

**UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS IN BRATISLAVA
FACULTY OF APPLIED LANGUAGES**

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**EXPRESSING DEFINITENESS VS.
INDEFINITENESS
IN ENGLISH AND IN SLOVAK**

Master's thesis

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**UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS IN BRATISLAVA
FACULTY OF APPLIED LANGUAGES**

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Master's thesis

Study program: Foreign Languages and Intercultural Communication

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Affirmation

I hereby affirm that this thesis represents my own original research and writing and that I have referenced all appropriate source materials.

Date:

.....

(student's signature)

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ABSTRAKT

KOCSISOVÁ, Dominika: *Vyjadrenie určítosti/neurčítosti v anglickom a slovenskom jazyku*. – Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave. Fakulta aplikovaných jazykov; Katedra jazykovedy a translitológie. – Vedúci záverečnej práce: doc. PhDr. Daniela Breveníková, CSc. – Bratislava: FAJ EU, 2017, počet strán: 61

Diplomová práca nadväzuje na bakalársku prácu, ktorá mala názov *Vyjadrenie gramatickej kategórie určítosti v anglickom jazyku*. Bakalárska práca sa venovala predovšetkým charakteristike používaniu určitého člena ako jedného z prostriedkov gramatickej kategórie určítosti v anglickom ekonomickom texte. V predloženej diplomovej práci sa objasňuje vyjadrovanie tejto kategórie, ktorá v anglickom jazyku je prítomná, avšak v slovenskom jazyku neexistuje a význam určítosti je nutné vyjadriť inými jazykovými prostriedkami, ako sú napríklad ukazovacie a neurčité zámená. Metódou analýzy je kontrastívne porovnávanie dvoch geneticky nepríbuzných jazykov. Cieľom práce je porovnať spôsoby vyjadrenia určítosti v anglickom a slovenskom jazyku na základe analýzy odborného ekonomického textu a na základe dotazníka odhaliť najčastejšie chyby, ktorých sa Slováci dopúšťajú v súvislosti s touto problematikou. V teoretickej časti práce charakterizujeme výskumy v oblasti kategórie určítosti v zahraničnej literatúre, uvedieme klasifikáciu jazykových prostriedkov určítosti z pohľadu britskej lingvistiky. V aplikačne zameranej časti práce uvádzame na základe výsledkov analýzy a dotazníka a ich interpretácie odporúčania pre vyučovanie cudzích jazykov a pre autorov jazykových príručiek. Význam vypracovanej diplomovej práce spočíva v skutočnosti, že pre osoby, ktorých materinský jazyk je slovenčina, kde tento jav neexistuje, predstavuje tento fenomén pri osvojení anglického jazyka značné ťažkosti.

Práca obsahuje 5 tabuliek zo sekundárnych zdrojov a 4 grafy na základe vlastného spracovania.

Kľúčové slová: gramatické kategórie anglického podstatného mena, určítosť, neurčítosť, kontrastívna analýza, určitý člen, neurčitý člen, anglická gramatika, slovenský jazyk

ABSTRACT

KOCSISOVÁ, Dominika: *Expressing Definiteness vs. Indefiniteness in English and in Slovak*. – University of Economics in Bratislava. Faculty of Applied Languages; Department of Linguistics and Translatology. – Tutor: doc. PhDr. Daniela Breveníková, CSc. – Bratislava: FAJ EU, 2017, pp. 61

The master thesis proceeds with the problem investigated in the bachelor thesis named *Expressing the Grammatical Category of Determination in English*. The bachelor thesis was devoted to the characterization of the use of the definite article as one of the ways of expressing the grammatical category of determination in an English economic text. The master thesis clarifies the expressing of this category through other parts of speech, such as demonstrative or indefinite pronouns. It is of great importance to underline that it exists just in English, there is no equivalent in Slovak. For that reason, we use the method of contrastive analysis of two genetically non-relative languages. The aim of the work is to compare the possible ways of expressing definiteness/indefiniteness in English and Slovak languages based on the analysis of an economic text and with the help of a questionnaire to find the most common mistakes Slovaks commit regarding this issue. In the theoretical part we describe the inquiries in this field of study from foreign sources and classify the means of expressing definiteness/indefiniteness from the point of view of British linguistics. In the practical part, we make some recommendation for the teaching process of foreign languages and for authors of language handbooks based on the analysis and the questionnaire. The significance of the work lies in the fact that non-native English speakers, for example Slovaks, face great problems when learning the language.

The thesis contains five tables from secondary sources and four charts based on own processing.

Key words: grammatical categories of the English noun, definiteness, indefiniteness, contrastive analysis, definite article, indefinite article, English grammar, Slovak language

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Introduction

The present master thesis continues in the investigation of the phenomenon definiteness that we started in the bachelor theses called 'Expressing the grammatical category of determination in English'. The analysis in the bachelor work brought many interesting, surprising and enlightening conclusions. We realized that this topic was so wide and complicated that a deeper inquiry was needed.

This phenomenon is related to the nouns just in the English language, in contrast to Slovak. As it is limited to this language, it is natural that non-English speakers learning English early run into problems related to this topic. Undoubtedly, the category of definiteness is very important in English language as it serves as a mean of specifying, delimitating and generalizing. Its function can be underlined not just from the linguistic point of view, but also in everyday life.

It is significant to mention that it is recognized as a considerable problem for Slovaks because in our mother tongue there is no corresponding phenomenon. This is the reason why Slovaks, among other nations, have difficulties using the proper means. As the basis for the research of this topic has already been successfully given in the bachelor work in the form of clarifying this particular category and its means of expressing, we can continue with the description of Slovak nouns and following, with the comparison of the expressing this phenomenon in English and Slovak. Our intention consists in conducting a comparative analysis between these two languages.

The master's thesis is divided into two main parts. The first one is the theoretical part that includes three subchapters. The first subchapter deals with the topic of language typology, in which the origin of English and Slovak is explained, the similarities are pointed out and the differences are clarified, as English belongs to the West Germanic language group and is an analytical language, whereas Slovak is part of the West Slavic group and is a fleective language. The second subchapter of the theoretical part is dedicated to the classification of the Slovak noun, as it builds the necessary basis to be able to conduct the analysis later on. After a brief review of the characteristics of the English noun, we divided and described the Slovak nouns as concrete and abstract, common and proper, and finally as animate and inanimate. The last part of this section is dedicated to the grammatical categories of the Slovak noun, so that number, gender, case and in addition paradigm are described in greater detail.

The second section of the thesis is the practical part that includes two subchapters. The first one is the comparative analysis of an English economic text that serves as a mean of clarifying the reasons of the use of various determiners, predominantly the definite, indefinite and the zero articles in different phrases. As the next step we tried to translate these into Slovak and observed them from the linguistic point of view. The last subchapter of the thesis is devoted to a questionnaire, in which respondents of Slovak origin carried out the task of matching the correct article in different sentences, whereas different grammatical phenomena had to be taken into consideration.

In addition, various statements of renowned experts from the field of linguistics are to be found in the thesis serving to support our investigation. Besides that, a great number of figures, tables, charts, and examples are presented in the thesis to ensure the practical basis to the work.

Theoretical part

1 Language Typology

As the diploma thesis deals with the grammatical category of definiteness that occurs in the English language, in contrary to Slovak, where it does not exist, our goal is to clarify the possible ways of translating the means of this category into Slovak. To fulfil this aim, it is inevitable to describe both languages in more details, to investigate into their origin and to highlight the similarities and differences between them.

A language family can be considered as a group of languages that are related to each other in some way. In fact, their development is connected to each other. They usually have a common historical ancestor, which is called a protolanguage. *"Typology is thus to be understood in a broad sense as the general study of similarities and differences across languages – covering not only typology in a strict sense, but also descriptive frameworks embodying generalizations developed to support the descriptions of a range of different languages."* (Caffarel – Martin – Matthiessen, 2004 p.1) *"A language family is a group of related languages that developed from a common historic ancestor, referred to as protolanguage."* (Thompson, I. 2016. [online, cit. 2017-1-12]). The word protolanguage comes from the Greek language and means *"early"*. In the past there was probably an ancestral language, the Indo-European language. This language can be divided into several smaller units, so called branches. Both the Germanic and the Slavic branches are part of this unit that is the object of our inquiry. Even though these relations are often unknown, the comparative method helps in discovering how the different and similar characteristics of languages from the linguistic point of view offer many pieces of information that lead to the identification.

"In the 19th century, language typology was approached "from below": the focus was on the grammar of words (morphology and typology was based on word structure – the familiar types of isolating, agglutivative and polysynthetic languages." (Caffarel – Martin – Matthiessen, 2004 p.1)

English	<i>water</i>
German	<i>wasser</i>
Danish	<i>vand</i>
Russian	<i>voda</i>
Polish	<i>woda</i>
Czech	<i>voda</i>

Table 1 – Origin of the word *water* in the Germanic and Slavic branche of the Indo-European language family

Source: Thompson, 2016. [online, cit. 2017-1-12]

There are approximately 147 language families in the whole world. It is impossible to name this number exactly as still many areas in the world, mainly in the less developed parts, are undiscovered. In addition to that, it is significant to note that languages keep changing all the time. It is estimated that the number of currently existing languages is around 6 900. 95 percent of the language families belong to the 25 largest language families.

The Indo-European, to which the German and Slovak languages belong, occurs on the 5th place as it consists of 439 languages all together. These languages can be found primarily in Europe and various areas of South Asia, but owing to colonisation it was spread to the whole world. They have primacy in the number of speakers with the number of roughly 2.6 billion, which corresponds to 45% of the world's population. Just to name some countries, whose languages would not seem to be related to each other although they are, as they all belong to the Indo-European language family: Afghanistan, Bulgaria, China, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, India, Israel, Italy, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Ukraine, etc. The homeland of the language is not clear even now, there are debates about its geographical origin, some scholars claim it to be around the Black Sea, others say that between the Caspian and Mediterranean Seas. Scholars also found out that there is a relation between European languages and Sanskrit, the oldest language of the Indian subcontinent, which can be seen as a turning point. (Lewis – Simon – Fennig, 2016. [cit. 2017-1-7])

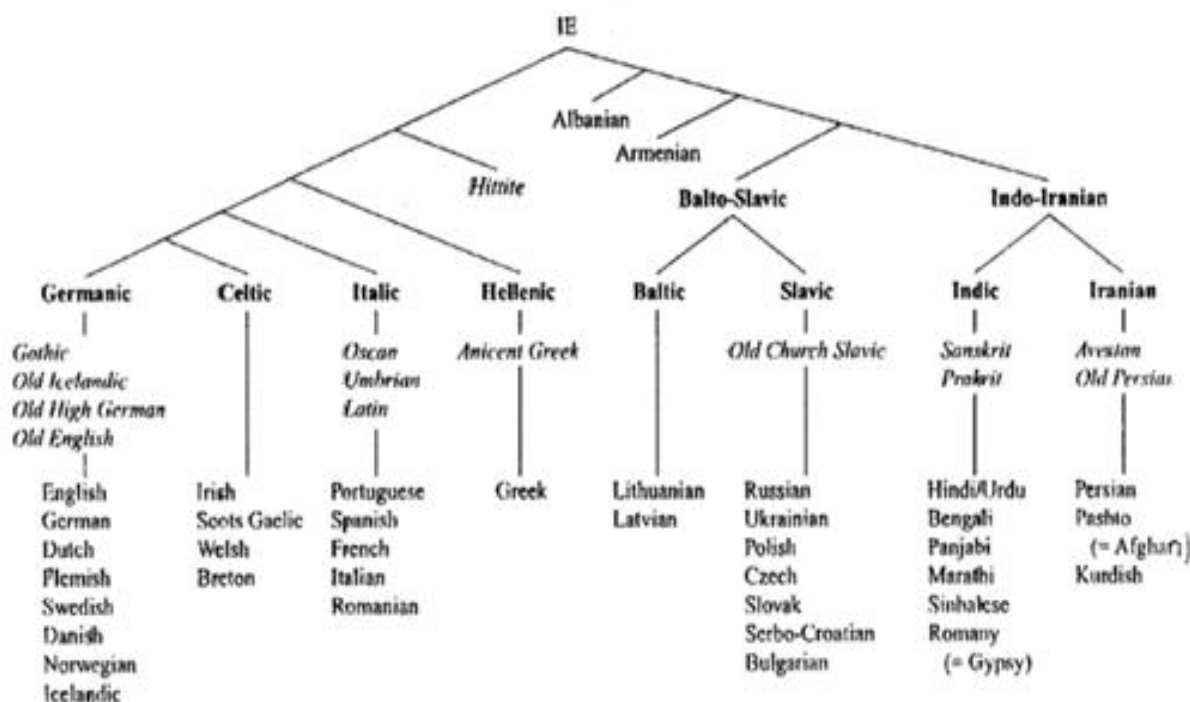


Table 2 – The Indo-European language family

Source: Thompson, I. 2016. [online, cit. 2017-1-12]

1.1 The English Language

English can be considered without any doubts as one of the most important and frequently used languages globally. The power of the United Kingdom, the colonisation, later the importance of the United States and many other reasons led this language to a significant position, today in almost each field, such as in politics, economy, technology, science, culture, etc. More than 335 million native speakers use it every day, right after Mandarin Chinese and Spanish. It is difficult to define the amount of the speakers who denote English as their second language, but it is probably between 500 million to even more than one billion. (Lewis – Simon –Fennig, 2016. [cit. 2017-1-7])

To pay attention to its classification, as already mentioned, English belongs to the group of the Indo-European family, more specifically to the West Germanic language family. *"It is most closely related to Low German dialects and to Dutch. English descended from the language spoken in the English Isles by the Germanic tribes, the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, who came to the British Isles around 450 AD and drove the original Celtic-speaking inhabitants to areas that are now Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, and*

Ireland." (Thompson, I. 2016. [online, cit. 2017-1-12]) There are various dialects of the language existing, just to name some Cockney, Scouse, Geordie, Birmingham (Brummie, Brummy), Edinburgh, Cornwall, Devonshire, Dorset, Bolton Lancashire, Radcliffe Lancashire, Newcastle, Lowland Scottish, Sussex, Westmorland or Glaswegian. Besides that there are many local English varieties in different countries around the world. The lexical similarity with German is 60%, with French 27% and with Russian 24%. *"English is now the most widely studied second language in the world because a working knowledge of English is required in many fields and occupations as well as for international communication. English loanwords now appear in many languages, especially in the fields of science, technology, politics, and culture, and international terminology is dominated by English words."* (Thompson, I. 2016. [online, cit. 2017-1-12]), (Crystal, D. 2001)

It is definitely very interesting that even though English grammar is Germanic-based, inflection does not play an important role as it does in other Germanic languages. This means that as it is an analytical language, where auxiliaries, word order or other pieces of information are what attention is paid to. Definiteness, countability, gender, number, and case are the five grammatical categories of the English nouns. There are two numbers in English, and thus singular and plural. Gender is not specifically highlighted, with the exception of the third person pronouns in singular *she/he*, e.g., depending on the fact if the object is animate, inanimate or whether feminine, masculine. To compare with Slovak where there are 6 cases of nouns, in English we can find just two, Nominative and Genitive, in other words, the possessive case is the only inflected case.

To mention verbs, their role is very complex in English. All the persons and numbers have the same forms except for the third person singular, where *-s* is added. There are four moods: declarative, conditional, imperative, and subjunctive and besides that, three voices existing, the active, the passive and the middle. Tenses are very complicated in English, but they are usually created from different combinations of the auxiliary verbs *have* and *be* added to the main verb. They can be regular or irregular. Not to forget the word order, the most frequently used construction is Subject-Verb-Object. Stress is diverse in English. Generally the first syllable of the word carries stress and the last one is mostly unstressed. Besides that there is primary and secondary stress, mainly in compound words. The vocabulary of English consists of many words of foreign origin, mainly for instance of Germanic, French and Latin origin because of historical reasons.

1.1.1 Definiteness in English and the Means of its Expression

To render an adequate basis for the diploma thesis it is inevitable to summarise the basic pieces of information about the grammatical category of definiteness and the means of its expression, and thus determinants that were collected during elaborating the bachelor thesis. This particular category characterizes the features of the noun and serves to describe whether an entity is unique, general, or the degree of its specification. Determiners can be described in general as words that are located in front of nouns affecting their meanings. Determiners basically specify a noun in different ways, they can make it indefinite (a woman), definite (the woman), or it can be useful in indicating quantity (many women). Singular countable nouns usually require a determiner, in contrary to that, proper nouns mostly do not. To be able to match the proper determiner, three factors must be taken into consideration: the fact whether the determiner is a part of a general statement, if it is familiar to the participants and besides that, countability. (Leech – Svartvik, 2003), (Alexander, 2003)

There are various divisions of determiners based on different criteria. According to Alexander (2003) they can be described as words serving to identify and classify (*the definite article, the indefinite article, demonstratives, and possessives*) and words expressing quantity (*numbers, quantifiers*). To mention a different perspective, Šajgalíková and Breveníková (2014) differentiate the means of this category as *articles, demonstrative pronouns, numerals, possessive pronouns, expressions indicating quantity, and wh-adverbs*, whereas when discussing word order, determiners are named as *predeterminers, central determiners* and *postdeterminers*. General determiners occur in cases when it is being talked about entities in a general way with no specification (*each, every, more, much, many, most, several, all etc.*)

Even though the zero article is often perceived negatively, as omission of an article, its use is significant in many cases. It appears with *abbreviations, institution names, with means of transport, verb – noun phrases, parts of the day, names of meals, in various collocations*, but it must be underlined that what definitely has to be taken into consideration is the context.

The indefinite article is used predominantly in cases when an entity is mentioned without further specification and offering more details and specifying it closely. Its pronunciation varies whether the following word initiates in a consonant sounds or a vowel

sounds. Its occurrence is connected to the following instances: *with several proper names, professions, various collocations pointing out frequency, in exclamations, quantity expressions, in front of nouns in -of constructions*, besides that sometimes its use is optional. Similarly, as in the case of the zero article, it must be emphasized that context and countability, as well, play an important role in deciding whether the chosen determiner is appropriate. (Dušková, 2006), (Šajgalíková – Breveníková, 2014), (Hewings, 2005)

The definite article also fulfils an important role. Its form does not change, stays invariable, just its pronunciation varies based in the fact whether it stands in front of vowel or consonant sounds. Its use is subject to many conditions. It can emerge with *unique entities, with ones that are already familiar to the participants, adjectives describing nationality, collective nouns and plural countable nouns, particular groups of people, time sequences, dates, parts of the day, seasons, fixed time expressions, institutions and organizations*. Many *geographical names, historical events, names of canals, seas, rivers, and oceans, countries, groups of islands and mountain ranges* include *the*, as well. With *theatres, movie theatres, hotels, restaurants, museums, galleries, bridges or other buildings* the definite article cannot be left out. Similarly, it must be present with *titles of books, films, in beliefs, climate, species, superlatives musical instruments, fixed phrases and fixed expressions*. (Alexander, 2003) (Collins Cobuild English Grammar, 1990)

1.2 The Slovak Language

The Slovak language comes from the Indo-European language family, more specifically it belongs to the West Slavic group of the Slavic branch, together with Czech and Polish. *"Slovak is a Slavonic language. It belongs to the Slavonic sub-family forming one branch of the so-called Indo-European languages. The Indo-European languages are related in some measure to one another and constitute a great family of languages that are spread over the broad expanse from the Indian subcontinent westwards through Europe as far as the Americas."* (Mistrík, 1988, p. 6) It is the national language of the Slovak Republic and is spoken by approximately 5 million inhabitants of the country. In addition to that, there are also expatriate Slovak communities existing, in Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine, the USA etc., so that the total number of Slovak speakers worldwide is around 5.2 million. Besides that, there are some dialects used in different parts of the country, the most spread are the Central Slovak, the Western Slovak and the Eastern Slovak. As a typical Slavic language Slovak is known to be a synthetic language

with a very strong influence of inflection. The addition of suffixes when inflecting is a typical sign of the language. *"Slovak, Czech, Polish, Upper and Lower Lusatian and the dead language of the Slavs living near the Elbe, form the West-Slavonic language group. The language closest to Slovak is Czech. But some characteristic features show that its relations to Polish as well as to the East-Slavonic languages had been active. The first more extensive Slavonic written records date from the 9th century and they come from Great Moravia. At that time the Slavonic languages were still remarkably close."* (Mistrík, 1988, p.7)

In Slovak there are three grammatical categories: gender, number, and case. They are closely related to the need of inflection in the Slavic languages as they get suffixes to the stem of the word to express the intention of the speaker through the proper grammatical form. There are three genders, feminine, neuter and masculine and two numbers, singular and plural. In addition to that, some nouns can be described as pluralia tantum. Nowadays there are six cases actively used: Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative, Locative and Instrumental. The seventh case, Vocative, is used just rarely.

To mention pronouns, in Slovak there are both full and short forms used. Pronouns are connected to the issue of politeness in Slovak: It is very important to differentiate between the second person in singular and plural, to clarify if we speak in a formal or an informal way. It is also quite usual that they are omitted, as they are needless because other parts of speech express what is inevitable. Numerals are inflected based on cases and gender. Adjectives always correspond with the noun they are modifying, so that they copy its suffixes.

There are two tenses, the past and the non-past. Present and future tenses have the same endings. When talking about non-past, in Slovak there are conflated endings, which serve to express the person and number. On the contrary to that, gender, number, and person remain as a sign of past conjugations. It is very important to note that they always agree with their subjects in person and number. There are two aspects: imperfective and perfective. Both perfective and imperfective verbs get particular prefixes and suffixes to the verb root. Non-past conjugation of perfective verbs stays for future tense. Non-past conjugation of the imperfective ones represents the present tense and they create future tense with the help of the auxiliary verb *be*.

There are three moods in Slovak, indicative, imperative and conditional and two voices, active and passive. Stress always falls on the first syllable of a word. The structure

Subject-Verb-Object is seen as neutral in Slovak. As Slovak is a fleective language where the form of the words reveals the intention of the speaker. Concerning the word order, what comes first is what is already know, the new pieces of information come at the end of the sentence. (SAV, 1966.)

1.3 Comparison of English and Slovak

Various differences between five parts of speech in English and Slovak, explained in the previous chapters, can be summarized in the following table:

English	Slovak
five grammatical categories of the English noun – gender, number, countability, determination, and case	three grammatical categories of the Slovak noun – gender, number, and case
two numbers – singular and plural, closely related to countability	two numbers – singular and plural + pluralia tantum
two cases – Nominative, Genitive	six cases – Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative, Instrumental, Locative + Vocative
adjectives are not inflected, just gradable	adjectives agree with the nouns they modify in gender, number, and case
the use of personal pronoun you is quite all-purpose	personal pronouns – full and short forms politeness expressed through the different pronouns for <i>you</i>
cardinal numerals are not inflected ordinal numerals have particular suffixes	cardinal numerals – inflection based on case, number, gender case
regular and irregular forms of verbs interrogative constructions – auxiliary verb <i>do</i>	non-past conjugations of verbs – conflated endings to express person and number past conjugations – gender, number, and person

three persons – first, second, third marked only in the third person	three persons – first, second, third personal pronouns often dropped
tense/aspect – auxiliary verbs <i>be</i> and <i>have</i> + main verb	two tenses: past, non-past
two aspects – progressive, perfect	two aspects – imperfective and perfective
four moods – declarative, imperative, conditional, and subjunctive	three moods – indicative, imperative, conditional
three voices – active, passive, and middle	two voices – active and passive
stress – diverse, stressed/unstressed syllables, primary + secondary stress	stress – always on the first syllable of the word
usual word order – Subject–Verb–Object	neutral word order – Subject–Verb– Object
writing – significant differences between pronunciation and spelling	writing – not very significant differences between pronunciation and spelling
24 consonants, 13 vowels, 8 diphthongs	27 consonants, 13 vowels, 4 diphthongs

Table 3 – Comparison of selected parts of speech in English and Slovak

Source: own processing based on secondary sources

2 Classification of Slovak Nouns

The first chapter of the bachelor thesis contained an introduction to English nouns. It was significant to describe them in detail and to include their characteristic features. The next step was to offer a classification of nouns. In the master's thesis the same approach is needed, but in contrast to the bachelor paper, more attention will be paid to the characteristics of the Slovak nouns, so that the inevitable platform for the comparison of expressing determination may be provided.

To sum up the results of our observation in the bachelor thesis, we can state, that nouns can be defined similarly in both English and in Slovak, but their grammatical characteristics differ one from another. Nouns are useful in defining and naming people, things and abstract entities. They fall into various classes and categories based on their lexical meaning and grammatical characteristics. *"Words, according to their lexical meaning and grammatical characteristics, are divided into ten parts of speech, which are inflectional and non-inflectional. Nouns belong to the inflectional parts of speech belong, according to their lexical meaning, are names for things, i.e. individuals, animals, plants and inanimate objects. Here belong also independent names for qualities, actions, mental processes and states. Nouns in Slovak are divided according to their gender."* (Mistrík, 1988, p. 18)

After specifying the general characteristics of the English noun, we presented the subclasses of nouns. At first we described the common nouns that stand for general entities (*girl/dievča, country/krajina*). They were divided further into collective nouns (*generation/generácia*), part nouns (*the half/polovica*), unit nouns (*a piece of cake/kúsok koláča*), measure nouns (*mile/míľa*) and species nouns (*types of fruits/druhy ovocia*). Those were compared to proper nouns that demonstrate specific or unique entities (*London/Londýn Germany/Nemecko*). The second subchapter contains a description of concrete nouns that are usually tangible (*dog, apple*) and abstract ones that are mostly immaterial and have specific suffixes (*wisdom/múdrosť, confusion-zmätok*). The last group with no correspondence in Slovak, was formed by countable nouns, so those that have both singular and plural forms (*table/stôl, house/dom*), and uncountable nouns, e.g. that are seen as pointing out entities that consist of more indivisible parts (*money, sand, love, hate*).

Nouns are the names for things, i.e. individuals, animals and plants, as well as independent names of qualities, actions, mental processes and states, e.g. učiteľ' (teacher), Ján (John), krava (cow), ruža (rose), skala (rock), Dunaj (the Danube), radosť (joy), písanie (writing), plač (cry). (Mistrík, J. 1988. p. 19). From the syntactic point of view they can serve in the role of main syntactical function as objects, subjects, or in secondary syntactical function as adverbial, predicate, complement or attributive. What distinguishes nouns from other parts of speech is that nouns name entities independently from other words, they can be seen as individuals. Other parts of speech, such as adjectives, adverbs, verbs or numerals name entities that need additional pieces of information.

In comparison with English, in the Slovak language there are more subclasses, but the similar ones are concrete/ abstract and common/proper nouns as these divisions spring in the semantic side of the languages. There is no match between those languages regarding the special grammatical category related just to masculine nouns describing if it is animate or inanimate, *životnosť*. (SAV, 1966)

2.1 Concrete Nouns vs. Abstract Nouns

This features class of nouns are quite similar in both languages due to the semantic aspect it is connected to. They name concrete things, so entities that exist on their own, they cannot be seen as an indivisible part of something else. They denote people (*man-muž, woman/žena, friend/priateľ, John*), animals (*dog/pes, cat/mačka, bird/vták, Buddy*), and things (*stone/kameň, house/dom, London/Londýn, Danube/Dunaj*) and also different objects, units of measurement, groups, and parts of a mass in relation to countable nouns, or even gases, materials, liquids, activities and languages. (Alexander, 2003)

Abstract nouns are defined as entities that describe different phenomena of reality or those of abstract meaning. "*The name of something which we experience as an idea, not by seeing, touching etc.*" (Swan, 2005 p. XVII) They stand for

- attributes or qualities (*modesty/skromnosť, resistance/odpor, willingness/snaha,*)
- abilities and mental aspects (*imagination/predstava, hearing/sluch, sight/pohľad, will/vôľa,*)
- states and feelings (*health/zdravie, wealth/bohatstvo, marriage/manželstvo, youth/mladosť,*)
- abstract results of events (*thought/myšlienka, dream/sen, incident/udalosť,*)
- names of spatial and temporal phenomena (*space/priestor, day/deň, hour/hodina,*)

- different abstract phenomena (*reality/realita, probability/pravdepodobnosť, relationship/vzťah, number/číslo*)

Abstract nouns are more often modified by adjectives (*good/dobrý*), verbs (*went/išiel*), adverbs (*yesterday/včera*) and numerals (*second/druhý*) as by nouns. It is significant to emphasize that the extent to which nouns can denote these phenomena is infinite and there is a close link to other parts of speech (*A good man – goodness dobrý muž - dobrota*). Similarly to English, in Slovak there are also typical suffixes standing for abstract nouns. (SAV, 1968)

2.2 Common Nouns vs. Proper Nouns

There are no significant differences between English and Slovak regarding common and proper nouns. Common nouns refer to entities that are general or stand for a whole group of entities of the same kind. It means that they can stand for any subject from that group and also any amount of these subjects, so they can be found both in singular and plural forms. Emphasis should be put on the fact that there is a close connection to the grammatical category of number. With collective nouns (*family/rodina, army/armáda, committee/výbor*) and mass nouns (*sand, salt*) is the use of plural due to the meaning of the word sporadic. "*Any noun that is not the name of a particular person, place, thing or idea is a common noun*" (Alexander, 2003, p. 38). Their characteristic feature is that they are written in small letters (*man, table, animal*).

Proper nouns are used to distinguish between various entities of the same kind (for example each river has its particular name *Danube/Dunaj, Hudson, Times/Temža*). As they refer to one specific entity, springing from this fact, they usually appear in singular. There is a problem emerging with pluralia tantum, whereas they can name not just one single item, but a whole group of these items (*trousers/nohavice, scissors/nožnice*). When the same proper noun stands for more possible items or people, it is necessary to give an additional piece of information (*John Smith/John Bush*). It can be underlined that proper nouns exactly specify various entities, common nouns just name them in general. To illustrate the comparison with an example: '*I would like to visit a national park*' stands for a common noun, as no additional information or specification is involved, the indefinite article is needed. In contrast to that in the sentence "*I would like to visit the Glacier National Park*" the noun is exactly delimited, and that is why the definite article must be included. Another requirement is that they must usually be written in capital letters.

2.3 Animate vs. Inanimate Nouns

In the Slovak language there is a special kind of subclass of nouns. It relates exclusively to masculine nouns. It enables us to make up pairs with feminine nouns. (*friend/girlfriend, steward/stewardess*). In some cases it stays without specifying the gender, so that it is common gender (*občan*). From the grammatical point of view, it is common to use them with Dativ. (*A všetkým je dobre, Kristíne preto, že zabúda na žiaľ, Marekovi preto, že roboty ubúda.*)

The animate nouns usually end in a consonant, *-o* or *-a* (*chlap, chlapec, dedo, hrdina, futbalista*) and are usually declined in the singular form based on the paradigm *chlap* in relation to words that end with hard or bilabial consonants and in the plural form according to the paradigm *stroj* in cases of nouns ending in soft consonants. The inanimate nouns usually end up in consonants (*dub, dom, počítač, zošit*). "Podstatné mená mužského rodu pomenúvajúce živé bytosti majú proti ostatným maskulínam v skloňovaní niektoré zvláštnosti, ktoré ich vydelujú ako osobitnú skupinu mužských životných podstatných mien." (SAV, 1966, p.138)

These nouns can be further divided into personal and non-personal. The second group refers to animals. Personal nouns can form possessive adjectives (*matkin, Ivanov*), generic adjectives just sporadically (*obrí, človečí*). Regarding non-personal nouns it is totally oppositely. They often form generic (*medvedí, psí*), but rarely possessive nouns (*psov, sukin*).

3 The Grammatical Categories of the Slovak Nouns

This chapter deals with grammatical categories of Slovak nouns. Each subchapter is dedicated to one grammatical category, namely number, gender and case. My bachelor thesis described the categories of the English noun: number, countability, case, gender and determination. The grammatical category of Definiteness was characterised in details to as it is the main subject of our work. Grammatical categories can be described as additional meanings. They always involve subordinate expressions. In each language categorisation is based on various paradigms, meaning that with language units that are organised in particular categories we can discover common features, but specific exceptions can occur, as well.

Grammatical categories give general grammatical pieces of information and complement the lexical meaning of words. Regarding the form, morphemes fulfil significant functions, as they make the features of a particular word clear (*ruk-u, mest-ám, obraz-om*). It is inevitable even for nouns of foreign origin that cannot be inflected to have the number, gender and case defined. (*Viac sa dozviete z resumé, Do plného kupé som sa už nezmestil*). When a word transforms into a different part of speech, it loses these categories. (*špina charakter* – adjective, *neskoro* – adverbial, *napríklad* – particle, *hore* – preposition, *ahoj* – citoslovce). Even though grammatical categories are related to each other, they are not connected to a high degree, as each category gives a totally different kind of information.

3.1 Number

The category of number is closely related to singular and plural forms. Nouns in singular point out that there is only one single piece of something, for example *a table/stôl, a book/kniha, a window/okno*) or even proper nouns, for example *John, California, Seattle*). Plural nouns are usually seen as ranging more objects and indicate that there is more than one of something existing, two boys, other women, those people.

To briefly sum up, the features of this category in the English language, most words get the suffix –s or –es when the word ends in –s, –ss, –sh, –ch, –x, or –z. There are also words where the same form remains (*fish*) and some exceptions and irregular ones, often regarding international words (*possibilities, leaves, and errata, bases, criteria*)

In the Slovak language it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between singular and plural, as the form and the semantic aspect not always correspond (*sugar/cukor, blood/krv, rice/ryža*). In Slovak the usual endings in plural are *-i* concerning animate masculine nouns ending in a consonant and *-e* or *-y* regarding inanimate masculine nouns that end up in a consonant. Mentioning feminine nouns in which the last letter is a vowel, the endings *-y* or *-e* are typical, while if it is the consonant *-i* is preferred. Not to leave out neutral nouns, *-e* changes into *-á* and *-e* into *-ia*. (Broughton – Šajgalíková – Breveníková, 2001; SAV, 1966)

Each phenomenon is considered as individual and, in contrast to that, a group of individuals is defined as quantity. That is what indicates the number of a noun, together with its appropriate form. "*Singulár vyjadruje spravidla jednotnosť predmetu, plurál mnohosť.*" (SAV, 1966, p.139) Number basically identifies the amount of entities (*knih-y, stol-y*). The situation is the same even with collective and abstract nouns or nouns where the plural form is not usual due to the meaning or the form (proper nouns – *Anna, Kriváň*) and pluraliatantum (*nohavice, dvere*). To be able to identify the number of the noun, there are different suffixes in singular and plural when inflecting.

3.2 Gender

In contrast to the Slovak language, where nouns have grammatical gender, often in no connection to sex, in the English language they are demonstrated rather naturally. This means that nouns standing for women are feminine and nouns that represent men are masculine. They are divided as masculine, feminine or neuter. When talking about personal pronouns, *his/her* and *its* are used. It is important to remark, that in some cases a totally different form exists. There are some examples regarding this issue in English (*boy/girl, gentleman/lady, god/goddess, steward/stewardess, lad/lass, widower/widow, spokesperson, gander/goose, he-goat/she-goat*). (Alexander, 2003)

Gender is described as that grammatical category that characterises nouns to the highest degree. In Slovak there are the same three groups of nouns as well as in English: masculinum, femininum and neutrum, as well as in English. Each one has specific features based on meaning and different suffixes seen when inflecting. Each noun can belong just to one group, variations are very rare in Slovak (*to chlapisko/ten chlapisko, zámok/zámka, to rybisko/tá rybisko*). In the Slovak language, the gender of the particular noun influences

also other parts of speech the word is related to. Adjectives, numerals, pronouns or verbs change their form based on that.

3.3 Case

The grammatical category of case is of great importance in the Slovak language. To sum up the pieces of information regarding these questions in the English language, there are just two possible ways of inflecting. The common case is used most frequently and does not need any endings. The second option, known as the Genitive, possessive case or the possessive form, contains an apostrophe. Nouns in singular usually need 's, in the plural form with s' (*actress*→*actress's*. *Stephen's pencil*, *other people's activities*→*the activities of other people*. *The President of the Czech Republic's opinion*, *She is a teacher of my brother's*) (Leech – Svartvik, 2003) We use the 's structure more often to talk about possessions, relationship and physical characteristics, especially when the first noun refers to a person or animal, or to a country, organisation or other group of living creatures.

For English, an analytic language, low inflectedness is typical. In comparison to that, in Slovak, a flective language, this particular grammatical category is of great significance. *"Tvarová sústava podstatných mien slúži predovšetkým na vyslovenie pádových významov, Spoločným prvkom týchto významov je, že sú vyjadrením vzťahov medzi substantívami a slovami, ktoré s nimi vo vete súvisia."* (SAV, 1966, p. 151) In Slovak there are six cases that are used on day-to-day basis. The Vocativ case, which was used frequently in the past, occurs just very sporadically, e.g. in addressing persons or in invocations (*Bože, synku*).

In Slovak, different suffixes play the most important role in inflecting, as each suffix refers to a particular case and each case refers to a particular meaning. *"Nominatív je proti ostatným pádom bepríznakový člen pádovej sústavy. Popiera vzťahy predmetu k iným javom, resp nijaký takýto vzťah nevyjadruje. Predmet pomenovaný podstatným menom v nominatíve chápeme nezávisle."* (SAV, 1966, p. 152) Basically, the grammatical form of the word has influence on its meaning. Attention should be paid to the use of those nouns that can not be inflected, usually due to their foreign origin. Other parts of speech used in the sentence can then reveal the intention of the speakers (e.g. *Novinári premárnili šancu na interview s atašé.*) (Mistrík, 1988)

"The declension of nouns refers to the alteration of case suffixes, with regard to their gender and number. The noun (masculine, feminine or neuter) usually forms a complete paradigm, i.e. six case forms in the singular and six in the plural. A case morpheme is attached to a given base." (Mistrík, 1988, p. 27)

English	Slovak		Questions
the common case	Nominative	answers the question	who? what?/ kto? čo?
the genitive (possessive)	Genitive	answers the question	of whom? of what?/ koho?čoho?
	Dative	answers the question	to whom? to what?/ komu? čomu?
	Accusative	answers the question	whom?what?/ koho? čo?
	Locative	answers the question	about whom? about what?/ (o) kom (o) čom?
	Instrumental	answers the question	with whom? with what?/ kým? čím?

Table 4 – The comparison of questions used in Slovak and English regarding inflection

Source: Mistrík, 1988, p. 24

To summarize the questions used in connection to inflection, in Nominative the basic form of the words emerges. (*This is a boy/Toto je chlapec.*) Genitive serves to express possession, so that the question *whose* (*This is the dog of my brother/Toto je pes môjho brata.*) or *of what* considering quantity are appropriate (*A glass of water/pohár vody*). Dativ is useful in setting the addressee. (*John gave a ring to Emily/John dal Emily prsteň.*) In Accusative the direct object is emphasized. (*I saw him./Videl som ho. My friend lives in London./Môj priateľ žije v Londýne*) The fifth case, Locative relates to some subject matter (*Tom is talking about his job all the time/Tom hovorí stále o svojej práci.*) The last case, Instrumental, points out some company, so *with whom* or *with what* are the suitable questions (*She went home with her mother/Odišla domov o svojou matkou. I would like a coffee with some sugar/Rada by som si dala kávu s cukrom.*)

	Nominative	Genitive	Dative	Accusative	Locative	Instrumental
Sg.	chlap	chlapa	chlapovi	chlapa	chlapovi	chlapom
Pl.	chlapi	chlapov	chlapom	chlapov	chlapoch	chlapmi
Sg.	hrdina	hrdinu	hrdinovi	hrdinu	hrdinovi	hrdinom
Pl.	hrdinovia	hrdinov	hrdinom	hrdinov	hrdinoch	hrdinami
Sg.	dub	duba	dubu	dub	dube	dubom
Pl.	duby	dubov	dubom	duby	duboch	dubmi
Sg.	stroj	stroja	stroju	stroj	stroji	strojom
Pl.	stroje	strojov	strojom	stroje	strojoch	strojmi
Sg.	žena	ženy	žene	ženu	žene	ženou
Pl.	ženy	žien	ženám	ženy	ženách	ženami
Sg.	ulica	ulice	ulici	ulicu	ulici	ulicou
Pl.	ulice	ulíc	uliciam	ulice	uliciach	ulicami
Sg.	dlaň	dlane	dlani	dlaň	dlaňou	dlaňou
Pl.	dlane	dlaní	dlaniam	dlane	dlaniach	dlaňami
Sg.	kosť	kosti	kosti	kosť	kosti	kosťou
Pl.	kosti	kostí	kostiam	kosti	kostiach	kosťami
Sg.	mesto	mesta	mestu	mesto	meste	mestom
Pl.	mestá	miest	mestám	mestá	mestách	mestami
Sg.	srdce	srdca	srdcu	srdce	srdci	srdcom
Pl.	srdcia	srdc	srdciam	srdcia	srdciach	srdcami
Sg.	vysvedčenie	vysvedčenie	vysvedčenie	vysvedčenie	vysvedčení	vysvedčením
Pl.	vysvedčenie	vysvedčení	vysvedčeniam	vysvedčenia	vysvedčeniach	vysvedčeniami

Sg.	dievča	dievčaťa	dievčaťu	dievča	dievčati	dievčaťom
Pl	dievčence dievčatá	dievčeniec dievčat	dievčencom dievčatám	dievčence dievčatá	dievčen- coch	dievčen- cami

Table 5 –The declension of nouns

Source: Mistrík, 1988, p.151

Practical Part

4 Comparative Analysis of an English Economic Text

In this chapter a comparative analysis between English and Slovak concerning expressing definiteness will be conducted. The text "*Human Capital, Consumption, and Housing Wealth in Transition*" published by the National Bank of Slovakia was chosen for the master's thesis as it comes from the field of economics. This text serves us to explain the reasons of using the particular determiner based on meaning, reference, fixed collocations, different constructions or other factors. After the basic investigation of the text has already been carried out, we will use this knowledge to try to translate these expressions into the Slovak language where we will pay special attention to the use of the proper article and giving reason for our choice. The unabridged version of the text can be found in the Appendix. In the last subchapter of this chapter the results of our inquiry are evaluated and summarized.

4.1 The Methodology of the Analysis of the English Economic Text

We decided to conduct an analysis of a particular economic text. To describe the methodology of the analysis, at first we were looking for the suitable text to carry out the analysis. We predominantly tried to find different reliable internet sources in English considering some economic issue that could serve as a quality one from the comprehensive and the linguistic points of view. After finding an interesting text dealing with human capital and consumption, we read it several times. At first to understand the basic idea of the text and to get the needed overview to be acquainted with this particular area. Secondly, we identified the sentences in which the investigated grammatical phenomena occurred. The next step was to choose the correspondent sentences and searched for the similarities and differences in them. After that, we ordered them together to be able to give an appropriate explanation and to compare them. In each investigated sentence we clarified the reason of the use of this particular article. However, the main goal of the analysis was to translate these sentences into Slovak and to give additional pieces of information regarding the linguistic aspect of the sentences. In the analysis we primarily devoted

ourselves to the explanation and translation of the use of the definite article. Following we devote ourselves to the indefinite article *a* and *an*. Subsequently, we dedicate ourselves to the zero article, and finally we mention some other determiners appearing in the text.

4.1.1 The Occurrence of the Definite Article – *the*

We began our inquiry with the search for the definite article in various relations. In the analyzed economic text the definite article occurred very frequently. To begin with, it could be found often in relation to adjectives. To name some examples, it appears in the positive form in the sentence "*Thus we can conclude that **the negative income level** is largely compensated at the level of consumption.*" (Appendix, Sentence 1) In English the article emerged in connection with an adjective and a countable noun, in singular 3rd person and in Nominative. In Slovak we would translate that as *záporná hladina príjmu*. In Slovak the related noun is of feminine gender, in singular and in Nominative, too, the paradigm is *ulica*. The adjective agrees with the noun. When mentioning adjectives, the definite article could be found in the comparative form, as well "*Similarly to the previous results, the estimated coefficient on years of education is significantly lower **among the older households**, which confirms our previous findings.*" (Appendix, Sentence 2) The English noun is an uncountable noun in 3rd person plural, Nominative. In Slovak the expression would be *spomedzi staršie domácnosti*, whereas the noun and the adjective are influenced by the preposition, so that the phrase is located in Accusative, and the noun is in plural, of feminine gender, inflected according to the paradigm *kosť*.

In comparison with these two forms, the frequency of the appearance of the superlative form was very high, it was used with nouns in singular, plural and uncountables, as well "*Since the housing wealth is **the most important component** of private capital we focus our attention on housing.*" (Appendix, Sentence 3) The original phrase is in 3rd person singular Nominative. One possible Slovak translation could be *najpodstatnejšia súčasť*. The adjective is also in superlative. The noun is 3rd person, feminine, singular in Nominative, paradigm *kosť*.

The definite article could be found also in relation to numbers. It was used for instance with cardinal and ordinal numerals as "*The only difference is that **the second and fourth specifications** are supplemented with the variable Cohort 90.*" (Appendix, Sentence 4) where *the second* and *fourth* are cardinal numerals used to refer to a particular placement in a sequence. In Slovak it would be as *druhá a štvrtá špecifikácia* also in form

of a cardinal numeral to express order. Another example of its occurrence was with general numerals. *"The importance of **the** latter factor was stressed in the past also by central-planning countries in Eastern Europe."* (Appendix, Sentence 5) as well as in the sentence *"**The** last column of table 1 summarizes the estimated coefficients"* (Appendix, Sentence 6). Both numerals represent the entity that is ranged at the end of a sequence and would be translated as *druhý faktor* and *posledný stĺpec*, whereas they are both in singular, Nominative and the general numerals correspond with the nouns they are related to.

There were also some cases of the occurrence of the definite article in connection to different fixed phrases or collocations. *"On **the** one hand, eastern European countries focused on basic and technical education while, **on the** other hand, human and social sciences were underdeveloped, in some cases even prohibited and persecuted."* (Appendix, Sentence 7) In this case it is not inevitable to inquire into characteristics of the noun from the linguistic or grammatical point of view, as the phrase is fixed and there are no doubts or debates about the proper use of the article. When translating such a case into a different language, we do not do any word-to-word translation or do not try to translate the phrase based on our own ideas. It is important to find the appropriate one, so that it would be translated into Slovak as *na jednej strane, na druhej strane*.

Proper nouns are another great group connected to the definite article. It is important to mention that in these cases the translation of the phrase or name is already given, so that there is a need to look for its specific name or title in Slovak, not just to make them up. *First, we use data on household income and consumption from the household expenditure survey, which is conducted annually by **the** Statistical Office of the **Slovak Republic**"* (Appendix, Sentence 8). The name *Statistical Office* is preceded by the definite article as it is a proper name of an institution, besides that, capital letters were used as it is being talked about proper names. In the second part of the whole name the definite article is used again as it comes along with a geographical name containing the word Republic. This name stands for *Štatistický úrad Slovenskej republiky* and it is a proper noun in Slovak, too, that is why the initial words are written in capital letters. Another proper noun is to be found in the sentence *"The data sets may be influenced only marginally by the accession to **the** European Union, which took place in May 2004."* (Appendix, Sentence 9) *The European Union* is a name of an institution consisting of more parts what always needs the definite article, the translation into Slovak is clear, *Európska Únia*. *"In order to impute the housing wealth, we use our second dataset, which comes*

from the survey of residential property prices conducted jointly by **the National Bank of Slovakia** and **the National Association of Real Estate Agencies.**" (Appendix, Sentence 10) The proper nouns denote unique entities in the Slovak language, as well, namely *Národná banka Slovenskej republiky* and *Národná asociácia realitných kancelárií Slovenska*.

To mention geographical names, the occurrence of determiners is very frequent. They were used with the definite article when talking about names consisting of more parts, for example including words like *Republic*. Thus, more often with the zero article standing for countries "*These results are largely similar to earlier estimations for **the Czech Republic** and in **Slovakia** presented by Chase, for **Romania** by Andrén, or for **Slovenia** by Orazem.* (Appendix, Sentence 11) *More recently, higher returns to education were reported by Newell for **Poland***". (Appendix, Sentence 12) Geographical names consisting of more words, including, for example *Kingdom* or *Republic* are always used with the definite article, so that in the name *the Czech Republic*, translated as *Česká republika*, the definite article must be present. In other one-word expressions representing countries the definite article was replaced by the zero article. The other states are translated as *Slovensko*, *Rumunsko*, *Slovinsko* and *Pol'sko*. They appeared even with proper adjectives. "*The next specification extends the analysis by a cohort differential in age-income profile of **the Slovak households***." (Appendix, Sentence 13) The definite article is placed in front of a proper adjective written with a capital letter in connection with a noun in plural form. In Slovak it would be translated as *slovenské domácnosti*, in Nominative, whereas the adjective is written in small letters, in contrary to English.

Following, the *of constructions* were one of the most frequently occurring case of the usage of the definite article, let us look at some examples: "*Moreover, **the quality of education** could decline during the reforms in Romania as argued by Andrén.*" (Appendix, Sentence 14) In English, the expression consists of two nouns besides the definite article and the preposition *of*, the first one is a countable noun in singular, Nominative, the second one is an uncountable noun in Genitive, the possessive case. Our translation would be *kvalita vzdelávania*, whereas the first noun is of feminine gender, paradigm *žena*, in singular Nominative. The second noun is neutrum, in singular Genitive and is inflected according to the paradigm *vysvedčenie*. These *of constructions* appeared also in relation with expressions consisting of more words, so that a noun is modified by an adjective: "*Several authors address **the suitability of human capital** achieved by communist education system.*" (Appendix, Sentence 15) The phrase *human capital* is in this case a

fixed expression, the adjective and the noun create a particular term. In Slovak it sounds as *udržateľnosť ľudského kapitálu*, whereas the noun is of muscular gender, singular and in Genitive and is preceded by an adjective that corresponds with it.

Another very interesting case of the use of the definite article occurred in the sentence *"In all cases, the estimated coefficients of disposable income are more or less **the same**."* (Appendix, Sentence 16) The sentence contains the combination of the definite article with the pronoun *same*. To compare with Slovak, it corresponds to *ten istý* so that there will be no noun connected to the article, i.e. definiteness is expressed also in Slovak – by means of the demonstrative pronoun.

4.1.2 The Occurrence of the Indefinite Article – a

The indefinite article *a* appeared frequently in connection with connectors or collocations. *"As **a result**, returns to education were negligible in all central planning countries."* (Appendix, Sentence 17) One possible translation is *v dôsledku*, so that the grammatical construction in both sentences is totally different. To name another example: *"However, these results may be influenced **by a low number** of observations with postcommunist education."* (Appendix, Sentence 18) The whole expression consists of a preposition, the indefinite article, an adjective and a noun. Besides that the *of construction* follows. To give the translation, it would sound as *ovplyvnení nízkym číslom*. Following, let us mention the sentence *"Once acquired, households stay in the same housing for **a relatively long period of time**."* (Appendix, Sentence 19) This expression could be translated into Slovak simply with the help of the adverb *dlho*.

Other common case of the use of the indefinite article was when pointing out a general meaning or a general entity. *"In particular, previous authors discuss several ways of how education completed before economic reforms may be less valued **in a market economy**."* (Appendix, Sentence 21) In this sentence it is highlighted that there is not a particular market economy as the target of the discussion, but a general one. Following, this kind of construction also appeared in the sentence *"The depended variable is defined as monthly household income, although the traditional Mincer model of earnings analyzes individual income instead of **a household of several persons**."* (Appendix, Sentence 22) The indefinite article in connection with an *of construction* can be found also with nouns in plural. *Several persons* is a phrase consisting of an adjective and a noun in plural Genitive.

Miesto viacčlennej domácnosti is our translation, whereas the first noun is of feminine gender in Genitive singular, paradigm *kost'*. The noun is then followed by a numeral that is inflected as an adjective and a noun in Genitive because of the preposition *miesto*. The plural form is an exception of the creation of plural forms, as in singular, it is *človek*, in this plural, the stem of the word does not remain, but changes completely.

4.1.3 The Occurrence of the Indefinite Article – *an*

In comparison with the other articles, the indefinite article *an* could be found rather sporadically. This is, though, intelligible, logical, as its usage is limited to the words beginning with a vowel sound. Some instances of its occurrence emerged in the following sentences "Moreover, *the income pattern of an average household coincides with the pattern of the household with secondary education.*" (Appendix, Sentence 23) As already mentioned in the analysis, the *of phrases* appear very frequently in connection to articles. In this case it also refers to a general meaning, it represents one possible household, not a particular one. It is followed by an adjective starting with *a*, so that a vowel sound. Again, the Slovak form of the words is influenced by the preposition, so it would be *priemernej domácnosti*, but this time just in Genitive without a Slovak preposition. An example where the indefinite article is preceded directly by a noun is to be found in the sentence "This means that exogenous increase in the value of the house of 1 percent *leads to an increase of household consumption* by 0.10 percentage points." (Appendix, Sentence 24) translated into Slovak as *k zvýšeniu domácej spotreby*, whereas the whole phrase is influenced by the preposition *k* and is to be inflected according to it, so resulting from that the noun emerge in Dative and is followed by an adjective and a noun in Genitive. Subsequently, we investigated the sentence "We argue that mass privatization programs *played an important role* in ensuring political support during economic reforms." (Appendix, Sentence 20) The expression *to play an important role* is quite usual in English. It is always used in connection with the definite article. In Slovak the expression is used as *zohrávať dôležitú úlohu*.

4.1.4 The Occurrence of the Zero Article – \emptyset

The zero article emerged several times with proper geographical names, representing directions, states or cities. "They find that the returns to skills are lower in

East Germany, which is probably the result of economic transition when the skills of some workers become obsolete." (Appendix, Sentence 25) *East Germany* needs the zero article according to the grammatical rule determining the use of directions. "The economic reforms in Central and Eastern Europe bring benefits mainly to young and highly qualified people." (Appendix, Sentence 26) With the names of states consisting of just one part and with cities the zero article is required. "We concentrate on Slovakia, because this country is an example of a fragile liberal democracy." (Appendix, Sentence 27) "For example, households in the capital city, Bratislava, are less likely to own their housing, but if so, it is more expensive than in other regions." (Appendix, Sentence 28) Slovakia and Bratislava are proper nouns, that is why the use of the zero article is clear. In the hypothetical case that to the name of the country the word *Republic* would be added, the zero article would be changed into the definite one. By contrast, names of cities remain usually with the zero article.

When referring to a group of people in general without giving any more specific pieces of information the use of the zero article is correct. The zero article appeared in relation to uncountable nouns "Two columns regression of household incomes on years of education, years of potential experience, experience squared and other variables capturing households' characteristics." (Appendix, Sentence 29) "Moreover, the effect of work experience is also lower in the older cohort group." (Appendix, Sentence 30) According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary* experience is a mass noun and can be characterised as following "The knowledge or skill acquired by a period of practical experience of something, especially that gained in a particular profession or An event or occurrence which leaves an impression on someone". In English, this noun has a singular form, in opposite to Slovak, into which it would be translated as *skúsenosti*, so in plural form. "We use information on the quality and state of housing to impute the value of real estate owned by household." (Appendix, Sentence 31) Based on the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* information can be described as an uncountable noun meaning "facts about someone or something", but the Slovak translation would emerge in plural as *informácie*.

Subsequently, we inquired into the use of some uncountable nouns: "By contrast, the countries made a significant effort to satisfy basic needs of population, including also affordable housing for everybody." (Appendix, Sentence 32) *Population* is an uncountable noun in Genitive. In Slovak it sounds as *potreby populácie* where again the noun is in

Genitive, singular. Another case of emphasizing a group of people arises in the sentence "*People often do not re-qualify until they are forced to do so by extreme events, including for example long-term unemployment.*" (Appendix, Sentence 33) When translating the noun loser from the sentence "*Overall, it is difficult to identify winners and losers from economic reforms, because they cannot be attributed to demographic groups*" (Appendix, Sentence 34) into Slovak the part of speech changes into a substantivized adjective, it would be as porazení, with *í*, standing for the plural form.

4.5 The Occurrence of Other Determiners

Just to mention, besides the definite, indefinite and zero article, also other determiners, such as these, all, other could be found. *Similarly, high-quality research was often concentrated on top-priority secret military projects with low spillovers to other sectors.*" (Appendix, Sentence 35) The word other with a noun in plural stands for *iné sektory*. "*These instruments describe the background of the household.*" (Appendix, Sentence 36) The demonstrative pronoun *these* is always used in plural in English. In Slovak the proper translation is *tieto nástroje*. "*In general, central planning countries tried to reduce all sources of inequality.*" (Appendix, Sentence 38) The determiner *all* represents the whole amount of something.

4.2 Results of the Analysis

In contrast to the analysis of this economic text carried out in the bachelor theses, where we tried to explain the use of the definite article in various sentences, investigating if it is cataforic or generic reference, a unique entity, a time expression, an adjective, numeral or a fixed collocation, this time the main goal was to translate sentences, whereas special attention is paid to the role of the part of speech to which the determiner belongs to in the original text. Based on the analysis it can be stated that the definite article can be translated into Slovak without the usage of any other elements. In the most cases, we spoke about nouns, sometimes about substantivized adjectives, numerals or adjectives in positive, comparative, or superlative forms. Those were inflected based on the structure of the sentence or the preposition it was related to. In the most cases it was nominative, sometimes genitive. The number or the subclass they belong to based on the fact whether they can be identified as common/proper or abstract/concrete, countable/uncountable were

various, with no pattern found. The whole text consists of 38644 words, whereas the definite article the was used 343 times, the indefinite article a 53 and the indefinite article an 10 times. Besides that, also other determiners, such as these, all, other could be found.

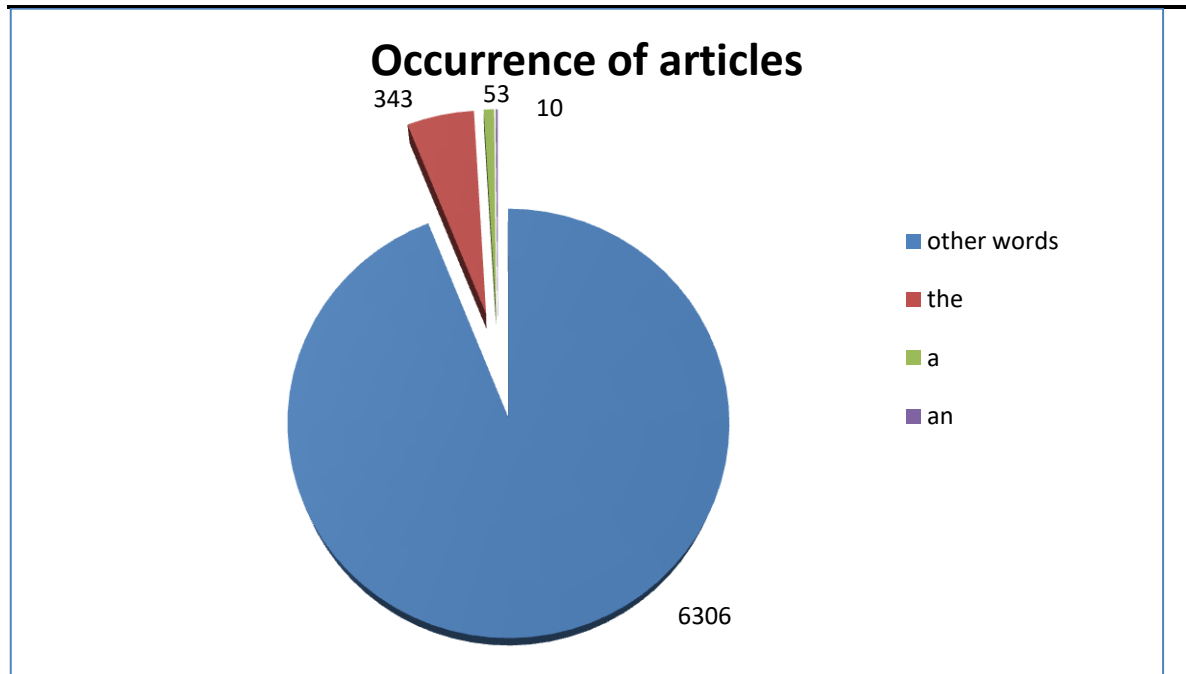


Chart 1 – Occurrence of articles in the English economic text

Source : own processing

5 Method of Research and Respondent Profile

As it has already been mentioned in the thesis, the grammatical category of definiteness/indefiniteness represents a great problem for Slovaks who try to learn the language as there is no similarity in English and Slovak concerning this particular linguistic area. Because of this reason we decided to include the questionnaire to practical part of the thesis, so that we can precisely examine the respondents, demonstrate their answers, evaluate them and in the end prove or alternatively disprove this statement. Besides that, we would like to point out the most frequent mistakes and to give explanation why they were possibly made. Subsequently, we try to give recommendation on how to battle these shortcomings.

The questionnaire consists of 15 sentences, each requiring a determiner. The sentences contain various grammatical phenomena, based on what the respondents had to fill in the proper article. The subjects of the investigation were, for example, proper names, abstract entities, countability, reference, geographical names, abbreviations, and fixed expressions. It inquires into their knowledge regarding the use of means of the grammatical category of determination, predominantly the definite, the indefinite and the zero article. The questionnaire is set for respondents who have at least basic level of English, so that the investigated sentences are diversely demanding. Our goal is to find out to how much the Slovaks understand this problematic field and how they are able to use the means of definiteness in English, more precisely, to what degree is that influenced by different variables, as for instance, gender, age, the level of their education, educational exchange or work experience and so on.

5.1 The Questionnaire

Vážení respondenti,

touto cestou si Vás dovoľujeme požiadať o vyplnenie krátkeho dotazníka vo forme testu v anglickom jazyku, ktorý je súčasťou mojej diplomovej práce. Som študentkou 5. ročníka študijného programu Cudzie jazyky a interkultúrna komunikácia na Fakulte aplikovaných jazykov Ekonomickej univerzity v Bratislave. Pracujem na diplomovej práci s názvom „Vyjadrenie gramatickej kategórie určenosti v anglickom a slovenskom jazyku“. Cieľom práce je analyzovať gramatickú kategóriu určenosti v anglickom jazyku a posúdiť

možnosti prekladu do slovenčiny, kde takáto kategória neexistuje. Práve z tohto dôvodu je tento lingvistický jav pre Slovákov náročný na pochopenie aj správne použitie. Podstatou testu je zistiť úroveň správneho využitia vyjadrovacích prostriedkov tejto kategórie Slováckmi, ktorí majú aspoň základnú znalosť anglického jazyka.

Test je úplne anonymný a Vami poskytnuté údaje budú použité výlučne k spracovaniu diplomovej práce. V odpovediach treba označiť jednu z možností, a teda správny člen, určitý, neurčitý alebo nulový, pričom je vždy len jedna odpoveď správna.. Za Vašu ochotu Vám vopred ďakujem.

1. Pohlavie

žena

muž

2. Vek

do 18

19-25

26-45

nad 45

3. Najvyššie dosiahnuté vzdelanie

ZŠ

SŠ - gymnázium

SŠ – so zameraním (OA, priemyslovky a pod.)

VŠ 1. stupňa

VŠ 2. stupňa

VŠ 1. stupňa so zameraním na anglický jazyk

VŠ 2. stupňa so zameraním na anglický jazyk

iné

4. Kde resp. ako ste sa učili po anglicky?

na základnej škole

na strednej škole

v jazykovej škole

na študijnom pobyte v zahraničí
na pracovnom pobyte v zahraničí
na pracovisku
iné

5. Ako dlho sa učíte/ste sa učili po anglicky?

menej ako 2 roky

3-5 rokov

6-10 rokov

11 a viac rokov

6. Maturovali ste z anglického jazyka?

nie

áno, a to na nižšej úrovni (v súčasnosti označovaná ako B1)

áno, a to na vyššej úrovni (v súčasnosti označovaná ako B2)

7. Ak máte aj iný doklad dokazujúci Vaše jazykové znalosti angličtiny (certifikáty, štátne skúšky), špecifikujte, doplňte aj úroveň)

8. Z akých učebníc ste sa učili po anglicky? Doplňte názov, ak si spomínate.

9. Mali ste vyučovanie aj s rodeným hovoriacim anglického jazyka?

áno

nie

10. Venovali ste pozornosť aj dostatočnému precvičovaniu používania určitého, neurčitého a nulového člena v anglickom jazyku?

áno

nie

5.1.1 The sentences used in the Questionnaire

- 1 In many under-developed countries there is no possibility of ___ good education.
- 2 ___ Belief is the main determinant of a fulfilling life.
- 3 To compare with the last years, there is rising tendency to go to ___ sea during the summer holiday.
- 4 It took him years to master how to play ___ piano.
- 5 ___ World Trade Organization deals with global rules of trade.
- 6 On Friday there will be ___ OPEC meeting taking place.
- 7 ___ Smith brothers plan to run for the general election.
- 8 ___ NATO is an Alliance consisting of 28 independent member countries.
- 9 What was on ___ radio when you woke up?
- 10 ___ lion is rare in this area.
- 11 I plan to climb ___ Mount Everest.
- 12 My employer had his wedding on ___ Sunday many years ago.
- 13 ___ St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican is of great importance for the Catholic Church.
- 14 Even though I am not very interested in ___ art, I think this one is ___ Monet
- 15 ___ Wall Street in New York is the financial symbol of the United States.

5.1.2 Key to the Questionnaire

1 In many under-developed countries there is no possibility of **a** good education.

2 **0** Belief is the main determinant of a fulfilling life.

3 To compare with the last years, there is rising tendency to go to **0** sea during the summer holiday.

4 It took him years to master how to play **the** piano.

5 **The** World Trade Organization deals with global rules of trade.

6 On Friday there will be **an** OPEC meeting taking place.

7 **The** Smith brothers plan to run for the general election.

8 **0** NATO is an Alliance consisting of 28 independent member countries.

9 What was on **the** radio when you woke up?

10 **The** lion is rare in this area.

11 I plan to climb **0** Mount Everest.

12 My employer had his wedding on **a** Sunday many years ago.

13 **0** St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican is of great importance for the Catholic Church.

14 Even though I am not very interested in art, I think this one is **a** Monet

15 **0** Wall Street in New York is the financial symbol of the United States.

5.2 Discussion

The given questionnaire was filled out by 100 respondents. We asked mainly young people, predominantly University students to participate in the research. To give more pieces of information to the description of the people involved, 79 per cent of respondents taking part were woman, so just 21 per cent were men. The vast majority of them were 19 to 25 years old. We recognized as an important aspect to ask about education of the respondents, what kind of school they graduated from and whether they specialized in English during their studies. As it can be seen in the chart, the most of the participants graduated from the first grade of the University, the next big group consisted of those who have not finished this level of education yet.

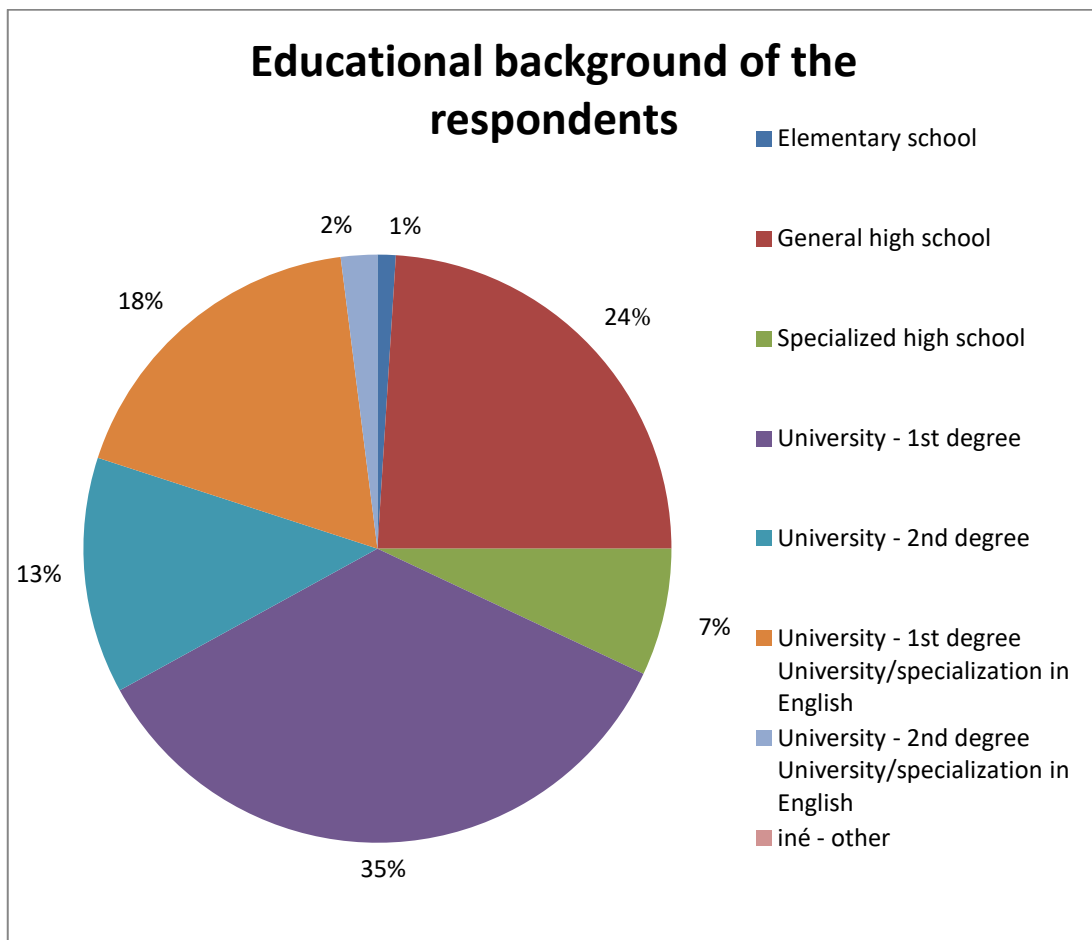


Chart 2 – Educational background of the respondents

Source : own processing

Most of the respondents claim to have studied English for at least 11 years. Nowadays, it is obligatory to make the final exams at the high school/secondary school (maturita) in Slovakia at least in one foreign language, 96 per cent of all the respondents said it was English, whereas 67 per cent of the on the higher level, that is nowadays called as B2. The respondents were also asked where or how they learned the language. 71 per cent of them started with English in elementary school, even more, 90 of them dedicated themselves to the language at high school/ secondary school. In addition to that, 27 per cent attended classes in language schools, 19 per cent in abroad studying and in contrary to that, 18 per cent in abroad, but working.

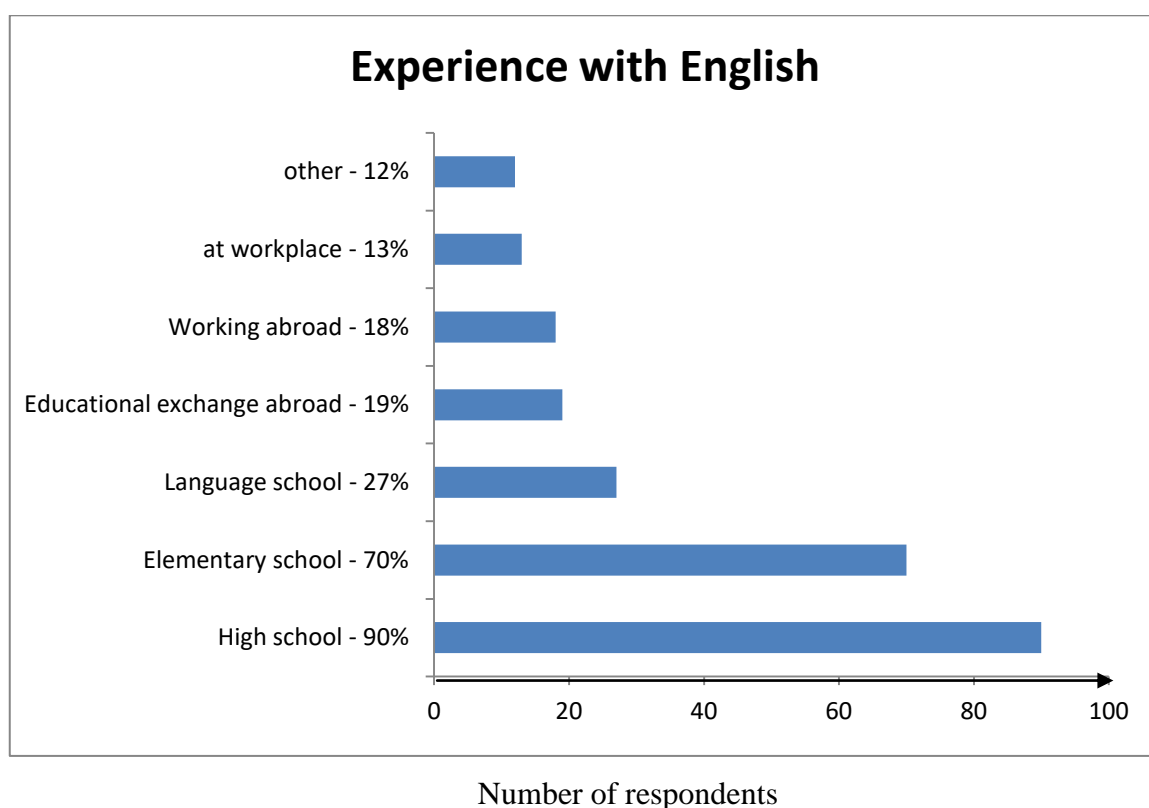


Chart 3 – Experience of the respondents with English

Source: own processing

Some respondents listed even other documents proving their language skills, the most often repeated were State exams B2 or C1, and Cambridge English First B2 or C1. Among the most frequently used study books were Project at elementary school and Headway at high/secondary school, besides that, Opportunity, Yes, Face2Face, and in some cases books for final examination preparation and business English books for the

students of the University of Economics. Surprisingly, the majority, more precisely 57 per cent of the respondents have never had a class with a native speaker. 56 per cent of them state that during their English studies there was not enough attention paid to the practicing of the use of the proper article.

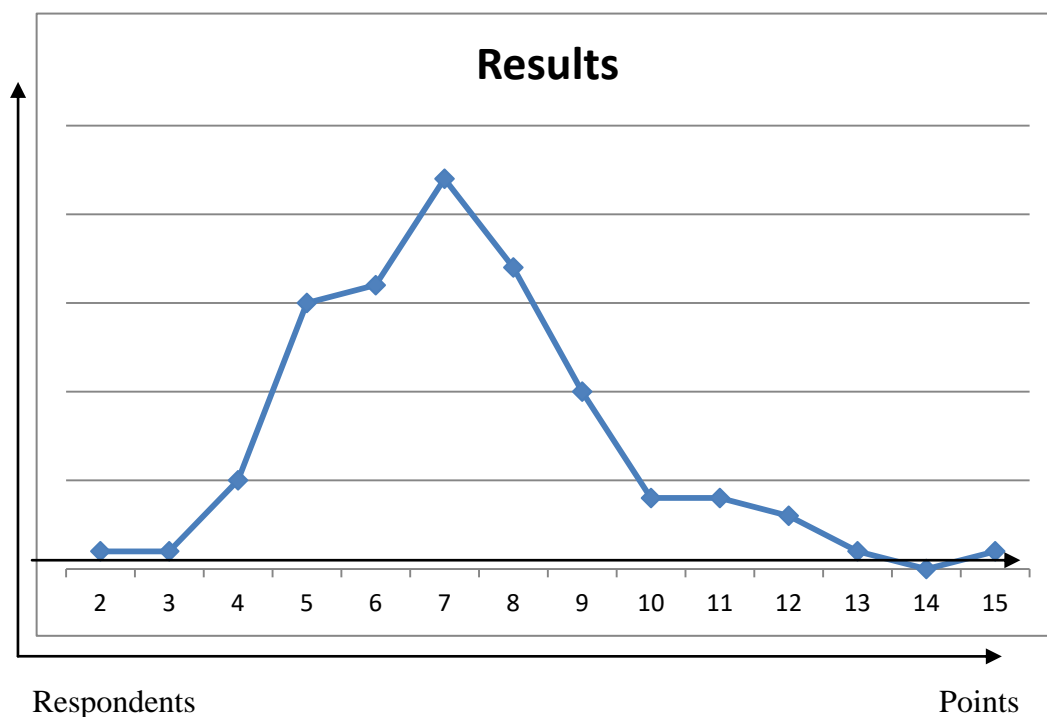


Chart 4 – Results

Source: own processing

It was possible to achieve 15 points in the questionnaire, whereas the lowest number was 2 points and the highest was 15. The average is 7.24 points. Based on the questionnaire, we can assume that Slovaks have problems using the proper article in fixed collocations, just 11 per cent of the respondents had the sentences *"To compare with the last years, there is a rising tendency to go to θ sea during the summer holiday"* right. The majority of the participants, 74 per cent, marked the definite article, they probably made a connection to the word sea, which is usually used with the definite article, and does not take into consideration that it appears in a particular phrase or, the second possibility is, that they might have not known the phrase itself.

The second sentence that was answered incorrectly by the overwhelming majority, i.e. by 83 per cent of the respondents was *"My employer had his wedding on a Sunday many years ago"*. As children from the very beginning of their English studies learn that days are used with zero article, we suppose that they used what they learned by heart concerning an isolated linguistic phenomenon and were not actually able to take the context into consideration, what completely changed the meaning of the sentence, though, so that a different determiner was needed. To compare, in the sentence *"The World Trade Organization deals with global rules of trade."*, the sentence also begins with a noun that is usually seen in relation to the definite article. Even though it is just a part of a particular proper name, we assume that many of the 75 per cent of the respondents who matched the correct answer did so based on the fact that they are used to hear the word *world* in connection to the definite article.

Another problematic case can be found in the sentence *"The lion is rare in this area."* After the first two sentences with the lowest number of correct answers, this is not a surprise. The sentence needs the definite article, as it is in atemporal present and in generic reference. Such linguistic phenomena are taught just at Universities in fields of studies in the English language, so that the most of the participants probably do not understand the context that actually gives a hint what determiner to use, it cannot be learned simply by heart, and that is probably the reason why the most of the respondents got it wrong.

Similarly, in the sentence *"Even though I am not very interested in art, I think this one is a Monet."*, what should be observed, is the context. In isolation, there would be the zero article, as the following word is a proper noun, but the noun refers to one of the works of the famous painter, that is why the indefinite article *a* is proper. Again, the respondents used what they learned by heart and did not think about the links, so that just 33 per cent of the got the sentence right. In contrary to that, in the sentence *"The Smith brothers plan to run in the general elections."* 72 per cent of the participants filled correctly the definite article in, even though there is a proper name, more exactly a surname that appears predominantly with the zero article in English, but they evidently understood that the proper noun denotes the entire family and the use of the definite article is necessary in this particular situation.

To compare two similar linguistic phenomena, let us look at the sentences *"I plan to climb \emptyset Mount Everest."*, *\emptyset Wall Street in New York is the financial symbol of the United States"* and *" \emptyset St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican is of great importance for the Catholic*

Church". In each case the article is followed by a proper noun, kind of a unique entity or a proper name standing for a person, which can be the reason why more than the half of the respondents got the sentences incorrect, as they marked the definite article as the possible right answer.

Another problematic case occurred in the sentence "*In many under-developed countries there is no possibility of a good education.*" This word is usually used as an abstract, uncountable noun, so it is usually seen in relation with the zero article, so that the majority of respondents voted for this possibility. However, in this sentence there is a particular education mentioned, so that, again, a specific context must have been taken into consideration to be able to answer the example properly. To support this statement, the sentence "*Ø belief is the main determinant of a fulfilling life.*" can serve as an example. Here the abstract, uncountable nouns refers to a general entity that is not particularized in more details, no that the usual grammatical rules determine the use of the determiner, that can be the reason, why more than half of the respondents got the sentence right.

Not to forget the use of abbreviations, they can be found in two sentences. In the first one "*On Friday there will be an OPEC meeting taking place.*" using the indefinite article *an* was just the half of the respondents successful, but in the second sentence "*Ø NATO is an alliance consisting of 28 independent member countries where the zero article is preferred.*" There can be more explanations for these results, but we suppose, that the respondents are not so skilled in determining articles with abbreviations, so that it was easier for them to give preference to the zero article.

The sentence where most respondents succeeded was "*What was on the radio when you woke up?*". Here, the sporadic reference appears, but what is probably more important to reveal the reason of this success is, that phrases, such as *listen to the music*, are taught from the elementary school, so the respondents probably remembered that they learned this word in relation to the definite article. That is the most likely reason why 81 per cent completed the right answer.

5.3 Conclusion of the Analysis

To sum up, in the second chapter of the practical part of the master's thesis we focused on the mistakes made by Slovak respondents regarding the grammatical category of definiteness/indefiniteness in the form of the questionnaire with some important

personal details and 15 sentences where the proper article should have been filled in. Our questionnaire with the test was filled out by 100 respondents, predominately university students from different fields of studies, so that a diverse sample of answers build the basis for our research. Our goal was to find the most frequent errors regarding the use of the articles by Slovaks. At first, it was inevitable to set the linguistic phenomena that need to be included in the sentences so that different cases of the occurrence of articles appear. They were demanding on various levels, some of those phenomena are taught already at elementary school, some of them at universities when specializing in languages, and some of them cannot be learned by heart at all, but must be understood to use articles correctly. After that, we tried to explain in details what could have been the possible reasons why the participants matched incorrect answers.

Based on the results of the questionnaire we can state that the biggest problems Slovaks have concerning the use of the proper mean of this category, occur, when they have to understand the situation and follow the links to manage to find the correct article. We can state that Slovaks predominantly used what they learned by memory during their English studies and did not take into consideration that many grammatical phenomena cannot be looked at in isolation and it is absolutely necessary to evaluate the context. As the second biggest problem we would assess that Slovaks often avoid using articles. Based on the questionnaire it can be seen that the zero article was used quite frequently. The reason for that consists probably in the fact that Slovaks are not used to use any determiners in the Slovak languages, so that they do not miss them either in English. Other obstacles emerged with fixed collocations, abbreviations, abstract, proper and uncountable nouns.

To end up, we would give some recommendation for the teaching process of the English language for Slovaks. As there are no articles in Slovak, they often forget to use any, and that should be corrected by explaining the existence of the articles already at the very beginning of English studies. The particular case (proper names, specific references etc.) should be explained early, but besides that it must be highlighted that a language is a living organism. It would be reasonable to teach Slovaks from the very beginning that although there are many rules that must be followed, they are mostly subordinate to the context. The teachers should pay more attention to practising, preparing more exercises, leading discussions where they should correct the students if they fail to use the proper determiner because they will never master the language if they do not acquire this basic

phenomenon and will be immediately exposed by native speakers. To conclude, we would advise teachers not just to teach the rules of the language, but to teach the students how to think in the language.

Conclusion

The objective of the master's thesis was to clarify the grammatical category of definiteness and to investigate into its influence regarding the language skills of Slovaks learning English. It can be undoubtedly stated that this particular grammatical category is of great importance in English, as it serves as a mean of generalizing, specifying and delimitating, as well. Definiteness/indefiniteness is a very complex and complicated linguistic phenomenon that is recognized as a serious problem for non-native English speakers in general. For Slovaks is the understanding of this grammatical category and the use of its means especially demanding as in our language there is no corresponding phenomenon which leads to an increased number of errors concerning Slovaks using the English language and looking for the correct determiner to express one's thoughts.

The thesis consists of two major parts. The first and at the same time the theoretical part is divided further into three chapters. The very first discusses the topic of language typology. It involves the description of the origin of English and Slovak. Subsequently, both languages are described in detail, whereas special attention is paid to the similarities and differences between these languages as one is an analytical language and the second one is a flecive language. The next chapter of the theoretical part deals with the classification of the Slovak noun. They were divided into subchapters based on the fact, whether they are concrete and abstract, common and proper, or animate and inanimate. To finish the theoretical part, we added a chapter inquiring into the grammatical categories of the Slovak noun. Number, gender, case and paradigm are characterised in more details and compared with those of the English noun's.

The second part of the thesis represents the practical part and is organised into two chapters and further into more subchapters. The goal of the first chapter was to conduct a contrastive analysis of an English economic text. In the text the articles were found and explanation was given to the reasons of their use. After that, we tried to translate these particular phrases or collocation into Slovak and investigate into them from the linguistic point of view, so that we can draw conclusions and advise on the teaching process of English. The very last chapter of the thesis contains a questionnaire, involving several questions about the background of the respondents and fifteen sentences, in which the definite, indefinite and zero articles were to be filled in. Different variables must have been considered to find the correct determiner, such as context, reference, collocations, proper

names, abstract names or countability. We recognized very interesting results regarding the ways of thinking of Slovaks and reasons of their answers, weather they were correct, or exactly in contrary, incorrect.

To draw a conclusion, we can state that the main objective of the master's thesis was accomplished, as we gave the necessary theoretical basis in the first part and conducted an interesting and enlightening research in the practical part. We are sure we managed to prove that the grammatical category of definiteness plays an extremely important role in the English language and great attention must be paid to its explanation and practice in the teaching process of non-native English speakers. As it represents considerable problems for them, hinder the communication process and leads to various misunderstanding that could be possibly prevented, we definitely recommend to focus on this phenomenon to a high degree.

Resumé

Predložená magisterská práca nadväzuje na bakalársku prácu, ktorej názov bol „Vyjadrenie gramatickej kategórie v anglickom jazyku“. Pri výskume sme však zistili, že vzhľadom na rozsiahlosť a komplexnosť témy je potrebné v nej pokračovať. Už pri vypracovávaní bakalárskej práce sme si uvedomili dôležitosť tohto lingvistického javu, ktorá do značnej miery ovplyvňuje vyjadrovanie sa v anglickom jazyku. Táto skutočnosť sa len znásobuje pri osobách, ktoré majú iný materinský jazyk než anglický, tak ako napríklad aj v prípade Slovákov. Daná téma nás inšpirovala natoľko, že sme sa rozhodli dať za cieľ diplomovej práce preskúmanie vplyvu tejto kategórie a spôsob jej vyjadrenia v komunikácii medzi Slovákami, keďže v slovenčine neexistuje podobný ani zodpovedajúci lingvistický jav.

Práca sa teda venuje gramatickej kategórii určenosti, ktorá sa vzťahuje na podstatné mená v anglickom jazyku a zaujímavosťou je, že nemá žiadny ekvivalent v slovenskom jazyku, čo však v konečnom dôsledku vedie k značným problémom vo vyučovacom procese a v samotnom využívaní angličtiny ako cudzieho jazyka medzi Slovákami a tými, ktorých materinským jazykom je angličtina. Rovnako sa však objavujú nedorozumenia aj medzi Slovákami a zástupcami iných kultúr, pre ktorých je anglický jazyk tiež cudzím. V angličtine spĺňa táto gramatická kategória veľmi podstatnú úlohu, keďže jej správne použitie nie je dôležité len z lingvistického hľadiska, ale aj kvôli bezproblémovému dorozumievaniu sa a presnému vyjadreniu našich intencií a ich pochopeniu recipientmi.

Práca je rozdelená do dvoch hlavných častí, teoretickej a praktickej. Prvá časť slúži na poskytnutie teoretických základov, ujasnenie problematiky a vymedzenie pojmov, aby sme tak pripravili priestor na praktickú časť. Stanoveným cieľom v tejto časti práce bolo preskúmanie problematiky na konkrétnych príkladoch, aby sme mohli vyvodiť závery a podať odporúčania pre vyučovací proces anglického jazyka, čo sa týka tejto problematiky. Spomínaná prvá, teoretická časť, sa delí ďalej do ďalších troch kapitol a viacerých podkapitol. Keďže v práci používame metódu kontrastívnej analýzy dvoch nepríbuzných jazykov, v prvej kapitole teoretickej časti sme tieto jazyky porovnali a upozornili na podobnosti a rozdiely medzi anglickým a slovenským jazykom, pričom sme vychádzali zo štúdia vzniku a vývoja porovnávaných jazykov. Z tohto dôvodu sme sa rozhodli na úvod práce charakterizovať jazykovú typológiu a popísať indoeurópsku jazykovú skupinu, do ktorého angličtina aj slovenčina patria.

Upozornili sme na fakt, že angličtina je v súčasnej dobe jedným, ak nie najdôležitejším a najpoužívanejším jazykom v celosvetovom meradle. Patrí do západogermánskej jazykovej skupiny a je analytickým jazykom, čo znamená, že nie skloňovanie, ale napríklad slovosled zohráva dôležitú úlohu. Slovenčina, ktorá je využívaná prednostne na Slovensku a za jej najpríbuznejšie jazyky považujeme češtinu a poľštinu, je oproti tomu súčasťou slovanskej podskupiny a je flektívnym jazykom, čo znamená, že skloňovanie, a teda pridávanie morféme k základu slova je jej podstatnou charakteristickou črtou. Ako pomôcku pre lepší prehľad sme vložili tabuľky a obrázok zo sekundárnych zdrojov. Pri popisovaní charakteristík jazykov sme sa v prvom rade zamerali na zaujímavé lingvistické úkazy a súvislosti, ktoré môžu mať vplyv na vyjadrenie gramatickej kategórie určitosti. Na záver kapitoly sme zahrnuli pre lepší prehľad rozsiahlu tabuľku, v ktorej poukazujeme na rôzne lingvistické úkazy v oboch jazykoch a porovnávame ich. Spomíname tu rod, číslo, pád, slovosled, časy, prízvuk, rôzne informácie ohľadom slovných druhov a vetných členov, aby sme tak mohli tieto dva jazyky dôkladne porovnať.

Obsahom druhej kapitoly práce je charakteristika slovenských podstatných mien, pričom ich delíme na všeobecné a vlastné, konkrétne a abstraktné a životné neživotné. Obsah kapitoly nadväzuje na charakteristiku anglických podstatných mien, keďže tieto záležitosti pramenia zo sémantickej roviny jazyka, z tohto dôvodu sa tu vyskytuje veľa podobností a len málo rozličností. Do spomínanej prvej dvojice patria podstatné mená, ktoré poukazujú na entity vo všeobecnosti a tie, ktoré ich presne pomenovávajú. Konkrétne podstatné mená poukazujú na hmatateľné entity, pričom abstraktné sa používajú v súvislosti s nemateriálnymi. Životnosť sa posudzuje len v prípade mužského rodu a odvíja od faktu, či poukazujeme na živú osobu alebo na nejakú vec či predmet.

V rámci tretej kapitoly diplomovej práce sa venujeme preskúmanie gramatických kategórií slovenského podstatného mena. V prvej podkapitole sa zaoberáme kategóriou čísla, kde uvádzame, že podstatné mená sa môžu vyskytovať v singulári, v pluráli alebo ako pomnožné. Predmetom skúmania druhej podkapitoly je kategória rodu, pričom v slovenčine existujú tri – mužský, ženský a stredný. Tretia podkapitola má za cieľ objasniť pády, ktoré sa v slovenčine vyskytujú. V súčasnosti sa ich pravidelne používa šesť, a teda nominatív, genitív, datív, akuzatív, lokál a inštrumentál, pričom sme v tabuľke uviedli ako jazykové prostriedky vyjadrenia určitosti/neurčitosti aj zámená. V ďalšej sme

uviedli ďalšiu tabuľku, obsahujúcu skloňovacie vzory podstatných mien v slovenčine vo všetkých pádoch pre lepšie pochopenie problematiky.

Druhou a zároveň veľmi podstatnou časťou práce je praktická časť. Tá sa skladá z dvoch obširných kapitol. Celkovo štvrtá kapitola práca zahŕňa komparatívnu analýzu anglického ekonomického textu. Text pochádza od Slovenskej národnej banky a zaoberá sa problematikou ľudského kapitálu, spotreby a ich zmien v poslednej dobe. Čo sa týka metodiky nášho výskumu, na úvod sme si vyhľadali vyhovujúci text. Vzhľadom na náš študijný odbor sme uprednostnili text z oblasti ekonómie s príslušnou témou a terminológiou. Následne sme si text prečítali a usilovali sme sa mu porozumieť. Pri ďalšom čítaní sme sa zamerali na vyhľadanie členov, a teda určitého, neurčitého a nulového. Keď sme objavili potrebné vety, hľadali sme súvislosti medzi konkrétnymi gramatickými javmi. Tie sme potom zaradili do skupín. Členy a zvyšné slová, ktoré s nimi bezprostredne súviseli, sme preskúmali z viacerých hľadísk a odôvodnili správnosť ich použitia. V ďalšom kroku sme sa snažili spomínané výrazy preložiť do slovenčiny a preštudovať gramatické javy, ktoré sa v súvislosti s nimi objavili. Prednostne sme určovali vlastnosti podstatných mien, rod, číslo, pád, vzor a zaradili ich do skupín. Avšak členy sa vyskytovali aj s inými slovnými druhmi.

Na základe analýzy sme zistili, že preklad anglických fráz a viet, v ktorých sa členy vyskytujú, nie je taký náročný, ako ich preklad zo slovenčiny do angličtiny. V texte sme sa primárne venovali výskytu a vysvetleniu určitého člena, následne sme preskúmali aj neurčitý člen *a* a *an* a na záver prišiel na rad nulový člen. Popri hľadaní členov sme v texte objavili aj iné určujúce členy. Všetky vybrané frázy sme podrobne preskúmali, všimli si gramatické javy, určovali rod, číslo, pád aj vzor a potom sme frázy preložili do slovenského jazyka.

Obsahom poslednej kapitoly našej magisterskej práce bol dotazník určený výlučne pre Slovákov, ktorý disponujú aspoň základnými vedomosťami z anglického jazyka, ktorý nám slúžil ako zdroj informácií z hľadiska úrovne vedomostí, čo sa týka použitia prostriedkov gramatickej kategórie určenosti. Dotazník sa skladal z dvoch častí, tá prvá mala za cieľ získať osobné údaje o respondentovi (pohlavie, vek, najvyššie dosiahnuté vzdelanie, počet rokov štúdia angličtiny, skúseností s angličtinou a podobne, aby sme si vedeli urobiť obraz o kvalitách respondentov a na základe toho získať vhodné vzorky k vyhodnoteniu.

Druhá časť dotazníka bo gramatický test, skladajúci sa z pätnástich viet, v ktorom bolo treba doplniť správny člen a teda určitý, neurčitý *a*, neurčitý *an* alebo nulový. Vo vetách sa objavili rôzne gramatické javy, ktoré bolo dôležité brať do úvahy, išlo o kontext, abstraktné aj vlastné podstatné mená, a teda názvy inštitúcií, či mená, počítateľnosť, geografické názvy, frázy a kolokácie.

Výsledky boli veľmi prekvapujúce a poučné. Priemerná úspešnosť bola 48%. Zistili sme, že Slováci majú tendenciu používať pravidlá, ktoré sa učili naspamäť namiesto toho, aby zvažovali celkový kontext. Taktiež majú tendenciu používať nulový člen, aj keď nie je správny, čo si vysvetľujeme faktom, že v slovenčine členy neexistujú, Slovákom nechýbajú ani v angličtine.

Na základe získaných údajov doporučujeme venovať oveľa väčšiu pozornosť vysvetľovaniu tohto komplexného javu vo vyučovacom procese, keďže jeho neporozumenie vedie mnohým nedorozumeniam v komunikácii. Je nevyhnutné, aby sa študenti angličtiny neučili len pravidlá, ktoré sú použiteľné v izolovaných častiach, alebo aby boli schopní pochopiť celý kontext, ktorému sú pravidlá zväčša podriadené. Základným problémom je, že vo vyučovacom procese sa nevenuje dostatočná pozornosť tomu, aby sa Slováci neusilovali všetko prekladať, práve naopak, aby sa naučili v angličtine aj rozmýšľať.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Human Capital, Consumption, and Housing Wealth in Transition – National Bank of Slovakia (the chosen sentences)

Appendix 2

Human Capital, Consumption, and Housing Wealth in Transition – National Bank of Slovakia (the whole text)