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**Mária Vacková**

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Vedoucí práce: PhDr. Naděžda Stašková, Ph.D.

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FREQUENT MISTAKES IN PRONUNCIATION MADE BY ENGLISH  
LEARNERS

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

**Mária Vacková**

*English language with a focus on education*

Supervisor: PhDr. Naděžda Stašková, Ph.D.

**Pilsen, 2020**

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

V Plzni, 1. června 2020

.....  
vlastnoruční podpis

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## ABSTRACT

This undergraduate thesis aims to provide and describe some of the most frequently occurring mistakes in the pronunciation of English words by English learners, especially Czech native speakers. The thesis is composed of two parts, theoretical and practical. The theoretical part describes all the crucial terms (such as phonetics and phonology), standard transcription and IPA. Next, it deals with the issue of accent, specifically RP and its characteristic. The thesis imparts classification of English vowels and consonants and the process of their realization – speech production. Finally, the main focus of the research was put into words that are most difficult to pronounce and therefore regularly mispronounced. According to the prior research, a list of such words was created to serve the second part. The practical part is an analysis of audio recordings of Czech students of English language and their pronunciation of the text created for this purpose. A great number of pronunciation mistakes was caused by the placement of the stress. In the Czech language, the overwhelming majority of words has the stress fixed on the first syllable and therefore the unfamiliar principle of moving stress is problematic on its own. Moreover, the stress brings weak syllables and reduced pronunciation that can by itself change the meaning of the word. Additionally, the reduced vowel sound /ə/ does not appear in Czech, together with /θ, ð, ŋ/. These sounds were consequently often mispronounced and replaced by sounds that appear in the Czech language.

Keywords: pronunciation, speech, sound, phonetics, vowels, consonants

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The following undergraduate thesis deals with potential predicaments English language learners have to face throughout their academic journey. English as an international language is an important tool for a modern person and on that account, the issue of these troublesome words that are frequently mispronounced is essential and deserving of further consideration. The goal of this thesis is to answer questions such as which phonemes are the most difficult to pronounce, how much emphasis lays on correct pronunciation and what are some alternative sources of pronunciation that influence the Czech students of the English language.

The first part, the theoretical background, is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, the terms of phonetics and phonology are described as well as transcription and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The issue of standard pronunciation is looked upon as well, covering the term Received Pronunciation and its present-day status.

The second chapter covers the process of speech production focusing on the last two stages – formulation and articulation. This chapter also describes the human speech system alongside the articulatory system. The third chapter deals with the individual segments – vowels and consonants – and their further classification.

Finally, the last chapter list some problematic sounds of English pronunciation that Czech native speakers are most likely to cause mistakes in. This chapter explains their regular causes as well as their execution.

The practical research consists of two chapters. The first chapter, Methods, presents general information about the research and the respondents. Each respondent was inquired about their experience with English pronunciation at school during a short interview and subsequently asked to read out three short texts that were produced for that purpose. Then the second chapter analyses the recordings of each respondent. Basic information (such as their age, status and the length of their English studies) are provided for every respondent followed by the mistakes they made that are phonetically transcribed and commented on.

The last chapter, Conclusion, sums up the research and its outcome.

The main motivation for choosing this topic is my interest in this area of linguistic studies. This aspect of language repeatedly goes unheeded in the sake of grammar and

vocabulary, despite its importance. Hopefully, in the future, teachers will give this field more recognition in their lessons.

## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The present chapter provides the theoretical background crucial for this thesis. It explains essential terminology and provides the basic knowledge necessary for an understanding of the analysis.

Phonetics and phonology are some of the core areas of linguistic studies. They both deal with pronunciation and speech sounds. This chapter defines both of these terms and presents the International Phonetic Alphabet and its use for transcription. And lastly, the term of Received Pronunciation is explained.

### 2.1 PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY

Phonetics could be defined as the general study of the characteristics of speech sounds. (Yule, 2010, p. 26) According to Crystal, phonetics is a study of the way humans make, transmit, and receive speech sounds. (Crystal, 2003, p. 236) It is divided into three phases: articulatory phonetics, acoustic phonetics and auditory phonetics. Articulatory phonetics provides a description of the speech organs (articulators) in the vocal tract and the process of speech production. Acoustic phonetics deals with the physical characteristics of speech and transmission through the air. Auditory phonetics examines the perception of the speech by a listener and how it is processed in the brain.

Phonology studies the sound system of languages and the general properties displayed by these systems. (Crystal, 2003, p. 236) It describes the way phonemes function and behave in the sound system of a language. Phonology is essentially the description of the systems and patterns of speech sounds in a language that allows us to distinguish meaning in the actual physical sounds we say and hear. (Yule, 2010, p. 42)

#### 2.1.1 TRANSCRIPTION

Phonetic transcription is the usage of phonetic symbols to describe the sounds in written form. The Roman alphabet is unsuitable for this purpose since some letters have a variety of values and some languages use different alphabetic systems. In addition, some sounds simply have no representation among the letters of the Roman alphabet. In consideration of this fact, the International Phonetic Alphabet was created. That was a big step for international communication, because even though many languages have their own additional sounds that

are specific for their region (e.g. Czech ř transcribed as /r̥/ when voiced and /r̥̥/ when voiceless – in the final position) it provided a common understanding of the sound of the particular languages.

2.1.2 IPA

International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is a set of symbols used for phonetic and phonemic transcription. It serves as an accurate written representation of spoken language. While phonetic transcription gives a detailed pronunciation of the individual sounds, phonemic transcription only provides distinctive sounds of a language. IPA can only demonstrate one suprasegmental feature – stress. The IPA system has been developing since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and found its use not only in English but in countless other languages. It is primarily based on Roman letters.

This chart displays all the IPA symbols in English

ɪ READ	ɪ SIT	ʊ BOOK	u: TOO	ɪə HERE	eɪ DAY	John & Sarah Free Materials 1996	
e MEN	ə AMERICA	ɜ: WORD	ɔ: SORT	ʊə TOUR	ɔɪ BOY	əʊ GO	
æ CAT	ʌ BUT	ɑ: PART	ɒ NOT	eə WEAR	aɪ MY	aʊ HOW	
p PIG	b BED	t TIME	d DO	tʃ CHURCH	dʒ JUDGE	k KILO	g GO
f FIVE	v VERY	θ THINK	ð THE	s SIX	z ZOO	ʃ SHORT	ʒ CASUAL
m MILK	n NO	ŋ SING	h HELLO	l LIVE	r READ	w WINDOW	j YES

Figure 1 IPA sounds in English (<http://phoneticalphabet-sounds.blogspot.com/>)

### 2.1.3 RECEIVED PRONUNCIATION AND STANDARD ENGLISH

English is an international language that is spoken by more than a billion people of the world. Naturally, with this many speakers, the language had to undergo many deviations to not only its pronunciation and comprehensive sounds but also the grammar, word order, vocabulary and spelling. When the deviation is this throughout, we speak about a dialect. An accent deviates in pronunciation but still follows the fixed grammar and vocabulary. Accents can be regional, social or ethnic.

Standard English is broadly accepted as the correct written form of the English language. It is the standard variety of English used for formal education and communication. The Received Pronunciation could be considered its spoken counterpart.

Originated in London, RP used to be the accent of the upper class. But during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the speech pattern spread all over Britain and became respectable and established. Speaking with a regional accent was considered unsophisticated, which helped RP to expand. This public acceptance induced the term 'received'. By 1869 RP had expanded all over Britain, generally, uniform regardless of the locality. (Lindsey, 2019)

RP got this title in the 1920s, before that it was usually referred to as Public School Pronunciation (PSP), and became the most prestigious accent of Standard British English. (Skandera & Burleigh, 2005, p. 6)

Its expansion continued during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thanks to the development of mass media, RP dominated broadcasting, especially BBC radio. That led to the synonymy between RP and BBC English. Nowadays, RP (or its presents form) is usually referred to as Southern England Standard Pronunciation (SESP) or Standard Southern British (SSB), since the term Received Pronunciation is considered archaic and is still connected with the high class and therefore perceived as somewhat haughty. That, of course, is a direct contradiction with the 'received' in RP. Even though RP experienced a fall in its popularity, it is still spoken by the members of the Royal Family, the parliament, institutions and the court. Majority of people speak a modified variety since the trend today is for people to sound educated but also be a part of their own region, contrary to the beliefs of Victorian England. (Melen, 2010, p. 9)

As any spoken variety, RP also went through some changes. Even though today's SSB shares most of the distinctive features, there have been some modifications. One of the most

distinctive features of RP was a frequent occurrence of weak or reduced sounds (weak forms are very common for the English language). That undoubtedly makes the /ə/ sound essential for correct articulation – unfortunately for Czech native speakers, there is no such sound in the Czech language. SSB speakers, however, tend to shift the stress and therefore lower the occurrence of weak syllables (e.g. primarily changed from /'praɪməɾəli/ to /praɪ'merəli:/). (Lindsey, 2019, p. 14)

Another change that is gradually getting more and more frequent is the th-fronting. Basically, the phonemes /θ, ð/ are being replaced with /f, v/. Even though it is not considered the standard pronunciation, it would definitely be of big help to Czech students, since these two phonemes are considered some of the most troublesome to articulate and are so very often mistaken for /f, v/ already.

## 2.2 SPEECH PRODUCTION

This chapter describes the process of speech production. There are three phases to this process following the airstream throughout the systems that cause speech production. The following text describes this process as well as the articulators.

### 2.2.1 PHASES OF SPEECH PRODUCTION

This process is initiated in the respiratory system. The lungs provide the out-breath – pulmonic egressive airstream. (Giegerich, 1992) The airstream goes up through the windpipe and into the larynx.

The larynx is an organ built of cartilage with multiple functions. It is essential for the phonation process and breathing as well as for the protection of the trachea against accidental object aspiration. Larynx houses a pair of horizontal vocal folds in the passage of air, the space between the folds is called the glottis. These membranes can open and therefore allow the airflow to pass freely, the alternative is glottis functioning as an obstruction for the airflow. During this process, the vocal folds can be forced to vibrate. This part of the process can influence the qualities of the sound such as voicing, aspiration, pitch and volume. (Volín & Skarnitzl, 2018, p. 16)

The last phase of the process leads through the articulatory system also called the vocal tract. The vocal track consists of the pharynx, the oral cavity and the nasal cavity. To achieve the correct articulation and create the required sound, all the articulators need to be in an

appropriate position. That denotes that a speech sound is distinguished by the place and manner of articulation.

### 2.2.2 THE ARTICULATORS, PLACES OF ARTICULATION

There are several articulators, they are divided into two groups, active (moving) and passive (stationary) articulators. There is one articulator that can have both functions, velum (also known as soft palate). When producing nasal sounds velum lowers to open the access to the nasal cavity, on the other hand when producing velar sounds, it is stative and serves as an obstruction for the tongue. (Volín & Skarnitzl, 2018, p. 22)

The point where the obstruction is in the way of the airflow is labelled as the place of articulation. The places of articulation can also be branched to active and passive. The lower lip, all parts of the tongue (the tip, blade, front, back and root) and the vocal cords can be classified as active. They all change their position to produce a particular sound. On the contrary, the upper lip, upper teeth, alveolar ridge, the hard palate, pharynx and the epiglottis are considered passive. The particular sounds and their corresponding place of articulation are examined in the following chapter.

This picture presents the articulators

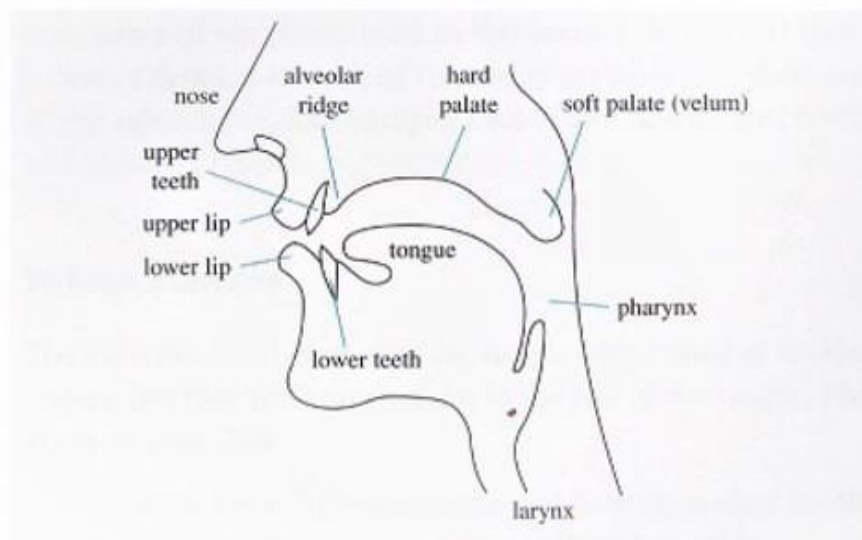


Figure 2 Articulators (Roach 2009, p. 8)

## 2.3 BASIC SEGMENTS OF SPEECH

This chapter deals with the basic segments of speech, consonants and vowels, and their respective further classification.

### 2.3.1 ENGLISH CONSONANTS

The English language recognizes 21 consonant letter and 24 consonant sounds. In some cases, one consonant letter is represented by two consonant sounds (e.g. *x* in *box* /bɒks/), which can work the other way around as well, when two consonant letters are pronounced as one consonant sound (e.g. *th* in *thing* /θɪŋ/). (Crystal, 2003, p. 242)

Consonants are defined as sounds that are produced by an obstruction of an airstream either in the pharynx or in the vocal tract. To describe English consonant phonemes properly they are divided into groups considering their intensity of articulation (voicing), the place of articulation, and the manner of articulation. (Skandera & Burleigh, 2005, p. 20) They usually occur in the initial and final position in a syllable (e.g. *glad*). They can appear in a consonant cluster that can count up to three consonants.

Both Czech and English languages have consonants that have no equivalent consonant in the other language. In Czech, there are no sounds /θ, ð, w/, reversely, English has no /ř, đ, ʧ, Ǳ/ sounds. Another example is in Czech very often occurring /c/ that English does not recognize as a phoneme on its own, only as a combination /ts/.

#### 2.3.1.1 PLACE OF ARTICULATION

The place of articulation is usually labelled according to the upper passive speech organ, the lower active organ lies directly against it. According to the place of articulation, consonants are branched into bilabial, labiodental, dental, alveolar, postalveolar, palatal, velar, glottal and retroflex. (Carr, 2013, pp. 40-46)

Bilabial sounds are pronounced with both lips. There are three bilabial sounds in English, /p, b, m/.

Labiodentals are produced by moving the lower lip against the upper teeth. The sounds /v, f/ belong to this category. Both bilabials and labiodentals form a group of labials since they both require the use of lips.



Dental sounds are made by a moving the tip of the tongue against the back of the upper teeth. In English are frequent two dental sounds /θ, ð/.

Alveolar phonemes require moving the tongue towards the alveolar ridge (bony ridge behind the upper teeth). English sounds that are produced there are /t, d, n, l, r, s, z/. There is a crucial difference between the English /r/ sounds (especially in RP) and the Czech /r/. RP is non-rhotic, meaning that the sound is only pronounced when followed by a vowel. Czech, contrarily, pronounces the sound even in the final position or when followed by a consonant. (Skaličková, 1982, p. 112)

Postalveolar and palate-alveolar sounds are made with the tip of the tongue near (or touching) the hind area of the alveolar ridge or the space just behind it. Among these sounds are counted phonemes /ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ/.

Palatals are sounds pronounced with a constriction between the body of the tongue and the hard palate. The only palatal sound in English is /j/.

Velar sounds are produced with an obstruction between the back of the tongue and the velum (soft palate). These are the sounds /k, g, ŋ/. The /ŋ/ is particularly problematic because the Czech language does not recognize it as an individual phoneme, but as a variation of the alveolar /n/ followed by a /k, g/. (Skaličková, 1982, p. 110)

Glottal sounds are pronounced in the larynx in the space between the vocal cords (glottis). The representatives of this category are /h, ɦ, ʔ/.

Retroflex sounds require the tongue to curl upwards and slightly backwards to make contact with the front of the hard palate. There are no such sounds in the Received Pronunciation, this sound, however, appears in American English as /ɻ/.

### *2.3.1.2 MANNER OF ARTICULATION*

To distinguish the consonant sounds properly, a third categorization is necessary – the manner of articulation. This descriptive parameter refers to the degree of constriction or closure of the speech organs. In English, there are 3 major distinctive manners of articulation, stops, fricatives and approximants. Those are further divided.

Stops require a complete closure in the oral tract between the two engaged articulators. Stops are divided into plosives and nasals. (Skandera & Burleigh, 2005, p. 22)

Plosive sounds are /p, t, k, b, d, g/. To pronounce these sounds the closed vocal tract holds the air pressure to release it explosively through the mouth. The velum is raised to close the nasal cavity.

Nasals are made similarly, but in contrast to the plosives, the velum is lowered and therefore the air escapes through the nose. In English, there are three main nasal sounds /m, n, ŋ/.

The articulation of fricative sounds is the result of two articulators in a close approximation. The space between them limited enough to create a friction noise by disrupting the airflow.

The first subgroup, fricatives, comply with all of the rules. Those are the sounds /f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ/.

„Affricates are sounds that consist of two elements. The first element is a plosive. This means that affricates, too, require a complete closure in the vocal tract, but the air is released slowly enough to produce friction, which we hear as a hissing s-like sound. “(Skandera & Burleigh, 2005, p. 22). These are the sounds /tʃ, dʒ/.

The third subgroup are glottal fricatives. Those are sounds are produced with friction at the glottis. In English, there are two such sounds /h, ɦ/.

Approximant sounds are produced with a wider gap between the articulators, these speech organs approach each other but do not touch each other. There are two perspectives to the division of the approximants. We can either distinguish glides and liquids or approximants central and lateral. (Skandera & Burleigh, 2005, pp. 23-24)

Glides /j, w/ are essentially produced as vowels without obstruction in the airflow. Liquids /l, r/ are sounds made with partial closure on the mouth created using the tongue. The result is a resonant vowel-like consonant.

Central approximants /j, w, r/ are pronounced with air escaping along the centre of the tongue. On the other hand, for the lateral approximant /l/ the air escapes the mouth along the sides of the tongue.

This chart displays all 24 consonant sounds arranged according to their place of articulation (first row), manner of articulation (left column) and their voicing (-V for voiceless, +V for voiced).

	Bilabial		Labiodental		Dental		Alveolar		Palatal		Velar		Glottal	
	-V	+V	-V	+V	-V	+V	-V	+V	-V	+V	-V	+V	-V	+V
Stops	p	b					t	d			k	g		
Fricatives			f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ				h
Affricates									tʃ	dʒ				
Nasals		m						n				ŋ		
Liquids							l	r						
Glides		w								j				

Figure 3 Consonant chart (Yule, 2010, p. 30)

### 2.3.2 ENGLISH VOWELS

The English language recognizes 5 different vowels in written form, in spoken form, however, there are 20 distinctive vowel sounds. „Phonetically, vowels are produced without any obstruction of air. Phonologically, vowels usually occupy the centre of a syllable. “ (Skandera & Burleigh, 2005, p. 31)

Vowels can have the form of a monophthong (they are also called pure vowels) with a single perceivable auditory quality. (Crystal, 2003, p. 237) They are produced in one position. In the English alphabet, there are 12 monophthongs and 8 diphthongs. Diphthongs are, according to Crystal, vowels where two qualities can be perceived. The last form a vowel can take is of a triphthong. Triphthongs have three qualities. Their notation, however, does not require any new symbols, because every triphthong can be transcribed using a combination of a diphthong and the /ə/ sound. This categorization is not completely fixed, during the history of English, some vowels changed their quality. „When a diphthong becomes a monophthong, the sound is said to be monophthongized; conversely, when a monophthong becomes a diphthong, the sound is diphthongized. “ (Crystal, 2003, p. 237).

Even though vowels are outnumbered by the consonants, they still carry some of the most important feature of an utterance; the tone of the voice, pitch and loudness. Their quality is not fixed either, the sound can alter markedly from region to another; different accents are usually recognized by their vowel system.

There are some general differences between the articulation of English and Czech vowel sounds. For example, when pronouncing Czech vowels, the tip of the tongue almost always

stays in contact with the lower teeth or the area below to help the tongue achieve the proper position. With English vowels, the tongue rarely touches that area, usually just hangs in the front of the oral cavity. (Skaličková, 1982, p. 79)

### 2.3.2.1 MANNER OF ARTICULATION

According to the manner of articulation, there are three criteria for the vowel phoneme description. Those are closeness/openness, frontness/backness and the shape of the lips. (Skandera & Burleigh, 2005, p. 32)

Closeness/openness refers to the space between the tongue and the palate as well as the position of the tongue towards the lower jaw. It could be considered the height of the tongue. When the tongue is high and therefore close to the palate, we speak about a close vowel (e.g. /u:/ in *food*).

Oppositely, when the tongue is positioned low, the gap naturally becomes wider and the vowel is called open (e.g. /ɑ:/ in *bath*)

Between these two extremes, there are several intermediate levels (near-close, close-mid, mid, open-mid, near-open) for the purposes of this thesis, however, only the fundamental categories (open, close-mid, mid, open-mid and close) are taken to consideration. A close-mid vowel is /e/ in *yes*, a mid vowel is for example /ə/ in *perhaps* and the sound /ɔ/ in *not* is an open-mid vowel.

„Frontness/backness refers to the part of the tongue that is raised highest.“ (Skandera & Burleigh, 2005, p. 32) When the front of the tongue is raised, the body of the tongue is nudged forward, the vowel is considered front. Front vowels are /i, ɪ, e, æ/. (Yule, 2010, p. 34)

Body of the tongue is pulled back when the back of the tongue is raised, then we speak of a back vowel. Back vowels are the /u, ʊ, ɔ, ɑ/ sounds.

Lastly, there is one intermediate position. Central vowels are produced with the centre of the tongue raised highest. Central vowels are the /ə/ sound in *above* and the /ʌ/ sound in *blood*.

Based on the lip rounding, there are three possible positions. The lips can be either spread, neutral or round. The lips are usually spread with front vowels and rounded with back vowels. The shape of the lips is often neglected as not significant since no two vowel sounds differ solely in the lip position. (Skandera & Burleigh, 2005, p. 32)

According to the three variations, there are three groups. Sounds / i:, ɪ, e, æ/ are produced with spread lips, /ɑ:, ʌ, ə, ɜ:/ are neutral and /ɒ, ɔ:, ʊ, u:/ are made with rounded lips. The /æ/ sound is especially tricky for Czech speakers since Czech only has the /e, e:/ sounds, therefore additional attention is necessary. (Skaličková, 1982, p. 85)

The monophthong according to their place of articulation

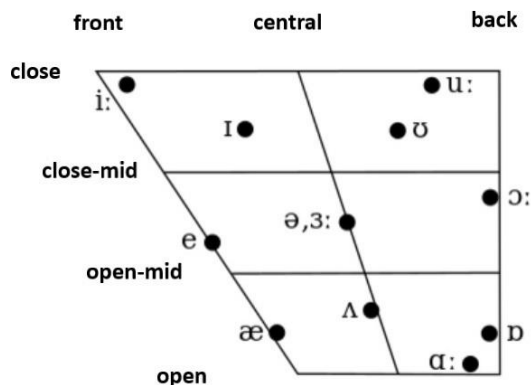


Figure 4 Monophthongs (Roach, 2009)

### 2.3.2.2 SHORT VOWELS

Among the twelve pure vowels, five of them are recognisably longer in duration than the other seven. As an example, the sound /i:/ in *seat* is distinguishable longer than the sound /ɪ/ in *sit*. Nevertheless, even short vowels can be pronounced relatively long depending on the context. (Roach, 2009, p. 13)

The contrast does not lie only in quantity (the duration), but also in the quality (different place of articulation). That is one of the reason, why the symbol differs beyond the vowel length mark.

These are the short vowels of the English language: /ɪ, e, æ, ʌ, ɒ, ʊ, ə/. The last sounds, /ə/, is the most frequent vowel in English. The schwa sound is, however, limited, it can only appear in unstressed syllables. (Crystal, 2003, p. 239) The term schwa comes from Hebrew and means 'emptiness'.

### 2.3.2.3 LONG VOWELS

As mentioned above, the English language has five long vowels. The long vowel phonemes are /i:, ɑ:, ɔ:, u:, ɜ:/.

vowels when in a similar context (such as the following sound or stress). The vowel symbol is followed by the length mark – two vertical dots to remind of the prolonged pronunciation. They are, however, not essential since the symbols alone are different from their short counterpart, because their manner of pronunciation is not the same. Only the sounds /ə/ and /ɜ:/ are produced with a closely similar quality, but only /ɜ:/ can be in a stressed syllable. (Roach, 2009, p. 16)

#### 2.3.2.4 DIPHTHONGS

In addition to the monophthongs (both short and long vowels), English has eight sounds that consist of two qualities. First is a monophthong, the quality then glides to the other vowel sounds, but does not properly reach it. Given this move, monophthongs are also called vowel glides or gliding vowels. Depending on the tongue movement and its direction, diphthongs are divided into two categories: closing and centring (these are further divided – see the following figure).

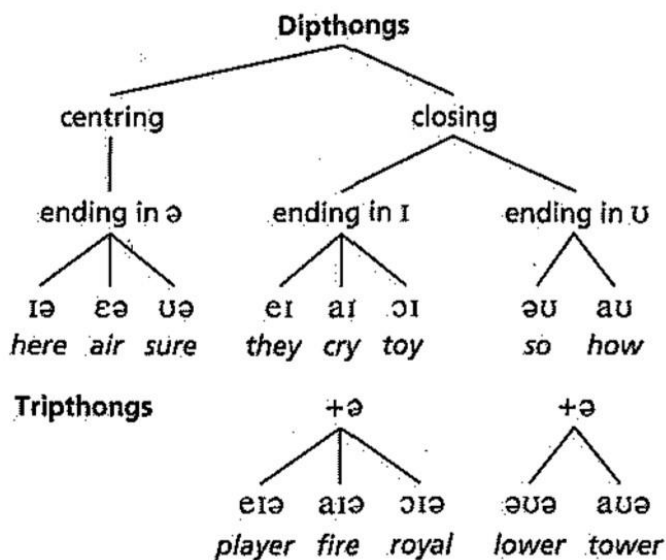


Figure 5 Diphthongs and triphthongs (Crystal, 2003, p. 239)

Closing diphthongs move towards a closer vowel. English has five closing diphthongs /eɪ, aɪ, ɔɪ, əʊ, aʊ/. The first monophthong symbol is usually different since the pronunciation is slightly different from a certain short vowel.

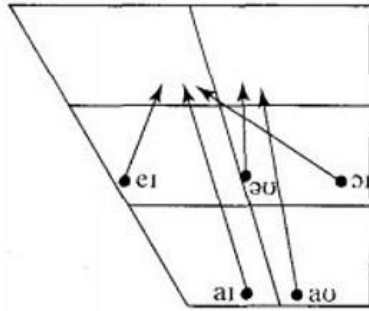


Figure 6 Closing diphthongs (Roach 2009, p.18)

All three of the centring diphthongs move towards the schwa sound /ə/. They are /eə, ɪə, ʊə/. Even though the pronunciation of the starting sound in /ɪə, ʊə/ is slightly higher than monophthongs /ɪ, ʊ/, we use the same symbols. The same applies to the schwa sounds, despite it never fully reaching.

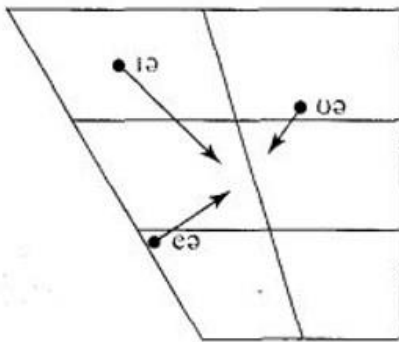


Figure 7 Centring diphthongs (Roach 2009, p.18)

### 2.3.2.5 TRIPHTHONGS

The last, and most complex, possible vowel sequence takes a form of a triphthong, where three different vowel sounds can be perceived. Unlike diphthongs, triphthongs are not considered separate phonemes, they are treated as a closing diphthong followed by a schwa sound. (Skandera & Burleigh, 2005, p. 40) The five triphthongs are /eɪə, aɪə, ɪəə, əʊə, aʊə/.

## 2.4 FREQUENT PRONUNCIATION PROBLEMS

This final chapter of the practical part deals with the problems in pronunciation that native Czech speakers have to face. They are divided due to their type.

### 2.4.1 CONSONANT SOUNDS

One of the regularly occurring inaccuracies is the pronunciation of the consonant in the final position. Czech students of the English language often tend to pronounce the final consonant in two incorrect ways. The first case is when the final consonant is pronounced the way it would sound in Czech when standing alone, fully voiced. That can change the meaning of the word – when the word *buzz* /bʌz/ with the final *z* voiced would sound like /bʌzə/ which is a different word, *buzzer*. Opposite case scenario – the final *z* is substituted with the unvoiced counterpart, *s*. Then the word *buzz* would be realised as /bʌs/ which drastically changes the meaning to *bus*. (Melen, 2010, p. 72)

Another problem with consonant comes with assimilation. For example the word *backbone* /bækbeɪn/ changes to /bægbeɪn/. Assimilation with *w* also proved itself to be difficult – instead of the correct pronunciation /ðɪs wʌn/ the student says /ðɪz wʌn/ or in some cases even /dɪz wʌn/. That brings us to another problem; Czech students often interchange the sound /w/ and /v/ since, in Czech language, it cannot change the meaning of a word. Unfortunately, that is not the case in English. *Veil* /veɪl/ and *whale* /weɪl/ only differ in one phoneme, yet the words are far from similar when it comes to their implication. (Skaličková, 1982, p. 187)

The problematic sound /ŋ/ was already mentioned before, this time with more detail. The /ŋ/ is new to native Czech speakers and therefore understandably causes trouble. Usually, it is realised as a combination /ŋk/, which can once again change the meaning – *sing* /sɪŋ/ to *sink* /sɪŋk/. Per contra, some students reduce the pronunciation to a regular /n/ sounds. That would change the word *sing* /sɪŋ/ to *sin* /sɪn/, once again changing content.

Another above-mentioned sound is /r/. It is particularly troublesome, because not only is the usual Czech /r/ sound of a different quality from the English letter *r*, RP often omits the letter altogether. For example, the word *far* /fɑː/ does not contain either /r/ or /ɹ/. In American English, the variant /fɑːɹ/ would be possible, using the Czech trilled /r/ would be completely unacceptable.



There is a crucial difference between the English /r/ sounds (especially in RP) and the Czech /r/. RP is non-rhotic, meaning that the sound is only pronounced when followed by a vowel. Czech, contrarily, pronounces the sound even in the final position or when followed by a consonant. (Skaličková, 1982, p. 112)

Phonemes /ð, θ/ do not exist in the Czech language which makes their pronunciation difficult. /ð/ is generally mispronounced as /d/ (e.g. then /ðen/ mistaken for /den/). Even more puzzling is /θ/ that takes the form of a variety of /f, t, s/ sounds. Some combinations change the meaning (three /θri:/, tree /tri:/ and free /fri:/, additionally, incorrect /sri:/). Also, the word birthday /bɜ:θdeɪ/ has a few wrong variations among the Czech students, such as /bɜ:sdeɪ/, /bɜ:zdeɪ/ or /bɜ:fdɛɪ/.

#### **2.4.2 VOWEL SOUNDS**

One of the first problems is the issue of timbre. In the Czech language, the sound timbre is never a determinative difference between two phonemes. Contrarily, English recognises timbre as a significant feature. Some of the vowel pairs that vary in timbre are /e, æ/, /ɒ, ɔ/, /ʌ, ɑ/. That leads to a multitude of errors (e.g. set /set/ and /sæd/).

Another trouble comes with vowel length. The Czech language uses only two levels and it is clearly indicated by the length mark. English has three levels and they are not marked in spelling. For example, word beat and bead are both spelt almost identically, yet the realisation of the vowel is not the same length. The three levels in examples: bit, beat, bead. (Skaličková, 1982, p. 185) Unfortunately, both beat and bead share the same vowel phoneme /i:/, which makes this issue particularly precarious.

The next error is very frequent, it is the correct reduction of pronunciation. This phenomenon is very usual because vowels in the unstressed syllable are reduced from their original quality to the schwa sound /ə/. Additionally, because this sound is so foreign for Czech speakers, the customary solution is to replace the /ə/ with a much more familiar /e/ sound. (Skaličková, 1982, p. 186) This matter is connected to another problem; in the Czech language, the stress is always on the first syllable, which is very far from English stress. That only adds to the already existing dissimilarity.

### 3 ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the research among respondents – Czech students who have been studying the English language for multiple years – and then analyses the results of this research. Ten Czech university students and one English teacher took part in this research. Their ages vary from 21 to 28 years of age. For the purpose of this thesis, their English levels are rather similar with the range from level B2 to C1 – all of them are already familiar with English pronunciation since they all have been studying this language for at least 10 years. Their mistakes, therefore, do not come from nescience, they simply indicate the most problematic sounds. All of the participants are university students but they come from different fields of academic studies.

The main research questions were:

1. Which phonemes are the most difficult to pronounce?
2. How much attention did the respondents' English teachers pay to the correct pronunciation?
3. Which alternate sources influenced the respondents' pronunciation?

#### 3.1 METHODS

Initially, the respondents were inquired about their personal experience with English pronunciation during their English studies. Among the questions were queries such as their primary utilization of the English language, the length of their studies and their major sources of pronunciation.

Subsequently, the respondents were asked to read three short texts. Text A consists of words that are generally often mispronounced and words that are also occurring and used in the Czech language. That makes their pronunciation a little bit trickier since native Czech speakers are used to their Czech pronunciation. Text B includes triads of words that are similar to each other in spelling, but differ in their pronunciation. Last, text C is an excerpt from the book *Alice in Wonderland* written by Lewis Carroll. In that text, unrealised weak forms caused by the connected speech were not taken into consideration sicne that is not the subject matter of this thesis.

Their pronunciation of the texts was recorded. During the analysis, any deviations from the standard pronunciation were thereupon phonetically transcribed and commented on. Both the original texts and their phonetic transcription can be found in the appendix.

## 3.2 ANALYSIS

The analysis showcases a detailed description of the individual respondents according to the information they provided. When each contributor is introduced, their pronunciation mistakes are transcribed and commented on.

### 3.2.1 RESPONDENT A

The first respondent is a 23-year-old woman. She is a university student of Czech linguistic studies. Her primary utilizations of the English language are reading foreign fiction, social media, communication with friends from other countries and entertainment (TV series, YouTube videos and videogames). She has studied the English language for 14 years: two years in a preschool study group, six years in primary school, all four years of grammar school and, finally, two years of English at university. In her opinion, during primary school, not much attention was paid to pronunciation whatsoever. Both her grammar school and university teachers, however, taught this subject thoroughly. Still, her grammar school teacher did not further dwell on phonetic transcription or the phonetic alphabet altogether. The textbooks did contain the correct pronunciation, but this transcription was not pointed out.

Mistakes in pronunciation:

#### Text A

- Author /'ɔ:θr/  
Articulated with a slightly trilled /r/ sound in the final position.
- Caffeine /kə'fi:n/  
Stress incorrectly put on the second syllable which led to the reduction of the /æ/ sound to a weak form /ə/.
- Comfortable /'kʌmftebl/  
/ə/ realised as a strong form /e/ in an unstressed syllable.
- Hotel /hotəl/  
The stress was not audibly marked, however, the reduction of the /e/ sound places it incorrectly on the first syllable.

- India /'ɪndɪʌ/  
The weak form was not articulated correctly, instead, it was realised as strong /ʌ/  
linked to the /i/ via the linking phoneme /j/.
- Tomato /tə'mɑ:tə/  
Stress was placed correctly, however, the weak forms were not realised properly.

#### Text B

- Sing /sɪŋg/  
The /ŋ/ sound was not realised as a single phoneme, but rather as /ng/.
- Through /fru:z/  
The /θ/ sound was mispronounced as another voiceless fricative sound, /f/.
- Threw /tru:z/  
Different mispronunciation of the phoneme /θ/ but this time as a labiodental  
voiceless /t/.

#### Text C

- Caterpillar /'ketəpɪlə/  
The timber difference between /e/ and /æ/ was not retained.
- Then /den/  
The phoneme /ð/ was simplified to a more familiar sound, /d/.

The pronunciation was overall very good, most of the mistakes were caused by weak forms, which is very common, or mispronunciation of phonemes non-existent in the Czech language.

#### 3.2.2 RESPONDENT B

The second respondent is a 22-year-old student of Theatre and film studies. His main motivation for learning English is reading of technical texts, communication and entertainment (videogames, podcasts, YouTube...). He has studied this language for 12 years – at primary school, at grammar school and also as an extracurricular activity. The real focus on pronunciation appeared during grammar school.

Mistakes in pronunciation:

#### Text A

- Caffeine /kə'fi:n/  
The stressed syllable was mistaken and the /æ/ sound was realised as weak /ə/.

- Comfortable /'kɒmfɔːteɪbl/  
Every vowel was pronounced with its full quality and the /r/ was articulated with slightly trilled quality.
- Tomato /tə'meɪtəʊ/  
Incorrect pronunciation for tomato (the /ɑː/ is often mistaken for /eɪ/, which would be an appropriate articulation of potato, tomato is, however, of a different origin).

#### Text B

- Buzzer /'bʌzr/  
Articulated with a resonant /r/ following right after the phoneme /z/.
- Thought /ðɔːt/  
Probably mistaken for though, the respondent suffers from mild dyslexia which makes the reading of words with such similar structure (e.g. the consonant clusters) remarkably more difficult.

#### Text C

- Addressed /'ɒdrest/  
Incorrectly placed stress provided the initial vowel with the strong form instead of the weak /ə/.
- Languid /'leŋgwɪd/  
The /æ/ sound was not realised with the correct change of timbre that differentiates it from the vowel sound /e/.

Pronunciation of this respondent was good even though in some cases it was rather unclear and required repetition. The respondent repeatedly did not reduce the vowel quality and occasionally placed the stress incorrectly.

#### 3.2.3 RESPONDENT C

The third respondent is a 22-year-old woman. She is an English major at university. She needs the English language for both reading and writing academic texts, international communication and entertainment (YouTube, Netflix, music). She has been studying English for 16 years. Her primary school English teacher did not have the best pronunciation herself, and also did not particularly inculcate correct pronunciation to her pupils. The situation was a little bit better, but the proper familiarization took place at university.

Mistakes in pronunciation:

#### Text A

- Birthday /'bɜ:rsdeɪ/  
/θ/ was articulated incorrectly as voiceless alveolar fricative sound /s/.
- Caffeine /kə'feɪn/  
Stress was placed on the second syllable and the diphthong /eɪ/ replaced the long vowel sound /i:/.  
• Tomato /tə'meɪtəʊ/

#### Text B

- Through /fru:/  
The /θ/ sounds were mispronounced as another voiceless fricative sound, /f/.

#### Text C

- Caterpillar /'ketəpɪlər/  
The /e/ sound replaced the correct /æ/ and there was an audible /r/ sound.
- Encouraging /'ɪnkəɪdʒɪŋg/  
The stress is incorrectly placed on the first syllable which led to the erroneously weak form, /g/ was articulated after the phoneme /ŋ/.  
• Present /prə,zent/  
Interchanged stressed and unstressed syllables naturally led to the switch of the strong and weak forms as well.

Respondent's pronunciation was very good, problems were with the /θ/ sound, which she brought to attention as problematic before recording the text. In a few cases, the stress was placed incorrectly which caused further mistakes.

#### 3.2.4 RESPONDENT D

The fourth respondent is a 22-year-old woman. She is a Music major at university. Her primary use of English is communication abroad and entertainment (films, series and video games). She has studied English for 12 years altogether, 6 years at primary school, 4 years at high school and 2 years at university. According to her, at high school, teachers paid some attention to proper pronunciation, but the main focus laid on grammar and vocabulary. She learnt most of her pronunciation via films and music.

Mistakes in pronunciation:

#### Text A

- Author /'aʊθə/

The long vowel /ɔ:/ was realised as the diphthong /aʊ/ – the respondent was probably following the spelling.

- Birthday /'bɜ:sdeɪ/
- Caffeine /kə'feɪn/
- Comfortable /'kɒmfɔ:tebl/
- Tomato /tə'meɪtəʊ/

Incorrect pronunciation of /ɑ:/ and additionally, the /b/ was not articulated as the weak form.

#### Text B

- Buzzer /'bʌzr/

#### Text C

- Mouth /maʊt/

Different mispronunciation of the phoneme /θ/ but this time as a labiodental voiceless /t/.

- Encouraging /ɪnkə'redʒɪŋ/

An incorrect syllable is stressed and the initial vowel is not reduced in pronunciation.

The main problem laid in stressing the right syllable and therefore realising the right weak syllables. In the Czech language, the stress is placed on the first syllable which makes it difficult to read English words that simply do not follow this rule.

#### 3.2.5 RESPONDENT E

The fifth respondent is a 21-year-old man. He is a university student of Applied sciences. He uses English for online arguments with foreigners. He has studied the English language for 13 years: 9 years at primary school, 4 years at high school and 1 year at university. His high school teachers had really good pronunciation, he was also influenced by sitcoms and films.

Mistakes in pronunciation:

#### Text A

- Author /'ɔ:tə/  
Common mispronunciation of the /θ/ sound as /t/.
- Caffeine /kə'feɪn/  
The first syllable is stressed incorrectly, not only reducing but omitting the /e/ sound altogether.
- Tomato: /təmə'təʊ/  
The stress placed on the last syllable shortened the long vowel sound to /ʌ/.

#### Text B

- Bid /bɪdə/  
The last consonant is fully voiced as if standing alone, probably the result of respondent's effort to emphasise the difference between the words.
- Buzzer /'bʌzə/  
Insufficient length of the vowel /ɔ:/ realised as the short /ʌ/.
- Thought /θɒt/  
Insufficient length of the vowel /ɔ:/ realised as the short /ʌ/.

#### Text C

- Caterpillar /'ketəpɪlə/  
The weak form was not articulated properly.
- Alice /,eɪs/  
The weak form was not articulated properly.
- Replied /re'plaɪd/  
The weak form was not articulated properly.

The weak form was not articulated properly.

There were some problems with the stress placement (and so the reduced quality), but overall the respondent spoke well.

#### 3.2.6 RESPONDENT F

The sixth respondent is a 23-year-old woman, an English major at university. For her, English is important for communicating with her friends, for schoolwork and entertainment (films, TV shows). She has been studying English for 14 years. During primary school and grammar school, no exceptional attention was given to proper pronunciation, most of their schoolwork was in written form. She learnt her pronunciation from films and songs.



Mistakes in pronunciation:

**Text A**

- Archive /ʌ'ki:v/ - incorrect stress, the diphthong /aɪ/ replaced by long vowel /i:/
- Caffeine /kə'feɪn/
- India /ɪn'diʌ/

The stress was on the second syllable incorrectly, no weak forms were articulated, however.

- Tomato /tə'meɪtəʊ/

**Text B**

- Buzzer /'bʌzər/

**Text C**

- Morning /'mɔ:nɪŋg/

Most of the respondent's mistakes were caused by misplacement of the stress.

**3.2.7 RESPONDENT G**

The seventh respondent is a 25-year-old university student. He uses the language primarily for academic purposes, communication and entertainment (music, videogames and TV series). He has been studying the English language for 22 years (preschool English, primary school, high school, language school and university). Up until high school, the emphasis was not on pronunciation. The respondent had to turn to other sources such as films, songs and YouTube videos.

Mistakes in pronunciation:

**Text A**

- Caffeine /kə'fi:n/
- Comfortable /kʌmf'tebl/  
/ə/ realised as a strong form /e/ in an originally unstressed syllable that was articulated as stressed.
- Hotel /hə'tel/  
The stress was placed correctly, but the diphthong /əʊ/ was replaced by /o/.
- India /'ɪndiə/

The weak /ə/ was replaced by the /e/ sounds, which would appear in the Czech pronunciation and was linked by a prominent /j/ sound.

- Tomato /tə'meɪtəʊ/

#### **Text B**

- Thought /θɒt/

#### **Text C**

- Alice /,eɪs/
- Languid /'le:ŋgwɪd/

The /æ/ sound mistaken for a long vowel and the phoneme /g/ was articulated after the /ŋ/ sound.

- Present /prɪ'zent/

The stress placed on the second syllable led to mispronunciation of the weak /ə/.

The pronunciation was overall good, some of the vowel and consonant sounds that do not appear in the Czech language caused problems along with the stress placement.

#### **3.2.8 RESPONDENT H**

The eighth respondent is a 23-year-old student of Information technologies. He uses the English language predominantly passively for reading and listening. He has studied English for 10 years (primary school, high school and language school). First, particular focus on pronunciation was during high school, the best results, however, did not occur until the language school.

Mistakes in pronunciation:

#### **Text A**

- Author /'aʊθə/

The long vowel /ɔ:/ was articulated as a diphthong /aʊ/.

- Caffeine /kə'fi:n/
- Comfortable /'kɒmfteɪbl/

Correct elision in the centre of the word, the vowel sound was not clear, closer to the /ɒ/ sound.

- Hotel /'həʊtl/

- Mountain /'maʊntɪn/  
The /n/ sound was not articulated.
- India /'ɪndiə/
- Tomato /tə'meɪtəʊ/

#### Text B

- Buzzer /'bʌzr/
- Threw /tru:/
- Three /tri:/

The phoneme /θ/ was mistaken for the labiodental voiceless /t/.

#### Text C

- Caterpillar /'kætəpɪlə/  
The /æ/ sound was realised as /ʌ/ that differs in the timbre.
- Alice /,lɪs/
- Encouraging /'enkəɪdʒɪŋg/

Stress moved to the first syllable, the /g/ sound was articulated following the /ŋ/ sound.

Before the recording, the respondent mentioned that he has not been using English in spoken form in a long time and therefore the quality of his pronunciation has declined with time.

#### 3.2.9 RESPONDENT I

The ninth respondent is a 22-year-old university student of Journalism. She makes use of the English language by reading both technical text and fiction and poetry. She has been studying it for 15 years (primary school, grammar school and the freshman years at university). According to her, her high school English teacher paid more attention to grammar and vocabulary. They did not use the phonetic alphabet, even though the transcription was included in their textbook's vocabulary. She used music as an alternative source of pronunciation.

Mistakes in pronunciation:

**Text A**

- Archive /'λkɑɪn/

The word was realised with an insufficient length of the vowel sound /ɑ:/.

- Caffeine /'kλfeɪn/

**Text B**

- Sing /sɪŋg/
- Threw /fru:/

**Text C**

- Caterpillar /'kætəpɪlə/
- Addressed /'λdrest/
- Encouraging /'enkəʀɪdʒɪŋ/
- Was /wλz/

The vowel was not pronounced correctly as the open back rounded /ɒ/, this mistake was made because the *a* in was would be in Czech pronounced /λ/.

- Morning /'mɔ:nɪŋg/
- Then /den/

The respondent struggled with the various realisations of the letter *a* that can represent up to seven different sounds in the English language.

**3.2.10 RESPONDENT J**

The tenth respondent is a 28-year-old English teacher. He uses the English language for educational purposes at work, communication and entertainment (films, TV series, videogames and music). He has studied English for 16 years. His teachers have neglected this aspect of language studies and he did not know the phonetic alphabet until university. He picked up his pronunciation from films and songs.

Mistakes in pronunciation:

**Text A**

- Caffeine /kə'fi:n/
- Comfortable /'kλmfətəbl/

The elision of the cluster was not carried out correctly.

- Hotel /'həʊtl/

- India /'ɪndɪə/
- Pronunciation /prɪˌnɑːnsi'eɪʃn/  
The weak syllable was realised with pronounced with /ʌ/.
- Tomato /tə'meɪtəʊ/

#### **Text B**

- Full /fu:l/  
The vowel sound was unnecessarily prolonged creating the long vowel sound /u:./

#### **Text C**

- Alice /,eɪs/
- Addressed /'edrəst/  
Incorrectly, the stress was placed on the first syllable and created a weak form in the second one.

This respondent's pronunciation was very good, only minor issues occurred in his recording.

#### **3.2.11 RESPONDENT K**

The eleventh and last respondent is a 21-year-old university student of Czech studies. She uses English chiefly for communication, internet searching, self-education and reading. She has studied the language for 10 years. Her primary school English teacher heeded the pronunciation, her high school teacher, however, did not. At university, very little attention was paid to pronunciation and the evaluation was based on written assignments and tests. Her pronunciation was influenced by music, British TV series and podcasts.

Mistakes in pronunciation:

#### **Text A**

- Caffeine /'kæfeɪn/
- Fitness /'fɪtnes/
- Hotel /'həʊtl/

#### **Text B**

- Full /fu:l/
- Threw /fru:/

### Text C

- Mouth /maʊf/
- Encouraging /'enkʌrɪdʒɪŋg/
- Rather /'redər/

The vowel sound changed from open back unrounded /ɑ:/ to open-mid front /e/ sound.

- Then /den/

Very good pronunciation, occasionally, the stress was misplaced. Problematic were the phonemes /ð, θ/

## 4 CONCLUSION

This thesis focused on the difficult aspect of the pronunciation of a foreign language. It is divided into two parts. The first one, theoretical background, provided all the fundamental principles to ensure the understanding of the practical analysis. The analysis used data collected from respondents that took part in the research. They answer a few questions about their experience of studying the English language and recorded their pronunciation of three short texts that were created for this purpose. Their answers as well as the words they mispronounced were taken down and commented on.

The respondents were mostly students and their English level was relatively similar. They have all have studied English for at least 10 years, the longest period was 22 years. During the short interview very frequent was the opinion that their English teachers did not target the pronunciation with the utmost importance. It was usually grammar that was emphasised above all. That is, of course, understandable to some extent, however, the negligence of articulation often leads to uncertainty that causes the students to feel insecure about their spoken English. Many of them can write and understand the language very well but are either afraid, embarrassed or shy to speak. That is a shame, because it creates remarkable limitations to their use of English and, in the end, to their joy of this language.

The most frequently occurring mistakes were not surprising, they were the phonemes that are not present in the Czech language. Borrowed words of English origin are also often mispronounced, because of the ostensible familiarity. And one of the biggest problems for Czech students, the stress placement is much more complicated than in the Czech language.

Phonemes that do not naturally appear in the Czech language include both consonants (/ð, θ, ŋ/) and vowels (/ə, ɜ:, æ/). Another problematic issue is stress. In the Czech language, the rule is simple – the first syllable is stressed. English, however, is very different. The rules of English stress are rather complicated and every rule has it won exceptions. That leads to another problem – weak forms. Not only are they pronounced as the non-Czech sound /ə/, but Czech student also are not used to their presence altogether. They are more likely to pronounce every vowel with its full quality. Borrowed words of English origin are particularly tricky. They are familiar to the students which, in many cases, leads to a rather Czech pronunciation (especially the stress placement). The /r/ sound is also quite problematic, in the

Czech language it has a trilled quality, which is not present in English. The standard pronunciation taught in Czech schools usually omits the /r/ completely.

Regarding the last major question of this thesis, what are some alternative sources of pronunciation for English learners, the usual answers were united. Films, TV series and music, those are the most common statements. Both films and TV series seem to be reasonable and reliable. Music, however, can be a problematic source because the pronunciation is sometimes adjusted to fit the lyrics or rhythm.

Overall, this thesis presented the issue of English pronunciation in practice via research among Czech native speakers that have been studying English language and therefore are acquainted with its sound. Any mistakes that were caused by connected speech were not taken into consideration.



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## APPENDIX I

### Text A

1. Archive
2. Author
3. Birthday
4. Caffeine
5. Comfortable
6. Earth
7. Fitness
8. Hotel
9. India
10. Mountain
11. Pronunciation
12. Tomato

### Text B

1. Bit – Bid – Beat
2. Bus – Buzz – Buzzer
3. Full – Fool – Foul
4. Sin – Sing – Sink
5. Though – Thought – Through – Threw
6. Tree – Three – Free
7. Quit – Quiet – Quite

### Text C

The Caterpillar and Alice looked at each other for some time in silence: at last, the Caterpillar took the hookah out of its mouth and addressed her in a languid, sleepy voice.

‘Who are you?’ said the Caterpillar.

This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, ‘I hardly know, sir, just at present – at least I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.’

## APPENDIX II

### Text A

/ 'ɑ:kaɪn/

/ 'ɔ:θə/

/ 'bɜ:θdeɪ/

/ 'kæfi:n/

/ 'kʌmfətəbl/

/ ɜ:θ/

/ 'fɪtnəs/

/ həs 'tel/

/ 'ɪndiə/

/ 'mɑʊntɪn/

/ prə ,nʌnsi 'eɪʃn/

/ tə 'mɑ:təʊ/

### Text B

/ bɪt/ - / bɪd/ - / bi:t/

/ bʌs/ - / bʌz/ - / 'bʌzə/

/ fʊl/ - / fu:l/ - / faʊl/

/ sɪn/ - / sɪŋ/ - / sɪŋk/

/ ðəʊ/ - / θɔ:t/ - / θru:/ - / θru:/

/ tri:/ - / θri:/ - / fri:/

/ kwɪt/ - / 'kwɪɪt/ - / kwɪt/

### Text C

/ ðə 'kæʔəpɪlə ənd ,æɪs 'lʊkt ət i:tʃ 'lðə fə səm 'taɪm ɪn 'saɪləns ət lɑ:st ðə 'kæʔəpɪlə 'tʊk ðə

'hʊkə aʊt əv ɪts mɑʊθ ənd ə 'drest hɜ: ɪn ə 'læŋgwɪd 'sli:pi vɔɪs

'hu: ə ju?' 'sed ðə 'kæʔəpɪlə

ðɪs wəz nɒt ən ɪn 'kʌrɪdʒɪŋ 'əʊpənɪŋ fər ə ,kɒnvə'seɪʃn

,æɪs rɪ'plaɪd 'rɑ:ðə 'ʃaɪli 'i 'hɑ:dli 'nəʊ sɜ: dzəst ət ,preznt – ət li:st 'aɪ 'nəʊ 'hu: 'aɪ wəz wen

'aɪ 'gɒt 'lɒ ðɪs 'mɔ:niŋ bət 'aɪ 'θɪŋk 'aɪ məst həv bi:n tʃeɪndʒd 'sevrəl 'taɪmz sɪns ðen/

## SUMMARY IN CZECH

Cílem této bakalářské práce je poukázat na nejčastější chyby ve výslovnosti českých studentů Anglického jazyka a vysvětlit jejich vznik. Hlavní otázky, které si práce klade, jsou například: jaké fonémy, jsou nejnáročnější na výslovnost, zda učitelé na správnou výslovnost dostatečně dbají a jaké jsou případně další možné alternativní zdroje výslovnosti.

Práce je rozdělena na dvě části a to část teoretickou a praktickou. Teoretická část nejdříve definuje základní pojmy z oblasti fonetiky a fonologie, seznamuje se systémem fonetické transkripce a v neposlední řadě se zabývá standartní anglickou výslovností, která se vyučuje v českých školách. Dále se zde popisuje proces fonace neboli tvorby hlasu. Následně je zde rozdělení anglických fonémů na konsonanty a vokály a jejich další řazení a nakonec se v praktické části popisují nejčastější chyby, kterých se čeští studenti dopouštějí.

Praktická část je vytvořena na základě průzkumu mezi českými studenty. Několik respondentů odpovědělo na otázky ohledně jejich zkušenosti se studiem anglického jazyka. Tyto otázky se týkaly např. délky jejich studia a jejich spokojenosti se zaměřením na výslovnost během jejich studia. Následně každý respondent přečetl tři krátké texty, ze kterých byly zaznamenána a foneticky přepsána slova, která byla vyslovena nesprávně.

Výsledky rozboru těchto nahrávek byly následující: nejčastěji jsou chybně vyslovovány fonémy, které se přirozeně v českém jazyce neobjevují a to například konsonanty /ð, θ, ŋ/ a vokály /ə, ɜ:, æ/. Slova přejatá z anglického jazyka také často představují problém, český student totiž často přejme počeštělou výslovnost. A v neposlední řadě je nutné zmínit záležitost slovního přízvuku. Ten se totiž v českém jazyce umísťuje na první slabiku, v jazyce anglickém je to bohužel situace zcela odlišná.

Většina respondentů se shodla v tom, že jejich vyučující nevěnovali správné výslovnosti zvláštní pozornost, hlavní důraz vždy ležel na gramatice a slovní zásobě. Mnozí z nich proto vyhledávali alternativní zdroje výslovnosti, mezi nejoblíbenější patří filmy, seriály, hudba a videohry.