partial immersion* – during the partial immersion there is just a half of the teaching taught in the second language.
3. *Two-way immersion* – during this type of immersion are students with minority and students with majority language taught, together in one class. Teaching is taught in both languages.

Boswick (2004, 19-20) states that the immersion can be also divided into early immersion, delayed or middle immersion and late immersion.

1. *Early immersion* – it mostly starts at the kindergarten or in the first year of the school. Early immersion in combination with total immersion means that the

foreign language is a medium in all subjects; it takes approximately 3 years and afterwards the teaching through foreign language is declining.

2. *Delayed or middle immersion* – the use of the second language is delayed until the students are 9 or 10 years old. Those students firstly learn literacy skills in their first language and afterwards they can start the immersion in the second language.
3. *Late immersion* – it is postponed until the students are in the secondary school. All subjects are taught in the second language.

Lyster's research (2004, 52) shows that the students who were taught through the immersion developed a higher proficiency level of the second language, almost native comprehension skills, confidence and high ability of communication, and skills of production language which are described as grammar, vocabulary and sociolinguistic skills in comparison with students who did not go through the immersion.

Boswick (1998, 9), argues that the immersion is the most intensive form of teaching a second language and Krashen (1989, 57) describes it as “not a simply another successful language teaching program - it may be the most successful language teaching program ever recorded in the professional literature. No program has been as thoroughly studied and documented, and no program, to my knowledge has done as well.”

## **II. ANALYSIS**

## **5 PRELIMINARY STAGE OF RESEARCH**

The second part of the Bachelor Thesis focuses on the research which was made to obtain results on the life of au-pair. The work focuses on the au-pairs' level of English language before they travel to England, on the environment where au-pairs live during their stay and subsequently on the level of English language after the stay in foreign country. The work puts emphasis on the situations which help the au-pairs to improve English language and also what expectations the stay in foreign country fulfils. The analytic part of the research is based on the questionnaire prepared by the author of this work.

### **5.1 The aim of the research**

The main aim of the research is to analyze whether it is beneficial to travel to foreign country, in this case to England, to improve English language skills. The research examines four main language skills which are taught during studies in the high school in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Language skills include listening, reading, speaking and writing.

### **5.2 Hypotheses**

1. The stay and work for one period in the foreign country is a benefit for the person from the point of view of learning the second language.
2. The second language can be easier to learn if the person is in the foreign country surrounded by subjects which help to acquire the language
3. The stay in the foreign country helps the person to become more independent and helps her/him to experience the culture of the foreign country.

### **5.3 Methods**

The method of questionnaire survey was used in compliance with the hypotheses which are determined in the previous paragraph. The number of respondents who completed the questionnaire is 73. The questionnaire contains 20 questions which are related to the topic of au-pair. The questionnaire was made online, on the survio.com webpage, which provides support for creating questionnaires. The respondents knew that the questionnaire is anonymous and that the results would be used for the Bachelor Thesis.

The ascertained data of practical part of the Bachelor Thesis were processed through the Microsoft Excel software and subsequently through Microsoft Powerpoint to prepare a graph for each question. The questions were elaborated into graphs. Each graph is

classified with a number and it is possible to see the analysis of the results under each of them.

#### **5.4 Type of research**

In compliance with the main aim of the research the quantitative research containing questionnaire survey was used. Thanks to this type of research it has been possible to compare the real results with the determined hypotheses.

#### **5.5 The respondents**

The work specializes on the position of au-pair. The work of au-pair became popular for foreign girls and boys during the last decades. The age of examined respondents is between 18 – 25 years. All examined respondents are from the Czech Republic or Slovakia. All respondents experienced the stay in a foreign country and they worked as an au-pair.

#### **5.6 Collecting of data**

The data for the Bachelor Thesis were collected from February 2017 to March 2017 through the online questionnaire. The questionnaire has been uploaded on survio.com website. The link for the questionnaire was distributed through social media. The author has an experience with job of an au-pair, as well as experience with Facebook groups which are related to au-pairs. The link to the questionnaire was intentionally uploaded into these groups. The collecting of data was divided into two phases.

#### **5.7 The first phase of data collecting**

The first phase was in February 2017; the link on the questionnaire was uploaded for the first time into three Facebook groups and on the author's own Facebook profile. The link to the questionnaire was shared by 4 more people. During the first phase 59 respondents completed the questionnaire.

#### **5.8 The second phase of data collecting**

The second phase of data collecting was undertaken to obtain new respondents who did not complete the questionnaire. The reason was that in Facebook groups there are many new posts and the link of the questionnaire was hard to find after one month. The second phase was in March 2017; the link of the questionnaire was uploaded for the second time into three Facebook groups which were the same as for the first time. During the second phase the number of respondents who completed the questionnaire was 14.

## 6 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

According to the number of respondents, the method used for data processing was quantitative. As Blaikie (2004, 15) writes, the quantitative method of analyzing data is about collecting data, analyzing them and coming to conclusions of given research. During the data processing 3 questionnaires were found which did not meet the requirements of chosen topic of Bachelor Thesis. The three questionnaires were excluded from the research because they were incomplete. 70 remaining questionnaires, which met all requirements, were used for data processing and analysis.

### 6.1 Question number 1

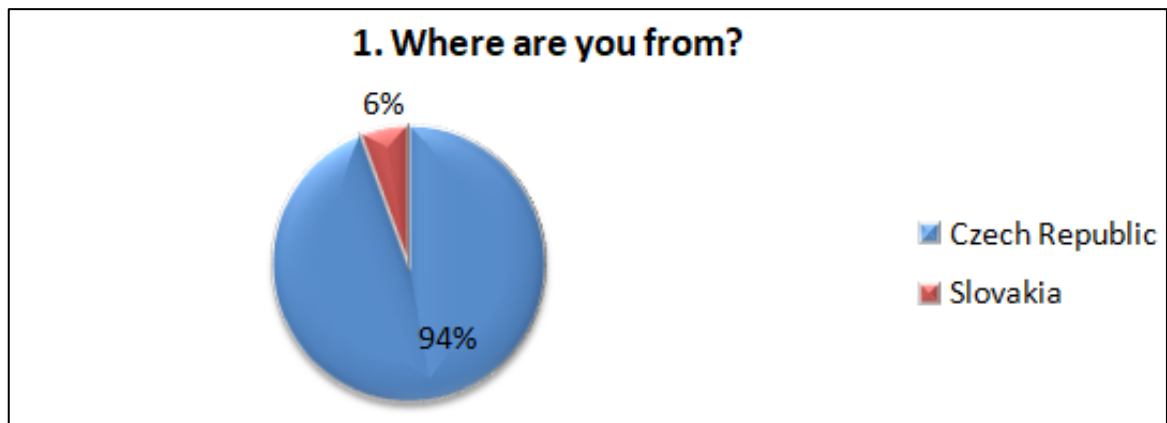


Figure 6.1. The native country of respondents

The question number 1 focuses on the native country of the respondents. The research specializes on respondents from the Czech Republic and Slovakia who have lived and worked in England as au-pairs. According to Búriková and Miller (2010, 49) the au-pairs from Slovakia are considered the biggest group of au-pairs in England but the results show that 94% which is 66 respondents are from the Czech Republic. 6% which is equal to 4 respondents are from Slovakia. The questionnaire has been uploaded only on Czech website which means that the results may be influenced by this fact.



## 6.2 Question number 2

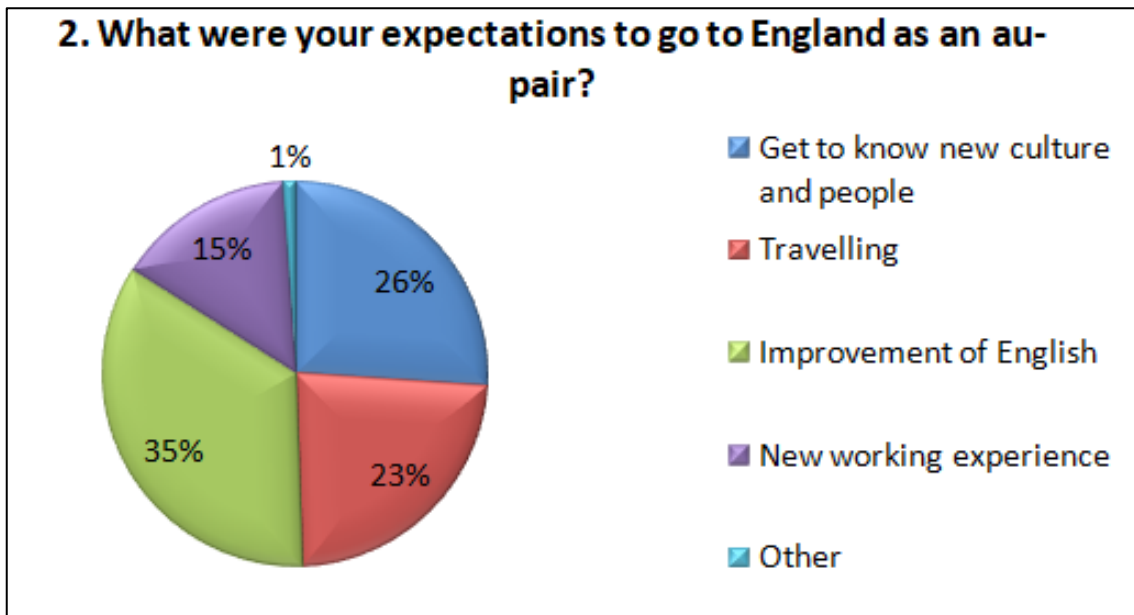


Figure 6.2. The expectations of au-pairs

The second question focuses on the respondents' expectations before they traveled to England and which they wanted to gain there. The respondents could choose between 4 options or they could write their own expectations. In this question, the respondents could choose all options or just those which suit them.

The results show that reason why the respondents traveled to England is improvement of their English, which represents 35% of the total number of answers. The respondents have chosen this answer 65 times. The second most common answer is getting to know new culture and people with 26% of all respondents (49 in total count). The third most common answer is travelling. Travelling is considered according to 23% of respondents (44 in total count) as an important factor. The last factor among 4 options which could be selected is new working experience; 15% of respondents (28 in total count) chose the answer. The very last part of the graph is *other* reasons which turned out to be 1%. It was chosen by 2 respondents. The respondents wanted to escape from their own country because of family and social problems. It can be assumed that respondents who chose other reasons wanted to have new experiences and they wanted to start their new life in foreign country.

To summarize the second question of the questionnaire survey, the most significant reason why respondents want to travel to England is because they want to improve their English language. The stay in a foreign country is beneficial for getting to know the culture, people and different places of the target country (England). Not even a quarter of respondents

(15%) who travelled to England wanted a new working experience. It can be presumed that the work is just a means for staying in a foreign country, for doing the main activity which is improvement of English.

### 6.3 Question number 3

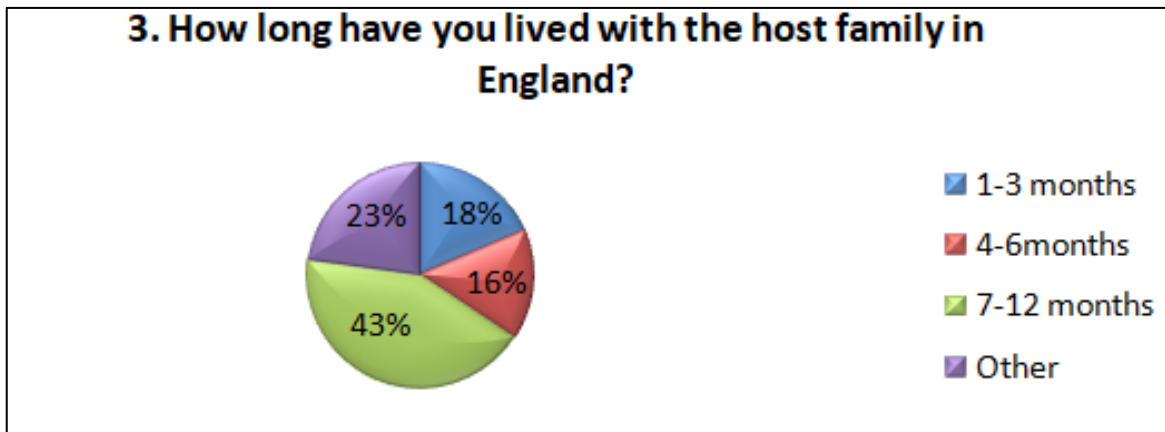


Figure 6.3. The length of stay in England

The third question of the questionnaire survey explores how long the au-pairs lived with the host family in England. 43% of the respondents lived in England for 7 – 12 months. The exact number is 30, which is nearly one half of all respondents. The second highest percentage of the length of stay is *other* which was chosen by 23% of respondents (16 in total count). According to the respondents, the category *other* covers the stay of more than a year; it can be divided into 3 subcategories which are respondents who lived with the host family more than 1 year, the second category contains the respondents who lived with the host family more than 2 years and the last category consist of the respondents who lived with the host family more than 3 years. The third answer of question number 3 is duration of the stay 1 – 3 months, which was chosen by 18% of respondents (13 in total count). If the respondents stay for 1 – 3 months, it is usually during summer between June and September. The reason is that many au-pairs, who are students, want to travel to England during summer holiday when the classes do not take place. It is an interesting way how to spend summer and an easy way to travel and earn money. On the other hand, the exceptions can be found. The last answer of the duration of the stay with host family is 4 – 6 months, chosen by 16% of respondents (11 in total count).

To summarize the third question, more than half of the respondents (23% *other*, 43% 7- 12 months) stayed with the host family more than 7 months whereas smaller amount of au-pairs stayed with the host family less than 7 months.

#### 6.4 Question number 4

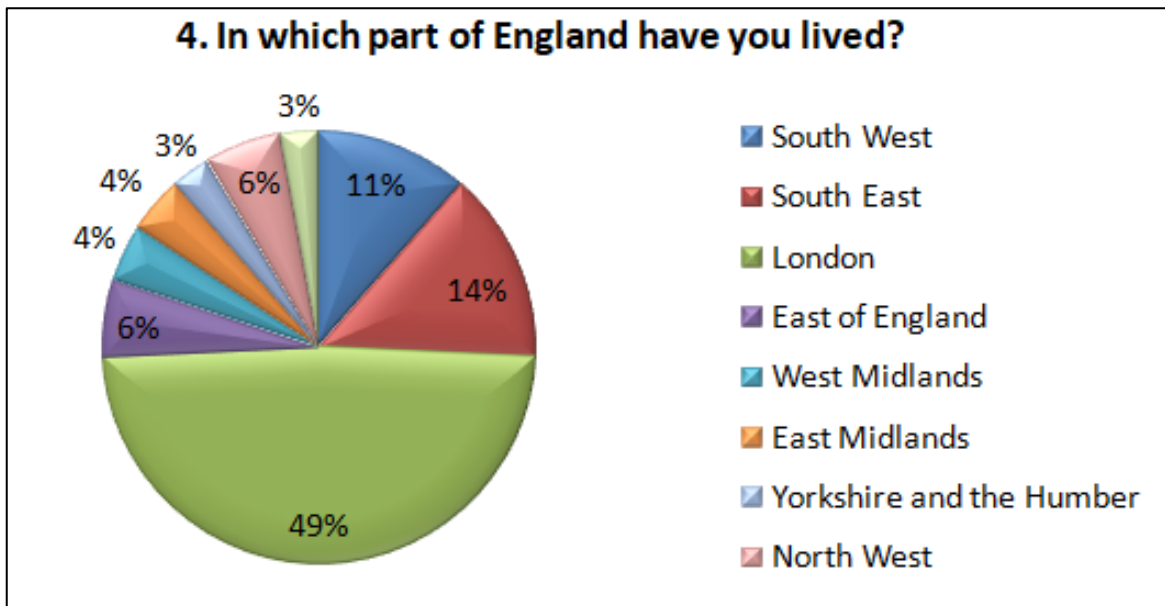


Figure 6.4. The regions of England

The fourth question of the questionnaire survey examines the regions of England where the au-pairs lived with their host families. Thanks to this graph it is possible to specify and assume the differences between English dialects which are described in the Chapter 3 of the theoretical part of this work. The most significant region, where 49% of all au-pairs have lived, is London. 34 respondents, which is almost a half of all respondents, chose this answer. The second and third most common regions where respondents have lived are South East with 14% of respondents (10 in total count), and South West with 11% of respondents (8 in total count). The rest of regions are chosen with a minimum of respondents. The percentage ranges from 3% to 6%, which is equal to 2 – 4 respondents. It is possible that some respondents who lived in the north adopted slightly different dialects than respondents who lived in the south. But the focus on the differences was not part of the research.

To sum up, according to the graph the major region where au-pairs lived was London.

### 6.5 Question number 5

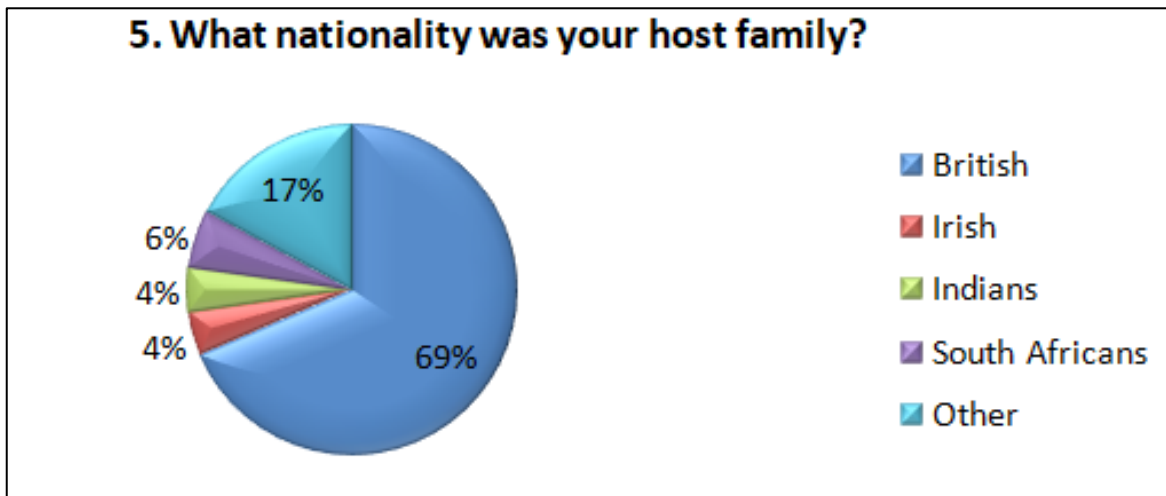


Figure 6.5. The nationality of host family

The question number 5 of the questionnaire survey explores the nationality of the host family of each au-pair. According to the UK Office for National Statistics (2016) the nationality of people living in England consists of 85% British, and 15% Non-British nationalities, e.g. Polish, Indian, South Africans and other. The results of the research show that 69% (in total count 48) of host families are British, which is a proportional number in comparison to the national statistics. It can be assumed that 69% of respondents could practise their English skills with native British speakers. The part of the graph labelled *other* fills the 17% slot (12 respondents in total count); it contains many different nationalities of host families. The nationalities listed by the respondents are Dutch, Chinese, Israeli, and bilingual families (Czech – British, Chinese – French, British – South African, French – Indian, Czech – South African). The smallest parts of the graph range from 4% to 6% which are equal to 3 – 4 respondents whose nationality of host family was South African, Indian or Irish.

To summarize, the results of research show that slightly more than 1/3 of families who are living in England are different nationalities than British.

## 6.6 Question number 6

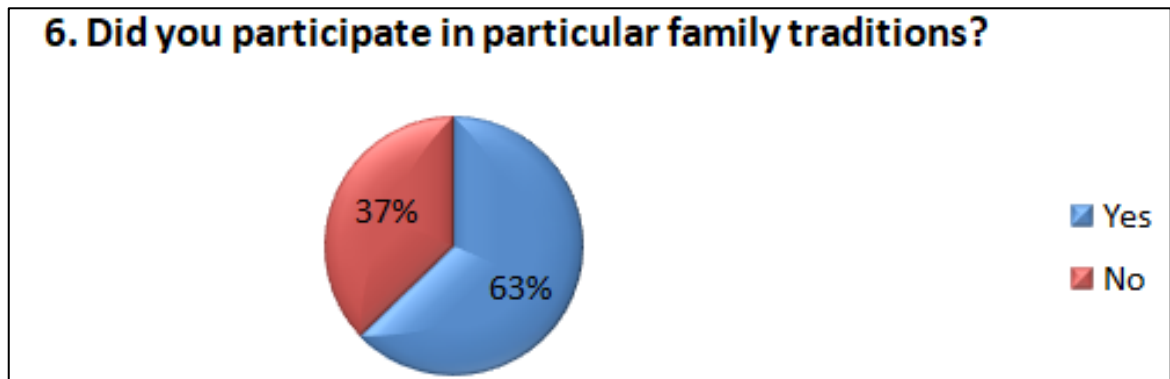


Figure 6.6. Family traditions

The question number 6 focuses on traditions of the host family. The question reveals how many respondents participated in various family traditions. The results show that 63% of all respondents (44 in total count) participated in some kind of family traditions. The most common answers listed by the respondents were birthdays, Christmas and Easter holidays. Fewer respondents listed celebrations such as a wedding, Christening and Thanksgiving. The rare answers were non-English national and religious celebrations of the host family, such as Hanukkah, Passover, Diwali and Shabbat. On the other hand, 37% of respondents (26 in total count) answered that they have no experience with any of the family traditions. It can be due to the fact that proportion of au-pairs stayed in England only for summer holiday and their stay may have not collided with the major holiday time. However, the months of the year when au-pairs lived with host-families were not necessary to specify in the research.

To sum up, the graph indicates that more than one half of the respondents were involved in family traditions thus they had a more immediate culture-learning experience.

### 6.7 Question number 7

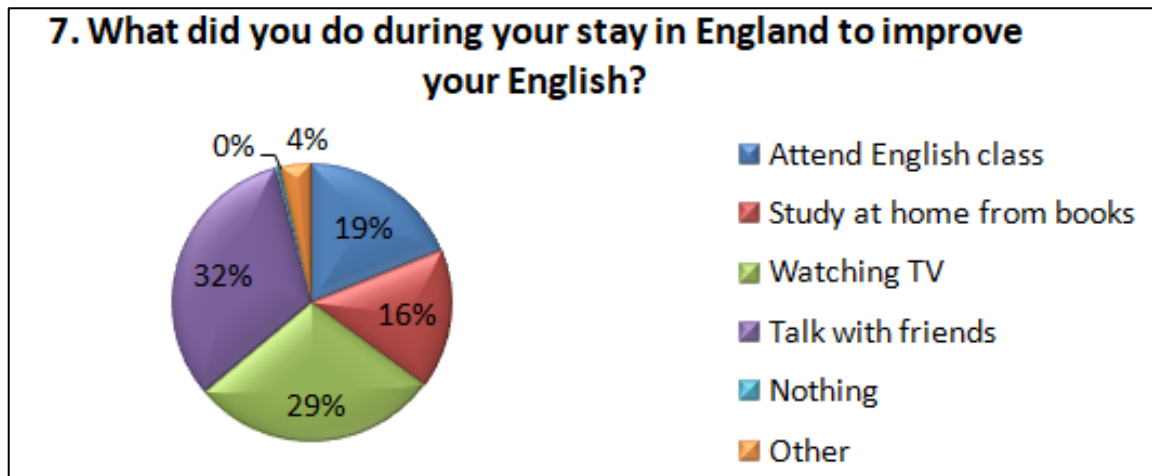


Figure 6.7. Activities for improvement English

The question no. 7 of the questionnaire survey examines the activities which respondents took part in to improve their English during their stay in the foreign country. The most common activity listed was talking with friends; the answer was chosen by 32% of all respondents. Social relationships have a crucial position in respondents' experiences. The respondents chose it 61 times. The second activity which was chosen by 29% of all respondents (55 in total) was watching TV. The third activity, which is attending English classes, was chosen by 19% of all respondents and it equals to 36 respondents in total. The fourth activity is studying at home from books. Self study at home was chosen 31 times which is represented in the graph by 16%. 4% of respondents chose *other* activity, listing, among others, talking with the host family and talking with strangers at the bus stop, in a shop or in other public places.

To summarize, all activities which are stated in the graph are more or less equal and important for improving the English language or any other foreign language.

## 6.8 Question number 8

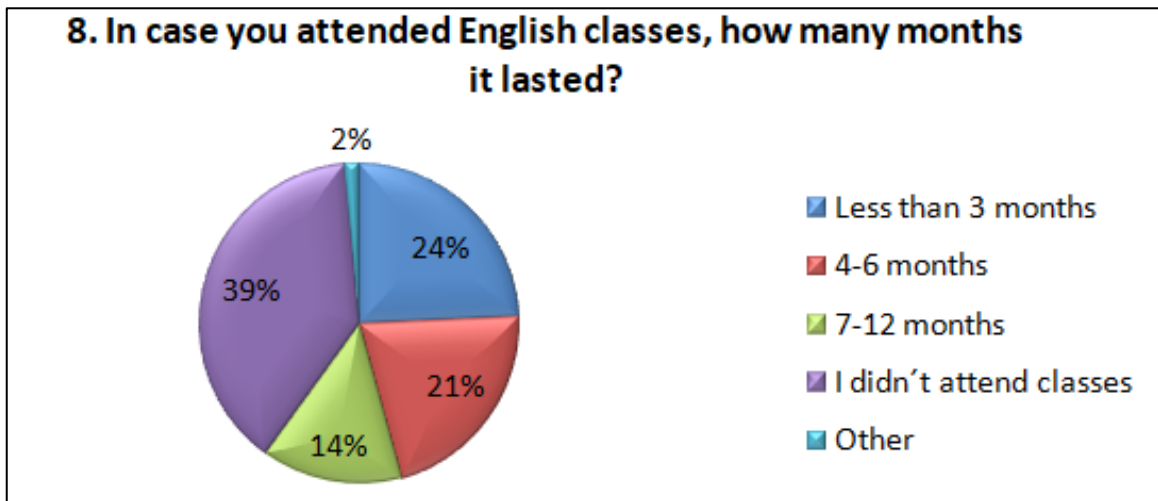


Figure 6.8. Attending of English classes

Question 8 is related to the previous question 7. Attending English classes is one of the activities which can be done in order to improve one's English. The results show that 39% of respondents (27 in total count) did not attend English classes. It can be assumed that for these respondents it was sufficient to do other activities in order to improve their English. On the other hand, for more than a half of all the respondents the English classes were suitable as an activity for improving their English. The graph shows that 24% of the respondents (17 in total) attended English classes for less than 3 months. 21% of the respondents (15 in total) attended English classes for 4 – 6 months and 14% of respondents equals to 10 respondents attended English classes 7 – 12 months.

To summarize, more than one half of all respondents attended English classes.

### 6.9 Question number 9 and 11

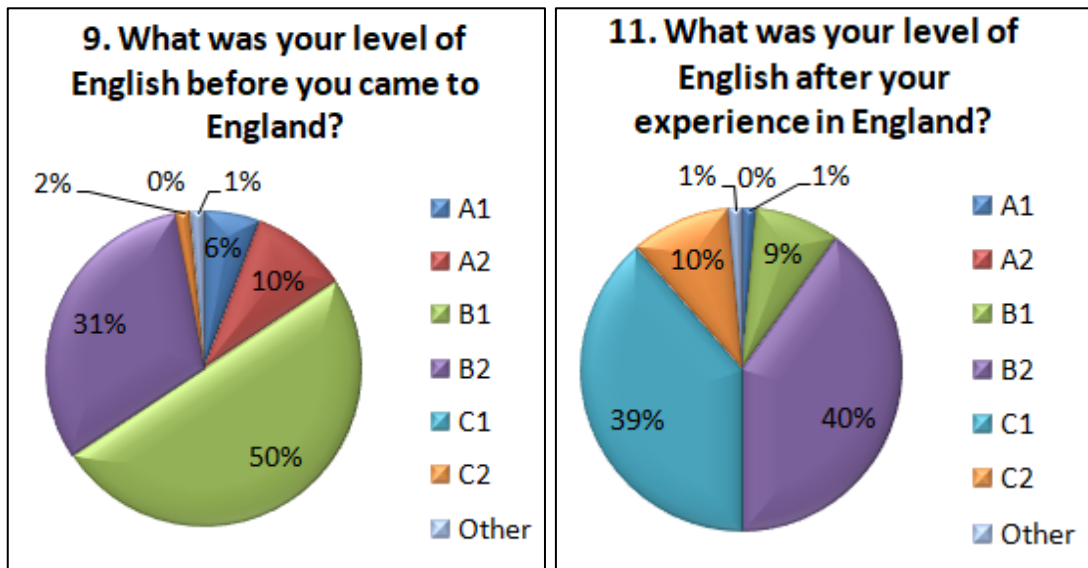


Figure 6.9. Level of English before stay

Figure 6.10. Level of English after stay

The question number 9 focuses on the level of respondents' English before their stay in England while the question number 11 focuses on the level of respondents' English language after their stay in England. The main aim of these questions is to ascertain the improvement of respondents' English language. The respondents were asked to self-assess their knowledge with the help of the CEFR.

The graph no. 9 shows that 6% of respondents had their English language competence on A1 level. In comparison with the graph no. 11 the level A1 of English language is 1%. Subsequently with other levels of English language the improvement of each level is visible. In the graph no. 9, 10% of respondents had English on A2 level but 0% of respondents have English on A2 level after the stay. According to the graph no. 9, 50% of respondents judged themselves as having English at B1 level. According to the MEYS (2014, 4) the level of English language after graduation from secondary education in the Czech Republic is B1. It can be assumed that 50% of all respondents had the level of English language according to the regulations which are stated in the Chapter 2 of the theoretical part. The graph no. 11 shows that 9% of the respondents have had the B1 level of English language after the stay. 31% of respondents had B2 level of English before stay and 40% of respondents have had B2 level of English language after the stay. The difference is visible between the graph no. 9 and no. 11. The results of the graph no. 11 show that the B1 level of English rapidly rose to level B2 and C1. In the graph no. 9 the level C1 of the English language is 0%, in the graph no. 11 the level of C1 is 39%. In the



graph no. 11 the increase of level C1 is visible from level B1 or B2 in the graph no. 9. According to the graph no. 9 there are 2% of respondents whose level of English language before the travel to England was C2. In the graph no.11 the level C2 increased on 10%; it is visible that during the stay in England respondents' level of English increased. In the graph no. 9, one respondent chose the *other* answer. The one respondent stated that he/she had no English language competence at all and during the stay his/her language competence increased to the B2 level.

In the graph no. 11 one respondent answered *other* answer, which was explained that the level of language after the stay is between 2 options, B2/C1.

To summarize the graphs no. 9 and no. 11, it is visible that during the stay in England, the level of English language increased in each category. According to the questionnaire analysis some exceptions can be found; one of them is that for some respondents the level of the English language did not change during the stay in England. Reasons why the level of English competence of some respondents (10 in total) did not change can vary. According to the results, 4 out of 10 respondents did not attend English classes which can be assumed as one of the reasons why their level of English did not change. Another reason also might be the length of the stay – a one to three months stay can be too short to raise the level up one CEFR category.

### 6.10 Question number 10 and 12

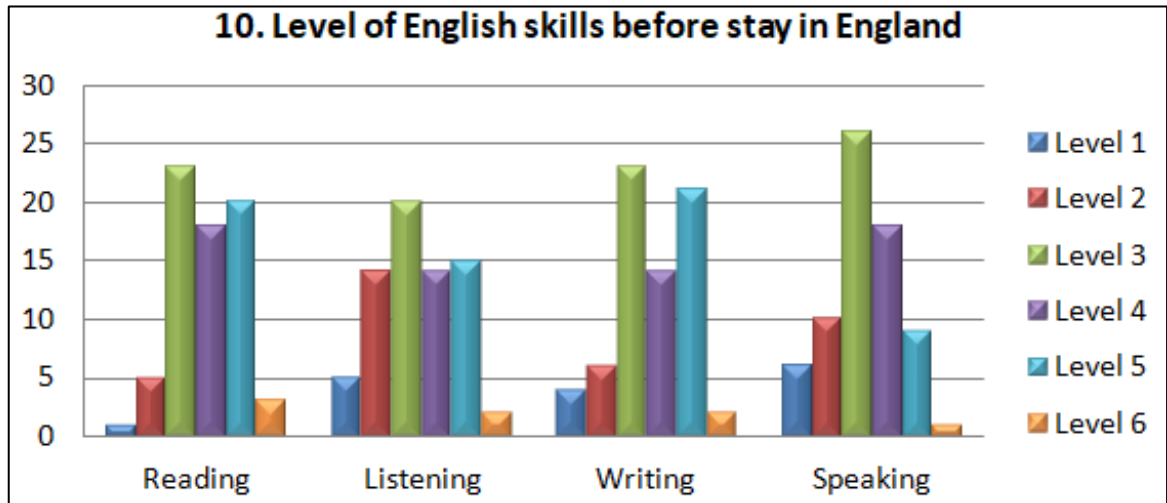


Figure 6.11. English skills before stay

Question no. 10 focuses on the level of English skills before the stay. This question examines the level of English skills which are reading, listening, writing and speaking. The evaluation was again done subjectively. Question contains 6 levels according to the level of improvement (1-very poor, 2 – poor, 3 – fair, 4 – good, 5 – very good, 6 – excellent).

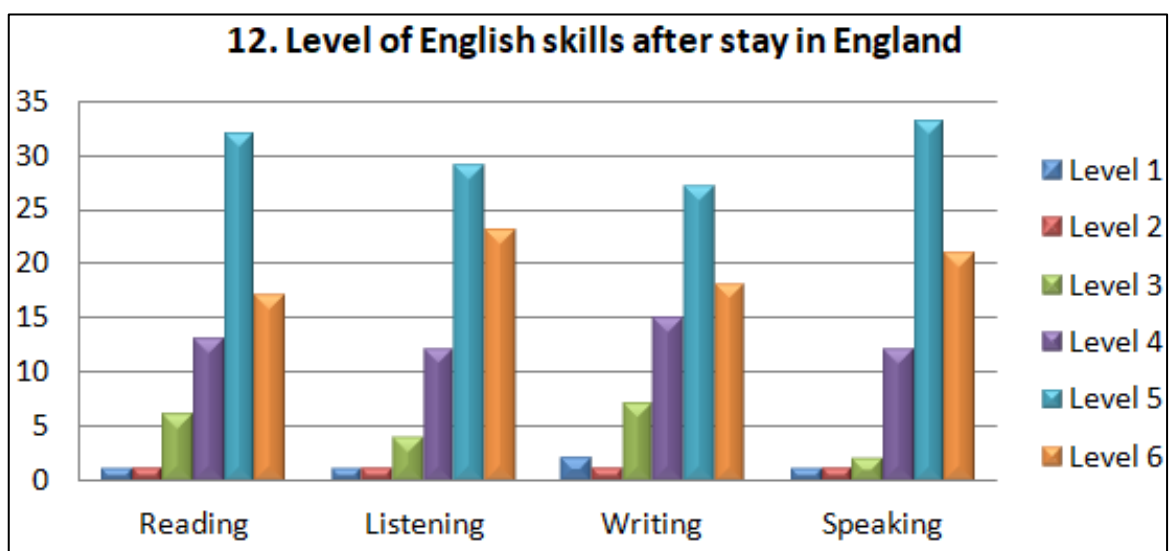


Figure 6.12. English skills after stay

The question no. 12 focuses on the level of English skills after the stay in England. Similarly to question no. 10, question no. 12 examines the level of the English skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking) after the stay, judged subjectively.

### ***Reading***

According to the graph no. 10, 23 respondents answered that they had their reading skills on the level 3 before the stay. Almost the similar number of respondents chose levels 4 and 5. On the other hand, 9 respondents thought that their level of reading skills is on the levels 1, 2 and 6. The average level of reading skills before the stay is 3.8 rounded off to 4 which is evaluated as “good”. In comparison with the graph no. 12, it is visible that after the stay in England, the reading skills improved. The highest amount of respondents evaluated themselves as “very good”. It can be assumed that respondents, whose reading skills were on the level 3 or 4 before the stay, have risen to a higher level. The amount of respondents who evaluated their reading skills as excellent in the graph no. 12 is also higher than in graph no. 10. As it is possible to see in the graph no. 12, there is a huge decline of level 2, 3 and 4. The average level of reading skills after the stay is 4.7 rounded off to 5 which is evaluated as “very good”. In conclusion, “good” command improved to “very good”.

### ***Listening***

The graph no. 10 shows that 20 respondents evaluated their listening skills on the level 3. The respondents chose a similar amount of the levels 2, 4 and 5. Five of the respondents evaluated their listening skills on the level 1, which means “very poor”. On the other hand, 2 of the respondents have chosen the level 6 of listening skills which means “excellent”. The average level of listening skills before the stay is 3.3 rounded off to 3 which is evaluated as “fair”. According to the graph no. 12 it is clear that the highest amount of respondents evaluated their listening skills as “very good”. The comparison between graph no. 10 and no. 12 allows the readers to see that the average level of listening skills, after the experience, is 4.8 rounded off to 5 which is evaluated as “very good”. After the stay in England, the levels 1, 2 and 3 of listening skills are trivial. According to the results some of the respondents did not improve their listening skills and remained on the same level. Nevertheless, both graphs show that the major part of respondents improved their listening skills. On average, “fair” command improved to “very good”.

### ***Writing***

According to the graph no. 10, a similar amount of respondents answered that their level of writing skills was on the level 3 and 5. The level 4 was chosen by 14 respondents and the levels 1, 2 and 6 by a low number of respondents. The average level of writing skills

before the stay is 3.6 rounded off to 4 which means “good”. The graph no. 12 shows that the level 5 is rose slightly, whereas the level 6 have extensively risen in comparison with the graph no. 10. The levels 1, 2 and especially the level 3 decreased. According to the graph no. 12 the average level of writing skills after the stay is 4.6 rounded off to 5 which is evaluated as “very good”. To summarize, “good” command improved to “very good”.

### *Speaking*

The speaking skills of more than 25 respondents were on the level 3 before the stay. The second group of respondents chose the level 4 of their speaking skills. Levels 1, 2 and 5 have been chosen by a number of respondents between 5 and 10. 1 respondent answered that her level of speaking skills was “excellent” before the stay. The graph no. 12 allows the readers to see that the level 5 holds the highest position. Nearly half of all respondents chose level 5 of speaking skills after the stay. The second high position of the graph no. 12 is held by level 6. Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 have been decreased in the graph no. 12. The average level of speaking skills after the stay is 4.9 rounded off to 5 which is evaluated as “very good”. It means that respondents have improved their speaking skills during the stay in England. “Fair” command improved to “very good”.

To summarize, all English skills stated above improved during the stay in England. The average level of all of the skills before the stay was between 3.2 – 3.8 and after the stay it was between 4.6 – 4.9.

## 6.11 Question number 13

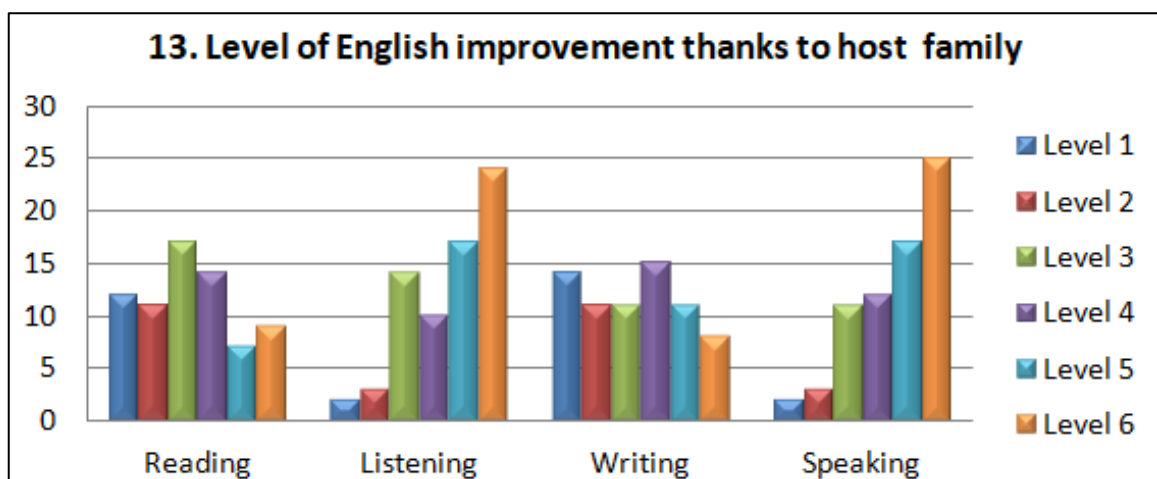


Figure 6.13. Improvement thanks to host family

The question number 13 of the questionnaire survey focuses on the improvement of English thanks to the host family. Each level was chosen by seven to seventeen

respondents. The average level of improvement of reading is 3.2 rounded off to 3. The writing skills of respondents were examined in a similar way. All levels of writing skills have been chosen by 8 – 15 respondents. The average level of improvement of writing skills is 3.3 rounded off to 3. The graph shows that listening and speaking skills are improved thanks to the host family. Levels 5 and 6 were mostly chosen by respondents. The average level of improvement of listening is 4.5 and of speaking is 4.6 rounded off to 5.

In conclusion, listening and speaking skills of respondents are perceived as substantially improved thanks to host family whereas reading and writing skills mostly had a balanced trend.

### 6.12 Question number 14

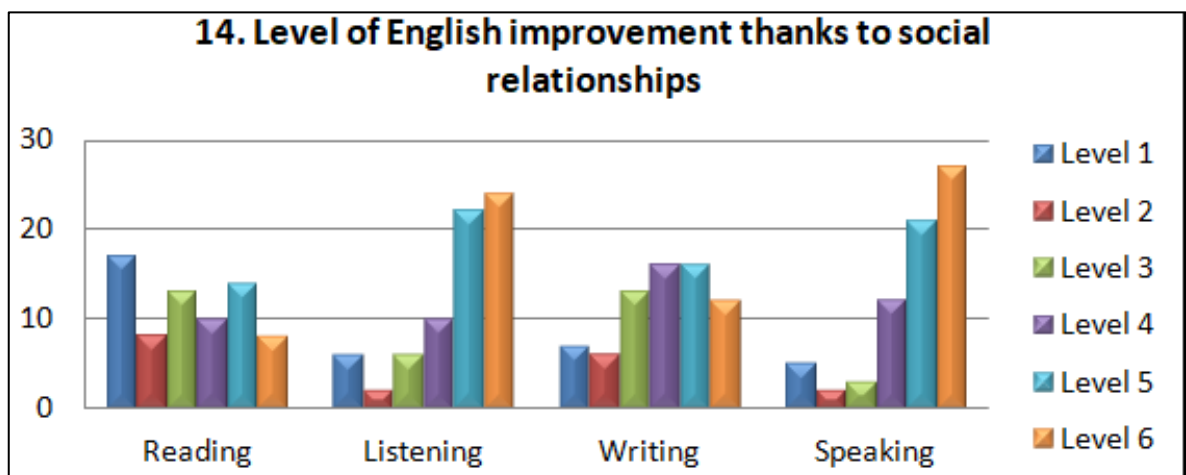


Figure 6.14. Improvement thanks to social relationships

The question number 14 focuses on the improvement of English language thanks to social relationships. The graph clearly shows that levels of reading and writing do not change sharply. In the graph of reading the level considered as “very poor” has the highest position. It can be assumed that more than 15 respondents do not consider reading as the improved skill thanks to social relationships. The average level of reading is 3.2 rounded off to 3. The graph of writing shows that the highest levels are 4 and 5. It can be assumed that respondents use writing as another means of communication with friends and that their level of writing improved. The average level of writing is 3.9 rounded off to 4. While levels of reading and writing did not change dramatically, the levels of listening and speaking did. Many respondents chose level 5 and 6 of listening and speaking skills. The average level of listening is 4.6 rounded off to 5 and the average level of speaking is 4.7

rounded off to 5. From the graph it is visible that listening and speaking improved significantly. According to the graph it can be assumed that thanks to social relationships the levels of listening and speaking skills improved more than levels of reading and writing.

### 6.13 Question number 15

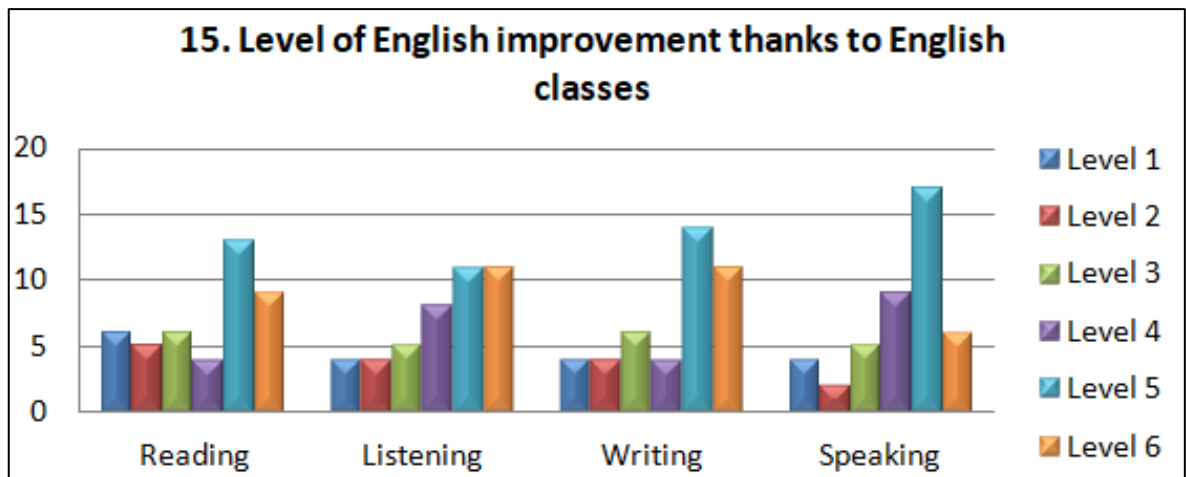


Figure 6.15. Improvement thanks to English classes

The last of the researched backgrounds which enables an improvement of English language is stated in the question number 15. The question focuses on the improvement of English thanks to English classes. The researched amount of respondents for this question is lower than the overall number of respondents of the questionnaire – it is 43 because 27 of the questionnaire respondents did not attend any English class during their stay. The average level of reading is 4.9 rounded off to 5. The average levels of listening, writing and speaking are the same for all the three skills which is 4.2 rounded off to 4. According to the graph, it can be said that thanks to English classes, the respondents mainly improved reading skills. Listening, writing and speaking skills are improved on the same level.

To summarize the three questions which focus on the improvement of English language in different environments, the improvement of speaking and listening skills is dominant in the environment of the host family and social relationships. However the graph of English classes environment shows different results where the improvement of reading skills is dominant. Improvement of listening, writing and speaking skills is at an equal level.

### 6.14 Question number 16

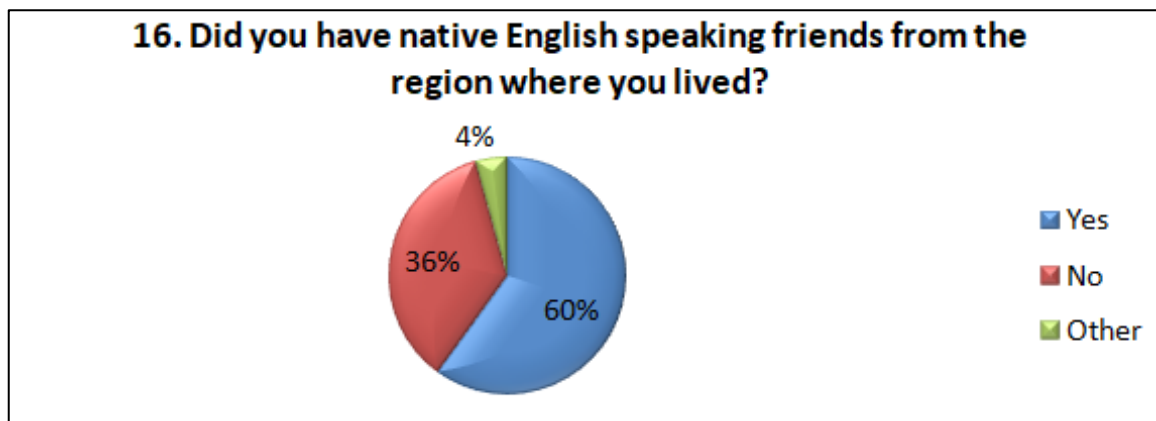


Figure 6.16. Native English speaking friends

The question number 16 examined if the respondents have had the native English speaking friends from the region where they lived. The aim of the question is to ascertain how many respondents were in contact with other native English speakers and not only with their host family and the social network of the respondents' native-language-speaking friends. The graph shows that 60% of respondents (42 in total count) have had native English friends from the region where they lived. On the other hand, 36% of respondents (25 in total count) 4% of respondents did not answer the question. Results of questionnaire show that the average level of speaking skills was 3 for all respondents before the stay. The average level of speaking skills rose to 4.8 rounded off to 5 for respondents who have had native English friends during the stay. And the average level of speaking skills rose to 4.9 rounded off to 5 for respondents who did not have native English speaking friends. According to the research, there is not improvement of English language thanks to the native English speaking friends. It may be possible that there are other factors which help to improve one's English speaking skills.

In conclusion, to have native English friends does not necessarily mean that the respondent will improve speaking skills of English language.

### 6.15 Question number 17

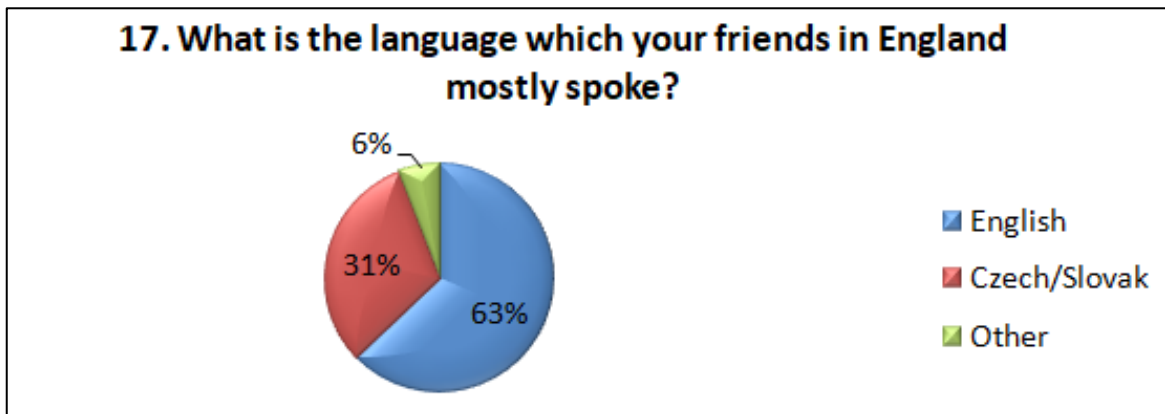


Figure 6.17. Language of friends

The question number 17 focuses on the language of respondents' friends in England. The question examines whether respondents acquired English language thanks to English speaking friends or whether they had friends who spoke their native languages. The graph shows that 63% of respondents (44 in total count) spoke with their friends in English. It can be supposed that their friends were either native English or of another nationality. In such case, English was the mediator of communication between two people of two mutually incomprehensible languages. On the other hand, 31% of respondents (22 in total count) answered that they had friends and mostly communicated with Czechs and Slovaks. The smallest part of respondents, 6% did not specify the language of their friends. Results of questionnaire show, that the average level of speaking skills was 3 for all respondents before the stay. The average level of English speaking skills rose to 4.8 rounded off to 5 for respondents who stated that they spoke with their friends in Czech or Slovak. However the average level of English speaking skills rose to 5.1 rounded off to 5 for respondents who stated that they spoke with their friends in English.

To summarize, there is very slight difference in improvement of English speaking skills for respondents who did speak in English and for respondents who did not. It can be assumed that there is more complex way to improve one's English language not just by social relationships.



### 6.16 Question number 18

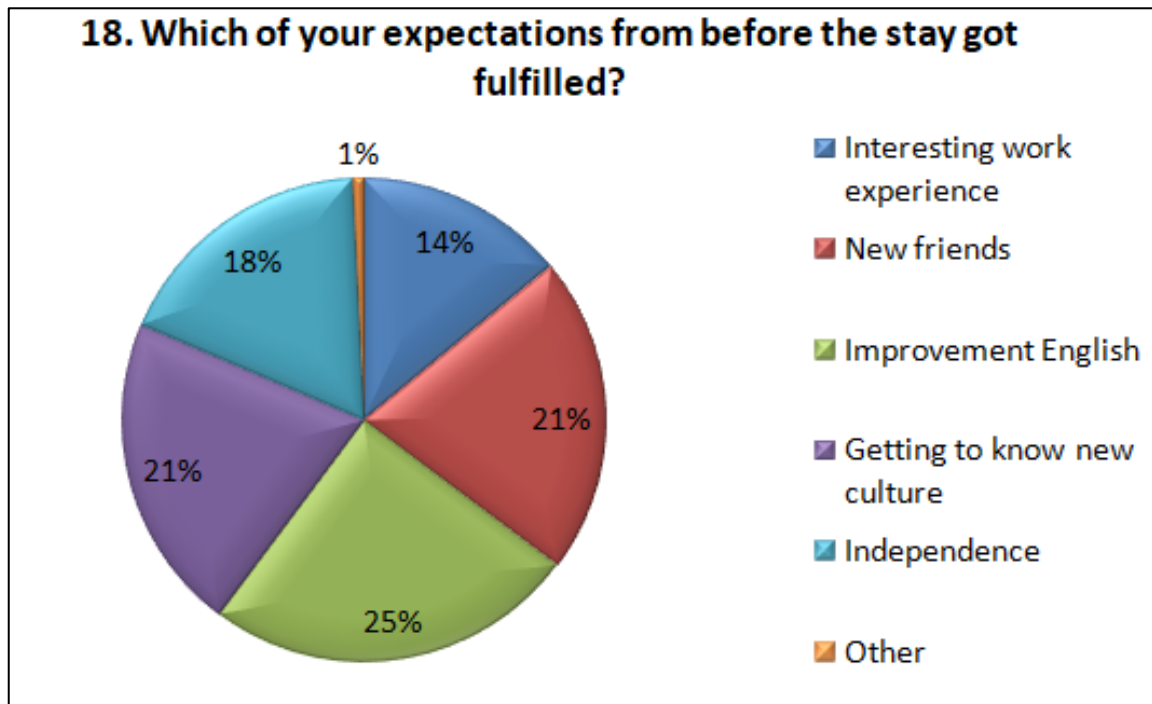


Figure 6.18. Fulfilled expectations

The question number 18 examines which of the expectations were fulfilled during the stay in England. The graph shows that almost all of them are on the same level. The improvement of English is the most fulfilled expectation. 25% of all respondents have chosen this option and it has the same dominant position as in the graph no. 2 about the expectations before the stay. Expectations which are meeting new friends, getting to know new culture and independence can be considered as the secondary expectations. The expectation with the lowest interest is “working experience” which is only 14%, and it is possible to see that this answer was the least chosen by respondents in the graph no. 2. The results show that all the expectations are important and have been fulfilled during the stay.

### 6.17 Question number 19

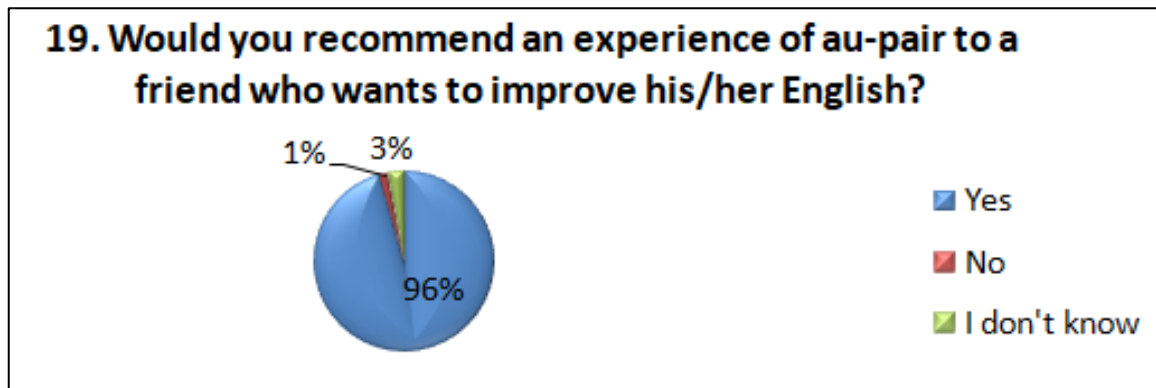


Figure 6.19. Recommendation of au-pair experience

The question number 19 focuses on the recommendation of the experience as an au-pair by respondents. The graph shows that the vast majority of respondents would recommend it. According to the graph, 96% which is equal to 67 respondents would recommend this experience. Thanks to this percentage, it is assumed that almost all respondents were satisfied with the job as au-pair thanks to many factors which are described in detail throughout the analysis of the questionnaire.

## 6.18 Question number 20

<b>20. Write 3 things which are different between cultures of Czech Republic/Slovakia and England.</b>			
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Total</b>
People	39	No answer	3
Food	25	Driving	3
Culture	7	Behaviour	3
Upbringing	7	Mentality	3
Celebrations and traditions	6	Cost of living	2
Education	6	School uniforms	2
Politeness	5	Clothing style	2
Social interaction	4		

Table 1 Differences between cultures

The last question of the questionnaire survey examines the differences between cultures of Czech Republic/Slovakia and England. The main aim of this question is to ascertain the differences between cultures from the point of view of au-pairs living in England. This question was constructed as open. All the answers of the respondents are included in total count. The total count of answers does not correspond with the total amount of respondents because the respondents could list more than one answer. The table no. 1 contains the total number of corresponding answers. Answers which were written by respondents only one time are not included in the table, but they are listed in the end of the paragraph. From the table it is evident that respondents consider people (39) as the main difference between Czech Republic/Slovakia and England. This answer is more specified in table no. 2. The second difference according to the respondents is food (25). Some of the respondents wrote that tastes are different and some of them wrote about the different idea of main meal (some respondents observed that the main meal in England is dinner and not lunch). Culture and upbringing was stated by the same amount of respondents (7). Celebrations, traditions and education are considered (each one) by 6 respondents as a difference. 5 respondents mentioned politeness of British people in comparison with Czechs/Slovaks. According to 4 respondents, the social interaction is better in England. Behavior, mentality and driving are considered as difference between Czechs/Slovaks and British for 3

respondents (each one). Cost of living is considered by 2 respondents as higher in England than in Czech Republic/Slovakia. 2 respondents consider wearing school uniforms as a difference, because in Czech Republic and Slovakia it is not compulsory for students. Clothing style of English people is considered as difference by 2 respondents. 3 respondents did not answer the question. Answers stated once in questionnaire are: work opinions, weather, environment, people are not afraid to spent big amount of money. To summarize, according to the respondents, there are many differences between Czech Republic/Slovakia and England. Most of the differences are among people behavior and their acts.

<b>Classification of answer <i>People</i> (39)</b>			
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Total</b>
Friendly people	13	Helpful people	5
People	9	Relaxed people	3
Open-minded people	7	Busy people	2

Table 2 Classification of answer *People*

The results of the question no. 20 show that 39 respondents consider people as the difference between Czech Republic/Slovakia and England. According to questionnaire survey, 13 respondents answered that people who live in England are friendly. 9 respondents wrote generally “people”. It can be presumed that respondents’ point of view was either positive or negative. According to 7 respondents, people from England are open-minded. 5 respondents consider people who live in England helpful and 3 respondents as relaxed. According to the opinion of 2 respondents, people who live in England are busy. On the basis of these results it can be assumed that people who live in England are judged positively rather than negatively by respondents of the questionnaire survey.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to prove that being an au-pair in England helps to improve the level of English of foreign speakers. This thesis proves that expectations of the au-pairs from before the stay were fulfilled. The thesis claims that the stay in a foreign country has a positive impact on the improvement English skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing) of the speaker.

In the theoretical part the explanation of the work of au-pair is provided as well as division of au-pairs into different types. Furthermore the English skills of Czech students, according to MŠMT, are stated. The next chapter describes the differences of accents and dialects in England. As au-pairs often encounter dialects from various parts of England and it often makes their understanding quite challenging. In the end the hypotheses of Stephen Krashen and language immersion are clarified.

In the practical part research was conducted in the form of online questionnaire survey. The analysis proved that the job of au-pair in England improved the English of the examined respondents. The improvement was measured from a subjective point of view of each respondent. According to the research, the improvement was 1 or 2 levels compared to the beginning of the stay.

The expectations from before the stay were various. The dominant position was held by the improvement of English. Moreover, the improvement of English was proved as a dominant expectation which was fulfilled during the stay.

The improvement of English skills was proven as successful. Three environments in which the au-pairs could improve their English were examined. The environments included host family, friends (social relationships) and English classes. Moreover, the improvement of each skill before and after the stay has been analyzed. The results show that au-pairs, thanks to the host family, improve primarily speaking and listening skills, while reading and writing skills are on the lower level. The similar results of improvement were found due to the social relationships. Speaking and listening skills are dominant whereas reading and writing skills hold the lower position. However, the results of improvement due to English classes hold a distinct position in comparison with two previous environments. The dominant skill with the most significant improvement is reading and the other skills have slightly lower yet equal improvement. Furthermore the average of English skills before the stay is mostly between levels 3 – 4. On the contrary, after the stay the average level is between levels 4 – 5.

It is important to emphasize that the results of this thesis may not apply to every Czech/Slovak au-pair who works in England. However the results based on the research show that the improvement of English is noticeable.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

RP – Received Pronunciation

NUOV – Národní ústav odborného vzdělávání

MŠMT – Ministerstvo školství mládeže a tělovýchovy

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 6.1. The native country of respondents .....	32
Figure 6.2. The expectations of au-pairs .....	33
Figure 6.3. The length of stay in England.....	34
Figure 6.4. The regions of England .....	35
Figure 6.5. The nationality of host family .....	36
Figure 6.6. Family traditions.....	37
Figure 6.7. Activities for improvement English .....	38
Figure 6.8. Attending of English classes .....	39
Figure 6.9. Level of English before stay .....	40
Figure 6.10. Level of English after stay .....	40
Figure 6.11. English skills before stay.....	42
Figure 6.12. English skills after stay.....	42
Figure 6.13. Improvement thanks to host family.....	44
Figure 6.14. Improvement thanks to social relationships .....	45
Figure 6.15. Improvement thanks to English classes.....	46
Figure 6.16. Native English speaking friends.....	47
Figure 6.17. Language of friends.....	48
Figure 6.18. Fulfilled expectations .....	49
Figure 6.19. Recommendation of au-pair experience.....	50

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1 Differences between cultures..... 51  
Table 2 Classification of answer *People*..... 52

## APPENDICES

P I    A questionnaire

## APPENDIX P I: A QUESTIONNAIRE

Dobrý den,

chtěla bych Vás poprosit o vyplnění dotazníku k mé bakalářské práci, která má název Lingvistická interakce mezi anglicky mluvícími rodinami a zahraničními au-pairs: Případ Čechů a Slováků v Anglii. Na základě tohoto průzkumu chci zjistit, zda vycestování do anglicky mluvící země pomůže, ke zdokonalení anglického jazyka. Dotazník je anonymní a výsledky budou použity pro zpracování praktické části mé bakalářské práce.

Děkuji za vyplnění.

1. Where are you from?

Czech Republic

Slovakia

2. What were your expectations to go to England as an au-pair?

Get to know new culture and people

Travelling

Improvement of English

New working experience

Other

3. How long have you lived with host family in England?

1 – 3 months

4 – 6 months

7 – 12 months

Other

4. In which part of England have you lived?

South West

South East

London

East of England

- West Midlands
- East Midlands
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- North West
- Nort East
- Other

5. What nationality was your host family?

- British
- Irish
- Indians
- South Africans
- Other

6. Did you participate in particular family traditions (birthday, funeral, Christmas, Easter, etc...)?

- Yes, specify... .....
- No

7. What did you do during your stay in England to improve your English?

- Attend English class
- Study at home from books
- Watching TV
- Talk with friends
- Nothing
- Other

8. In case you attended English classes, how many months it lasted?

- Less than 3 months
- 4 – 6 months

- 7 – 12 months
- I didn't attend classes
- Other .....

9. What was your level of English before you came to England? (see the table below)

- A1
- A2
- B1
- B2
- C1
- C2
- Other .....

10. Choose the level of English skills (1 = very poor, 6 = excellent) you think you had before you went to England:

Reading :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Listening:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Writing:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Speaking:	1	2	3	4	5	6

11. What was your level of English after your experience in England? (see the table below)

- A1
- A2
- B1
- B2
- C1
- C2
- Other .....



12. Choose the level of English skills (1 = very poor, 6 = excellent) that you think you have after your experience in England:

Reading :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Listening:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Writing:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Speaking:	1	2	3	4	5	6

13. Choose the level of your improvement (1 = not at all, 6 = remarkable) thanks to your host family :

Reading:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Listening:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Writing:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Speaking:	1	2	3	4	5	6

14. Choose the level of your improvement (1 = not at all, 6 = remarkable) thanks to your social relationships (friends etc...):

Reading :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Listening:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Writing:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Speaking:	1	2	3	4	5	6

15. Choose the level of your improvement (1 = not at all, 6 = remarkable) thanks to your English classes:

Reading :	1	2	3	4	5	6
Listening:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Writing:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Speaking:	1	2	3	4	5	6

16. Did you have native English speaking friends from the region where you lived?

- Yes
- No
- Other .....

17. What is the language which your friends were mostly speaking?

- English
- Czech/Slovak
- Other .....

18. Which of your expectations from before the stay got fulfilled?

- Interesting work experience
- New friends
- Improvement of English
- Getting to know new culture
- Independence
- Other .....

19. Would you recommend experience of an au-pair to a friend who wants to improve his/her English?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

20. According to your opinion, write 3 things which are different between cultures of Czech Republic/Slovakia and England.

### The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

<b>CEFR</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>A1</b>	I can say and understand a few things in English.
<b>A2</b>	I can simply talk and I understand familiar situations.
<b>B1</b>	I can make simple sentences and I understand main points of a conversation but I need more vocabulary. I have problems with complex grammar.
<b>B2</b>	I speak and understand well but I still make mistakes in grammar.
<b>C1</b>	I speak and understand very well but sometimes I have problems with unfamiliar and specialized situations.
<b>C2</b>	I speak and understand English completely fluently.

Source: <https://www.londonschool.com/level-scale/>