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**Thesis**

**PRONUNCIATION MODEL(S) FOR CZECH  
LEARNERS OF ENGLISH  
(NATIVE VERSUS NON-NATIVE)**

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**Plzeň 2012**

Prohlašuji, že jsem práci vypracoval/a samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

*V Plzni dne 27. dubna 2012*

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Veronika Pavlíková

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## ABSTRACT

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The aim of this thesis is to describe the chosen accents of English that are considered as preferred by Czech learners of English, and to investigate whether it is true that these characterized accents are frequently chosen by learners as their pronunciation models.

The theoretical part describes individual accents - Received Pronunciation, General American accent, Scottish English and International English. These are all regarded by the author as the most frequently learned and used accents or models of English by Czech learners of English. These are described not only from the phonetic and phonological point of view, but also from the historical one. By the three main and generally accepted accents, examples and contrastive examples are presented.

The practical part of this thesis explores the real current situation and positions of pronunciation as well as of individual accents. This investigation was done among university students of English in two institutions – University of West Bohemia in Pilsen and Charles University in Prague. The results are described and evaluated in the end of this thesis.

Results of this investigation and also theory covered in the theoretical part of this thesis can serve future teachers of English who want to provide their students with some information about the topic of different pronunciation models. This can be very appropriate and should be desired and required by their supervisors, because pronunciation and its models are very important aspects of the English language.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The topic of pronunciation models can be very interesting for all learners of English who desire to gain better knowledge of the English language and to improve their spoken discourse and also who are interested in different variations of English. This aspect of language, above all of the English language, is very wide and offers many questions and stimuli to think of this issue.

The goal of this thesis is not to describe all existing pronunciation models of English. This would exceed the recommended length of the thesis very much. The author therefore decided to focus only on the pronunciation models that she perceives as preferred and applied by Czech learners of English – Received Pronunciation, General American accent and Scottish English. This determined also the aim of the research – to confirm or falsify this hypothesis and also to establish and describe status of pronunciation teaching and pronunciation models generally among the university students of English.

The thesis is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter offers the theoretical background. It describes the general theory of pronunciation models, specifies selected pronunciation models and presents examples of words by which the pronunciation differs in dependence on the accent. This chapter focuses on four pronunciation models – Received Pronunciation, General American accent, Scottish English, and quite new phenomenon, International English. The individual subchapters define not only specific characters of each pronunciation model, but also present history of these accents and reasons for their popularity or application.

The second chapter focuses on research and its results. It describes method of research, selected group of people for research and finally presents and comments on the findings. At the end of this chapter, suggestions on application of the found data are stated.

Very crucial for this thesis are books and other texts, which were already published to this topic. It is also worth mentioning that many of these books are not simply available for Czech readers. The author of this thesis had to order one book from the United States and then gain other books from the libraries in Prague.



## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

First of all, the term pronunciation model and similarly used expressions should be defined to provide the reader with a clear idea of the topic of this thesis. According to Brown (1991), the pronunciation model “may be described as the accent presented for imitation by the learner” (p.39). Similarly, the Dictionary.com server defines only the term *model* as “a standard or example for imitation or comparison” (<http://dictionary.reference.com>, retrieved on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2012). Analogously, the word *accent* is defined by the Macmillan Dictionary as “a way of saying words that shows what country, region or social class someone comes from” (<http://www.macmillandictionary.com>, retrieved on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2012). This absolutely serves the purposes of this thesis. This text will cover selected accents of English, which are preferred by Czech learners of English as their pronunciation models. These two terms, pronunciation model and accent, will be used in this thesis as synonyms.

When talking about pronunciation model, it should be kept in mind that having pronunciation model does not mean that non-native speakers should pronounce identically as the native speakers. As Daniel Jones (1969) presents in his book *Pronunciation of English*, there are no two persons with absolutely similar pronunciation (p.3). He justifies it with statement that “The differences arise from a variety of causes, such as locality, early influences and social surroundings; there are also individual peculiarities for which it is difficult or impossible to account” (Jones, 1969, p.3). This should be perceived similarly also by Czech teachers and learners of English, who sometimes aspire to have the same pronunciation as native speakers, e.g. in the Great Britain. Jones also defines the phenomena of “good speech” and “bad speech”, which can be more desired by Czech teachers of English as well as by Czech learners of English. Jones describes the “good speech” as speech which is absolutely intelligible to the listeners; as the opposite to the speech which is difficult to be understood by the listeners (Jones, 1969, p.4). This theory is supported also by the idea that context is usually very helpful in situations of e.g. minimal pairs, which occur very often in the English language. Examples of such minimal pairs will be presented below in the theoretical part of this thesis. Usually, the context must be considered in everyday communication. The English language seems to be quite exceptional with the phenomenon of one English word with two absolutely opposite or conflicting translation found in translation dictionaries.

Generally, many accents of English exist. These accents can cover quite large territories as well as only small locations. Differences occurring between individual selected accents will be also described further in this thesis, but it can happen that these differences are quite hard to be observed by the non-native speakers. Sometimes it can be hard to hear the difference when the non-native speaker listens to one word pronounced in British English and General American accent again and again. Brown asks the same question in his book *Pronunciation models*. He answers this by theory called *perceptual evidence* which says that “it must be different enough for a listener to hear a difference” (Brown, 1991, p.27). He also talks about second possibility, about the productive difference, which he defines as believe of the speaker that he pronounces the two words differently (Brown, 1991, p.27). But the question is, whether such recognition of accent is so crucially important for Czech learners of English.

When learning English, the learner can have different reasons. “Lambert (1972) has made a useful distinction between the instrumental and the integrative motivation for language learning” (Brown, 1991, p.1). The instrumental reason means that the learner is learning language as some tool, e.g. to be able to lead the commercial correspondence or run business meetings, generally to use it for some profession, e.g. hotel staff, diplomat, language teacher. The second one presents learner’s desire to be able to understand whole culture and maybe also become a member of this community (Brown, 1991, p. 1-2).

To think about teaching of pronunciation, we have to consider the fact that each learner (of English as foreign language) is already speaker of at least one language and has some habits gained within years of speaking of his mother language. Brown (1991) mentions that “Pronunciation learning is in this respect different from, say, learning to drive a car. This involves physical and perceptive skills quite different in kind from those which the learner already possesses” (p.2). In fact, the teacher must somehow erase learner’s pre-knowledge and bring him to gain new habits, which will be useful for his language learning. Teachers of English frequently consider the division of time between individual areas of language learning and they come to the conclusion that “A blanket coverage of all features of pronunciation is clearly a waste of valuable time” (Brown, 1991, p.3). They often tend to devote time to those areas, which can show bigger progress and improvement in learner’s ability.

Furthermore, according to Brown (1991), there are two sets of initials, which are used in ELT: EFL and ESL (p.3). The distinction is sociolinguistic and is connected with functions and status of English in the particular locality. EFL means English as a foreign language – in this case, “English has no special status, but is acquired primarily for instrumental reasons, for international communication by a consequently small number of speakers” (Brown, p. 3). English as a second language (ESL) on the other hand has a special status for e.g. administration, law, education and media. Brown (1991) presents that “a greater proportion of the population speaks English in an ESL context than in an EFL context” (Brown, p.3). To conclude it, it can be said that majority of students learn English for instrumental reasons, have some pre-knowledge of pronunciation habits and are being taught under time pressure. Brown (1991) states that “It is therefore inefficient and unrealistic for an English teacher to expect to be able to cover all aspects of English pronunciation” (p.4).

According to teaching of pronunciation, we cannot focus only on description vowel and consonant segments. We have to include suprasegmentals as well, which are more important and basic and add more to accent and intelligibility. They should be therefore prioritized by learning of English, e.g. in textbooks. Another thing to consider is also the fact that majority of communication runs through facial expressions, tone of voice and gestures. The importance of segmental pronunciation should not be overestimated in context of whole communication.

## 2.1 Accent differences

There are two possibilities how to describe accent differences. Wells (1982) differentiates individual native accents of English, whereas Brown (1991) talks about differences between the non-native (learners’) and native (model) accents (p.18). For purpose of this thesis, the categories from Brown will be more suitable. His book, *Pronunciation Models*, focuses on differences between Received Pronunciation, General American and Singaporean English. This thesis will supply this listing with some others accents. To categorize these differences, we will use four levels: phonological system, allophonic realisation, phonotactic distribution and lexical distribution.

Phonological system involves a difference in the number of contrasting units between the accents (Brown, 1991, p.18). The RP and SingE, for example, differ in contrasts between the pairs of words. Concerning the RP, we can find minimal pairs; the

Singaporean English, oppositely, embodies no such difference – the pairs of words are homophones, they are pronounced identically (Brown, 1991, p.18).

Allophonic realisation includes corresponding phonemes in each accent, which are realised with different articulatory qualities. Concerning the mutual intelligibility, the notion of predictability is not to be omitted. “With differences in allophonic realisation, prediction is possible in either direction; if one knows how a word is pronounced in one accent, one can predict how it is pronounced in the other” (Brown, 1991, p.19). When we think of the differences in two phonemic systems, we are able to predict only in direction from the accent with more phonemes to the accent that has fewer phonemes.

Next type of accent difference (phonotactic) can be presented on the occurrence of /r/ in accents of English. This occurs in all accents as initials of syllable (*rice*), but not all accents allow it at the terminal position of syllable (*murder*). The later accents are called rhotic (many American accents) – distribution of /r/ is less limited than by the non-rhotic accents (such as RP) (Brown, 1991, p.20). The rule for this can be following: “In RP and other non-rhotic accents, /r/ does not occur in syllable final position. Exceptions to this rule are the so-called linking and intrusive /r/” (Brown, 1991, p.20).

This category of lexical distribution focuses on differences between pronunciations of individual words. “For instance, most English accents have a systemic difference between a front /æ/ and a back /ɑ:/ (as in the words *Sam* and *psalm*)” (Brown, 1991, p.20). The other example can be words as *laugh*, *path* and *grass*. By these words, accents in the south of England use the /ɑ:/ vowel and most Americans and northern England accents tend to /æ/ (Brown, 1991, p.20; Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, retrieved on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2012). “It can be seen that, having established that an accent difference is systemic, there is no question of there also being another type of difference, since we are not dealing with corresponding phonemes” (Brown, 1991, p.21).

Accent differences usually appear at usual “day-to-day” conversation. It can be a disturbing element as well as useful phenomenon. The former one occurs quite often e.g. in form of misspelling. In English, many minimal pairs can be found (Brown, 1991). “Minimal pair consists of two words that have just one small difference in sound with different meanings” (<http://www.usingenglish.com>, retrieved on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2012). Examples of such minimal pairs are *ship* and *sheep*, *tin* and *ten*, *cat* and *cart*, *worse* and *verse*, *tile* and *toil*, etc (<http://www.shiporsheep.com>, retrieved on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2012). But it

runs also vice versa. Misspellings are sometimes regarded as “good indicators of accent differences. If a speaker conflates two sounds which are represented fairly unambiguously by written letters in spelling, then we can expect him to misspell words in revealing ways” (Brown, 1991, p.24). The example will be presented later in this thesis, in the chapter about individual accents. Accent difference can also be the cause of potential loss of intelligibility, possibly in two ways. The speaker can be either not understood at all or only partially or mistakenly. Concerning the consequences, the complete not-understanding is often better because both sides of conversation are aware of the necessity to repeat the conversation to understand and be understood and it will not bring some serious problems as an entailment. In this sense, such misunderstanding can occur when the difference in pronunciation of individual speech-elements is not large enough for learners to be able to perceive it (Brown, 1991). This appears e.g. by Singaporean and Irish speakers when they have to distinguish /t/ and /θ/. (Brown, 1991, p.28) Moreover, some writers focus on the reason of loss of intelligibility. They concluded that it lies “at suprasegmental levels of stress, rhythm, intonation and voice quality than at the level of individual vowel and consonant segments” (Brown, 1991, p.25). From whence it can follow for English language teachers that the practice of pronunciation of individual vowels and consonants and focusing on diphthongs etc. seems not to be as important as e.g. Czech teachers of English sometimes think. Probably, they should rather centre the suprasegmental level of speech.

As mentioned above, the accent differences can also be helpful in some way. It can be “a useful starting point for discussing features of learners’ accent” (Brown, 1991, p.24). One of possible way of analysis is the taxonomic-phonemic approach, but many phonologists do not regard it as the most satisfactory way for explanation of features and processes in the phonology (Brown, 1991, p.24).

What should not be forgotten is the fact that language undergoes sempiternal process of smaller or bigger changes. This holds for pronunciation as well. Although some linguists state that the process is complete now, there are also others who disagree and are aware of continual change also in field of phonetics and phonology. Considering this, we should be conscious of some words being sometimes pronounced in one way, sometimes in another. This fact can be more obvious when we allow for more different accents, including non-native. “Accents of many non-native speakers lack the consistency and regularity of native accents” (Brown, 1991, p.26). However, native accents also need some simplification by

describing – they are not monolithic, reversely, they vary in similar way as non-native accents do. We can find comparable changes and subtleties by both, native and non-native accents. (Brown, 1991, p.26). Native accents show the differences e.g. by pronunciation of words like romance, expanse, finance and manse – words with so called /-ns/ structure. The previously mentioned word (e.g. romance) can be pronounced either [rəʊ'mæns] (BrE) or [ 'rɔʊmæns] (NAme) (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, retrieved on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2012). The above presented aims only draw attention to the existence of difference. Other examples will be presented in descriptions of individual accents. And what does cause such differences? One of the reasons is, according to experts, the difference in acquisition of the language. Brown presents that “Native children learn the language first in spoken form, only acquiring the written form later through formal instruction” (Brown, 1991, p.27). On the contrary, by non-native speakers it frequently goes vice versa. They acquire the language after literacy. The other aspect can also be the reality that many other languages have much more regular pronunciation in comparison to written language than English. Furthermore, phonologists present that “the consonant system of English is more consistent across the native accents than the vowel system” (Brown, 1991, p.27). That is why the analyses are more frequently applied to differentiate vowels than consonants.

## 2.2 Terms used in ELT

### 2.2.1 Standard

In this subchapter, the ambiguity of this word should be described. For our purpose, this can mean either a noun with “no agreed definition described to by linguists, although it is often treated as if it were” (Brown, 1991, p.39) or an adjective, which modifies English in sense of “a particular dialect of English, being the only non-localised dialect, of global currency without significant variation, universally accepted as the appropriate educational target in teaching English; which may be spoken with an unrestricted choice of accent” (Brown, 1991, p.39). Brown (1991) also presents that these characteristics should be considered rather as descriptions than definitions (p.39). Generally, in the field of pronunciation models and accents we can rarely find some strict definition as in some other fields of linguistics. Pronunciation is very individual and distinctive and also varietal issue; this diversity is caused above all by the fractionalism and big number of native speakers. It is usually described and presented by few examples. This reflects the current trend of linguists to prefer description rather than prescription, which is obvious also in many other

fields of linguistics, e.g. grammar and stylistics. The adjective *standard* is more frequently used by description of dialects rather than accents (Brown, 1991, p.39). This term can thus appear as inappropriate for this situation to some scientists.

### **2.2.2 Models**

As presented in the opening part of this thesis, pronunciation model can be defined as “the accent presented for imitation by the learner” (Brown, 1991, p.39). Learners are usually exposed to two types of models. It can be either tapes and CDs, which are part of textbooks for learners and contain recordings of native speakers (usually of either RP accent or GA accent, some textbooks are representing both of them and add some others), or teacher with his own accent, whether native or non-native. In general, accent of recorded speaker is not the same as the teacher’s one. They can speak the same accent, e.g. both of them can use the BBC-English, but it will probably not happen very often (but it should be kept in mind that the described situation relates to non-native teachers of English). This statement is supported by the fact that the number of teachers who are native speakers e.g. of RP and are teaching English as second or foreign language somewhere in the world is not very high. According to this fact, teachers usually create their own models (or are taught to it, simply acquire some model), which “may differ in several readily apparent respects from the textbook model” (Brown, 1991, p.40). The learner can then choose between the model of teacher or of recorded speaker(s).

### **2.2.3 Targets and goals**

For teachers of English as second or foreign language, the important issue to clarify is the goal they want reach during teaching of pronunciation. It seems to be clear that it is quite impossible for Czech learner to acquire the same pronunciation as the native speakers have. Of course, there are some exceptions, e.g. very talented learners who sound very similar to native speaker. Unfortunately, it is quite hardly possible for native speaker of Czech to evaluate the similarity of non-native speaker of English to the native one. But we can find people who are e.g. from the United States or Uruguay who are living in the Czech Republic for a long time and their non-nativity is not obvious. Logically, it should be the same also in other countries. But the aspect of living in the target country is to be emphasized. Usually, learners who study their target language in their country are not so prospect to have “native” pronunciation of the target language. They will presumably have a bit different pronunciation than their model has. According to Brown (1991), “there

is no problem in allowing a distance to exist between what is presented to the learner (the *model*) and an acceptable achieved performance by the learner (for which we may reserve the term *target* or *goal*)” (p.40). G. Brown (1974:55) also presents that when teaching English as foreign language, it seems to be good when the students are exposed to a native brand of English as a teaching model. The opinion of Abbott (1981) is very similar. He does not expect from students 100% achievement (Brown, 1991, p. 40). As a result, in one class, three different types of pronunciation occur: first voices from textbooks and recordings, second teacher’s pronunciation – both should serve as model for students, and third the performance of students, which should be as closed as possible to one of the models – or to something in between. This can unfortunately lead to confusion of students about requirements.

#### **2.2.4 Norms**

Norm is also a very important part of study of pronunciation. It underwent similarly long process of development as other linguistic disciplines. In the past, normative approach was taking turn with the descriptive one. Today, the descriptive approach prevails in majority of linguistic disciplines and pronunciation is not different. But this does not mean that no norms exist. Moreover, it is frequently considered as synonym to previously mentioned terms – model, standard, target and goal (Brown, 1991, p.40). It can be also used for statistical and experimental purposes.

### **2.3 How to choose the best pronunciation model**

When thinking about the choice of pronunciation model in teaching of English as second or foreign language, many issues should be kept in mind. First, teachers have to think of possibilities they have. They should consider possible textbooks and recordings and compare them with their own pronunciation. They should be aware of differences between theirs and recordings’ pronunciation to be able to understand possible distinctions, which can be made by students. Furthermore, they could take advantage of such distinctions and show them to students. Very important point is also the correctness of their own pronunciation. In the best case, they should choose one pronunciation model to use the same pronunciation every time and not to puzzle students. Possibly, it does not have to be only e.g. the Received Pronunciation or the General American; the international English seems not to be absolutely undesirable. Second, they should think of goals they will have in the pronunciation teaching – to determine which pronunciation model they will expect



from students, if there would allow some tolerance of inaccuracy etc. Very important part is also to identify the time they can spend on teaching and practising pronunciation and how will they assess it. These all are quite general steps for teachers who are thinking of teaching pronunciation.

Another issue is to find and somehow vindicate some pronunciation model, which can be suitable for them as teachers as well as for their students. Very important criterion for the choice of one model is its ease of learning. “One advantage of using a locally based pronunciation model, rather than a native one, is that its phonology may correspond in no small measure to that of the other indigenous language(s) of the learners’ background” (Brown, 1991, p.41). This is usually referred to as interference and is considered as advantageous because it is easier for learning and teaching. Generally, the learners’ pronunciation will definitely contain some elements of their mother tongue. This by itself is not so exceptional fact, but teachers should be able to keep these distinctions in bounds of intelligibility. The loss of intelligibility or need of excessive concentration on speaker’s pronunciation is conventionally considered as a mistake or failure. The attention should be paid above all on typically problematic elements of speech, e.g. diphthongs and monophthongs, which do not occur in other languages. Brown (1991) presents following:

Diphthongs of the [eɪ] and [əʊ] types are rare in languages of the world, whereas monophthongs of the [e] and [o] types are much more common. It is therefore not surprising that many learners of English substitute long [e:] and [o:] qualities for the vowels of say and no (in RP [seɪ nəʊ]; for these learners [se: no:] (p.42).

Similarly problematic can be, according to Brown, groups of words like beat, bit and bet or boot, put and bought (Brown, 1991, p.41). It is very important to mention that such problematic elements and groups of words differ from individual country and language.

## 2.4 Selected Pronunciation Models

When talking about varieties of English, we should not focus only on the large areas as countries, but we have to search differences also in much smaller units like regions and cities. For the objective of this thesis, this fact is not very important, because individual Czech students of English usually do not distinguish such details or, in case they are able to do so, are not absolutely able to choose one variety e.g. of RP and to use only this one. Therefore, this thesis will list many varieties but it will pay bigger attention to the main accents, which are the Received Pronunciation, the General American accent and the Standard Scottish English. Other variety, which will be also discussed in one chapter of this thesis, is the International English, which is very interesting phenomenon discovered and also respected in recent times and which has not been described yet in writings by so important authors as Adam Brown or J. C. Wells are for this topic.

### 2.4.1 Received Pronunciation

“Perhaps the most widely used pronunciation model for ESL/EFL learners, explicitly or implicitly, is the so-called Received Pronunciation (RP) accent of English” (Brown, 1991, p.30). As will be presented in the practical part, the author supposed that Czech learners of English are deciding above all between the RP accent, British English and the North American pronunciation model, when thinking about pronunciation. It would be very interesting to survey the cognition of distinction between RP and British English by Czech learners of English in the higher degree of study, e.g. university or some special courses, as the case study of this thesis is aimed. But this is not the case of this thesis. The name for this accent - the *received* - is an archaic expression for socially acceptable. Daniel Jones described it as the “everyday speech in the families of Southern English persons whose menfolk have been educated at the great public boarding schools” (Brown, 1991, p.30). Czech learners of English sometimes prefer this pronunciation model because they want to have “better” English. It is usually, not incorrectly, connected with the speech of Queen, which many learners want to imitate. But according to opinions of some native speakers it seems to be much easier to learn or accept the accent of the USA. Many speakers refer to RP as to “the Queen’s English”, “BBC English” or “Oxford English” (Brown, 1991, p.31). In the period of colonisation, RP was very frequent accent, because people should (or sometimes also wanted) be prepared to talk to the Queen of the empire. Albeit it is still true that the Queen speaks with an RP accent, the latter ones are not yet accurate. It was caused

on the one hand by the change of British society to modern one and on the other hand by the natural change of the language. It actually means that the language called “BBC English” and “Oxford English” are no more the same as RP. Consequently, the BBC-announcers and well-educated people (e.g. from Oxford) have no more automatically RP accent (Brown, 1991, p.31).

The other quite frequently mentioned hypothesis is that “RP is a well-defined accent” (Brown, 1991, p.31). Brown disputes this with statement that RP is similarly defined as other variations of English, which are defined. Researched disciplines are different and their descriptions and definitions are up to date according to the speed they are developing (Brown, 1991, p.31). There are some fields that progress quite slowly and their definitions in books can be current despite of relatively long publishing terms (as e.g. morphology or syntax), and we can also find other fields that progress quickly and publishers cannot manage to cover them in season (lexicology, pronunciation sometimes as well).

As implicitly stated above, RP was (and still is) frequently used as the reference accent. It “was a product of the public school system, and thus became associated with the aristocracy, prestigious professions (e.g. barrister, stockbroker, and diplomat) and the prestigious universities of Oxford and Cambridge” (Brown, 1991, p.31). According to Brown (1991), it was also an accent required of BBC announcers (p.31). This motivates the above mentioned opinion of non-native speakers of English, but does not negate the current situation, which has been already described above as well. It was thus well-known accent and not rarely worked as a model for learners. But this does not mean that RP has more contrasts and phonemes than other accents of English. (Brown, 1991, p. 27) The systemic difference in accents of Norfolk and RP is shown on the following example: “While RP pronounces pairs such as *moan / mown*, *rose / rows* and *sole / soul* identically, East Anglian speech distinguishes them, pronouncing the first with [ou] and the second [ʌu]” (Brown, 1991, p.27). Generally, this displays a very interesting fact is that on such “small” territory as the Great Britain is, we can find so many varieties of one language, and, on the other hand, some native speakers from the United States present that there are only three varieties of English in such large territory. According to Brown (1991), we can find less than 5 millions of RP-speakers.

The other reason for the popularity of Received Pronunciation by non-native speakers of English can be the opinion that this accent is the most intelligible accent of English. As

Brown (1991) presents “it is in general true that RP is a widely intelligible accent of English” (p.33). He comments on it with notion that some foreigners do not think that other accents are or can be similarly intelligible. Moreover, he claims that “they believe that non-RP accents are necessarily less intelligible” (Brown, 1991, p.33). This can also cause the above mentioned inclination of learners of English as ESL or EFL, who prefer the Received Pronunciation by the choice of pronunciation model. Yet this preoccupation of such topic can prompt that the scientists like Adam Brown do not share this idea. Some native speakers of English acting in the Czech Republic as teachers of some English discipline present, similarly as Adam Brown in his book *Pronunciation Models* does, that for example General American accent is more intelligible than Received Pronunciation. This topic will be also discussed in chapter about General American accent.

“RP is, after all, what anyone living in the United Kingdom hears constantly from radio and television announcers and newsreaders and from many other public figures” (Wells, 1982, p.279). This has been already opposed by different opinion of Adam Brown, presented above. People in the UK usually know this variety of English, although they are sometimes not able to refer to it accurately. For a small group of people, this variety is their own speech. As many other varieties, Received Pronunciation is not absolutely unified system. There are two possibilities of definition of distinctions within RP. Wells presents the system of mainstream RP, U-RP, adoptive RP and Near-RP, whereas the mainstream RP is read as central tendency, U-RP and adoptive RP are distinct from the previous one and Near-RP is variety which comprises “accents which are not exactly RP though not very different from it” (Wells, 1982, p.279). Furthermore, Wells (1982) mentions following:

A different set of distinctions within RP has been proposed by Gimson (1980): conservative RP, ‘used by the older generation and, traditionally, by certain professions or social groups’, general RP, ‘most commonly in use and typified by the pronunciation adopted by the BBC’, and advanced RP ‘mainly used by young people of exclusive social groups – mostly of the upper classes, but also, for prestige value, in certain professional circles’. (p. 279-280)

According to Wells (1982), the relationship between the varieties is not chronological. “In recognizing these varieties or tendencies within RP, one must remember that they – like RP itself – are abstractions, not objectifiable entities” (p.280).

One aspect of Received Pronunciation which underwent some process of change is the /ɔə/ and /ʊə/. Wells expresses doubts about existence of some people younger than pensioners who have the contrastive /ɔə/. If so, it is contrasting with the /ɔ:/ in words like *thought* or *north* (p.287). “This results in minimal pairs such as *court* /kɔət/ vs *caught* /kɔ:t/, *sore-soar* /sɔə/ vs. *saw* /sɔ:/” (Wells, 1982, p.287). Similarly, some homophones occur in the RP, e.g. *worn* and *warn*, *fort* and *fought*. Wells also presents that the above mentioned tendency of merging (to ɔ: instead of original /ɔə/) is quite complete now and some authors, e.g. Gimson, do not talk about /ɔə/ in vowel system of RP any more (Wells, 1982, p.287). The same occurs with the /ʊə/ and /ɔ:/. The examples are groups of words like *poor-pore-pour-paw*, which are all pronounced similarly (Wells, 1982, p.287; OALD – 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2012). This is confirmed by the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary as well as by the Longman Pronunciation Dictionary. Different examples are words *pure*, *curious* and *during*, which contain /ɜ:/ (Wells, 1982, p.288). Regarding the diphthong [ʊə], many rhymes can be found, as e.g. *fewer* and *pure* or *brewery* and *fury*. But these are by no means homophones (according to OALD and Longman Pronunciation Dictionary, 2000). There are considerable distinctions in pronunciation of word *fewer* /'fju:ə/ and *pure* /pjʊə(r)/, as well as by *brewery* /'bru:əri/ and *fury* /'fjuəri/ (OALD, Longman Pronunciation Dictionary, 2000).

Received Pronunciation also embodies contrasts of long and short /æ/. These contrastive pairs are, according to Wells, for example *bad* and *pad*, which he transcribes as /bæ:d/ and /pæd/, but this opinion is supported by neither the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary nor the Longman Pronunciation Dictionary, which present the short /æ/ by both words as the only possible pronunciation.

Very interesting phenomenon occurring in the Received Pronunciation is the contrast in length of /æ/ by monosyllabic adjectives and nouns. The adjectives end by /-æ:d/ as e.g. *clad*, *mad* or *bad*; nouns as *dad*, *fad* and *pad* end by short /-æd/ (Wells, 1982, p.289). But this Wells’ opinion is not supported by either OALD or Longman Pronunciation Dictionary (2000) again. This can serve as evidence for continual change of the language and, let say, tendency to simplify the pronunciation.

Wells (1982) as the RP-speaker also talks in his book called *Accents of English* about the pronunciation of words like *pirate*, *tyrant*, *Byron*, *Giro*, *thyroid* and *Moirra* (p.290). He presents that “an extreme position to adopt would be to say that the only pronunciations

possible in RP are those with /-aɪə-, -aʊə-, -ɔɪə-/” (Wells, 1982, p.290). But he also describes the tendency which allows for the word *thyroid* near /θaɪrɔɪd/ also the possibility of /θaɪrɔɪd/, which he even prefers (Wells, 1982, p.290). The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary again presents the second possibility as the only one. Pronunciation of these words with /-aɪə-/ is by Wells considered as belonging rather to Near-RP than to RP (Wells, 1982, p.290).

The process of change has obviously touched also the realisation of /æ/. As Wells (1982) presents, the matter is that [a] is quite close to /ʌ/, so that former pronunciation of word *bank* [bæŋk] is now [baŋk] and this merges with the pronunciation of *bunk* [bʌŋk] (p.292). He also states that „The lowering and centring of /æ/ is presumably linked to that of /ɪ/ and /e/ ..., though whether in a ‘push-chain’ or a ‘drag-chain’ is not clear” (Wells, 1982, p.292). This he sees as possibility to distance RP further from American and southern-hemisphere accents of English (p.292).

Wells (1982) is also talking about different possibilities of pronunciation of words like e.g. *mausoleum* /,mɔːsə'liːəm/ or /,mɔːsə'liːəm/; or of word *maverick* - /'mævərɪk/ or /'mævrɪk/ (p.295). Very interesting is also the phenomenon described in the same book: “Thus some people pronounce *kilometre* /kɪ'lamɪtə/, analogously to *thermometer* and *barometer*; others pronounce it /'kɪləmi:tə/, following what to my mind is the more sensible analogy of *centimetre* /'sentɪmi:tə/ (Wells, 1982, p.295). This all he considers as belonging to RP and adds other example: word *garage* has five variants, all of them can be again regarded as somehow belonging to RP: /'gærɑ:dʒ/, /'gærɪdʒ, 'gærɑ:ʒ/, /gə'rɑ:dʒ, gə'rɑ:ʒ/ (1982, p.295).

In English, we can also find some words which fluctuate in RP between /æ/ and /ɑː/. These are e.g. *plastic*, *masculine*, *transitive*, where /æ/ is more frequent; and *chaff*, *pastoral* or *plaque*, which tend to /ɑː/ (Wells, 1982, p. 295).

All previously mentioned provides the reader with the idea of variability and perhaps also changeability of such conservative accents as RP is or is regarded to be. The above described varieties of Received Pronunciations should not be forgotten. This all evokes me the scene from *My Fair Lady*, in which Mr. Higgins determines the residence of present people only on basis of their speech. I am not sure whether this could be possible today, when the fluctuation of people is much higher than in time of Eliza and Mr. Higgins, but nevertheless, it can illustrate us the situation.

### 2.4.2 General American

In contrast to accents of the United Kingdom, the United States seem to be much more uniform. The most broadened variation of English in the United States is the General American, abbreviated as GA or GenAm. It is spoken by two-thirds of Americans who “do not have a recognisably local accent” (Brown, 1991, p.34). This accent “can be heard from Ohio through the Middle West and on to the Pacific Coast” (Brown, 1991, p.34). As one of the biggest advantages, the big number of users of this accent is being mentioned. This width is also supported by “the export of US TV programmes, films and pop music” (Brown, 1991, p.34) all over the world. The fact that one accent covers such large geographical area and is still uniform enough to be used as a pronunciation model seems quite surprising. But on the other hand, it is not absolutely unified. Later, the local differences will be described. Nevertheless, it serves “as a concept referring to non-eastern non-southern accents” (Wells, 1982, p.470), as a label.

Similarly as the “Queen’s English” has been the model for habitants of British colonies until the World War II, General American noted such expansion after this breakpoint. The US got economic and political power and herewith attacked the position of Queen’s English as a standard. Surprisingly, domination of GA was not as strong as probably expected. But in many parts of the world (e.g. Central and South America) “it is more appropriate for learners to acquire an American accent rather than the British RP” (Brown, 1991, p.34) and it is not very different for other parts of the world. Today the influence of General American accent is very strong because of the media - it is sometimes also called ‘Network English’. Many people all over the world listen to American singers and watch American movies. This aspect is indispensable in the current technical and medial world. Globalisation, tourism and oil business also support this phenomenon.

“In North America it is along the Atlantic coast that we find the sharpest regional and social differences in speech” (Wells, 1982, p.467). It is again connected with the history. This region was the place of first European settlements, the region of first United States constituted in 1776. “The inland areas, including the vast tracts of the mid west and then the far west, were settled from the east” (Wells, 1982, p.467). The important isoglosses (a geographic boundary line delimiting the area in which a given linguistic feature occurs – definition from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com>, retrieved on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2012) in North

America therefore run from east to west, i.e. horizontally. This relates to dialects, which are, divided in three principal speech areas in the east (Wells, 1982, p.467). “This tripartite division rests mainly on differences of vocabulary, although it is claimed as valid for morphology and syntax and also for pronunciation as well” (Wells, 1982, p.467). This division is therefore not so important for purpose, but the three basic regions will be presented here. They are the north (New England and New York State – from Maine through Yankee heartland to New Jersey, it includes also New York City and Boston, Massachusetts); the midland (inland from the Middle Atlantic states of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, including Philadelphia) and the south (southwards from about Washington, DC, including Virginia and the Carolinas) (Wells, 1982, p.467). “The midland area is supposed to owe some of its speech characteristics to the influence not only of the Germans but also of the Scotch-Irish and the Welsh” (Wells, 1982, p.469). This is caused by the settlements in history of the USA. The settlers came from the England and other countries of the British Islands, similarly by German settlers, who brought their language with them. All groups of nations, German as Scotch-Irish and Welsh, have definitely influenced the vocabulary but, according to Wells, it is quite hard to find some real evidence of influence in branch of phonetics (Wells, 1982, p.469). The social background was also very important for development of language. The situation with black slave labour and similarly the economic and political situation, which are generally known, influenced the language very much. While in the north and midland people were sending their children to England for traditional education, the southern people were living quite commonly and in the strait contact with black slave labour, which definitely influenced their speech.

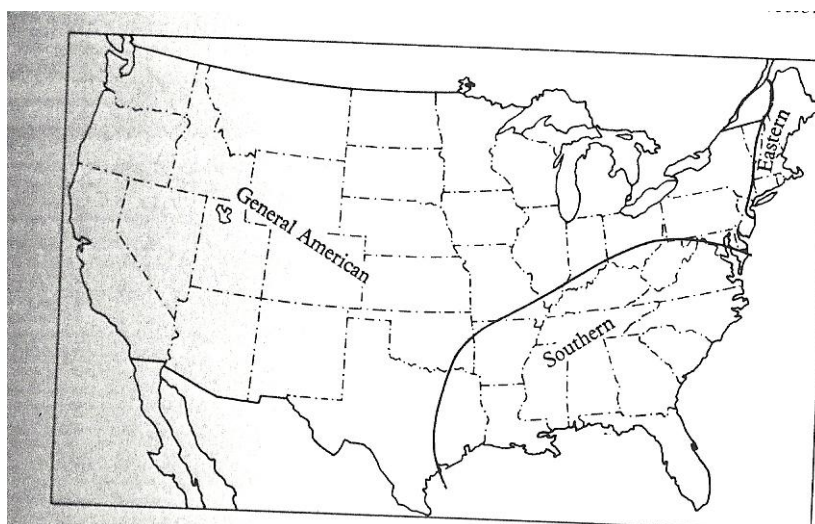
The situation on the coast, above all in the cities, was also very important. Inhabitants of cities as Philadelphia and Boston were trying to exert their prestige; in the time of American Independence, these were ones of the largest English-speaking cities in the world. Although it seems to be quite unlikely, it was the English innovations in pronunciation, what influenced the appearance of the American English. The Americans were imitating it, but not all of them, so this influence was not as strong as could be probably expected. “This is what we find with R Dropping, which came from England to Boston, to New York, and to the coastal south, but has remained in American eyes an anglicism, an easternism, or a southernism” (Wells, 1982, p.470). The R Dropping was not the only element which was only partially, maybe rather negatively influenced element



of the American English by the British English. It was similar with so called BATH Broadening (i.e. short vowel in words like bath, staff, glass and answer – Our changing pronunciation, J. Wells, <http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk>, retrieved on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2012), which appears quite rarely in the current pronunciation of Americans.

The previously described can lead to classification of the United States of America into three accent-areas. This division is displayed on the map below. The main areas are Eastern, Southern, and the most important for our purposes, General American. “In the opening up of the west in the nineteenth century it was this GenAm type or pronunciation which was carried into the new settlements stretching across the continent to the Pacific” (Wells, 1982, p. 470). Within the colonisations, the differences between northern, midland and southern accents merged.

*Picture 1*



Similarly as Wells divides the United States into three areas (on the map), Thomas does the same into ten speech areas. This is shown on the second presented map. On these pictures we can see that Wells and Thomas do not present the same issue similarly. Moreover, both concepts have quite nothing in common. This fact seems to be very surprising. The author was searching for some similarities, but the area of neither South nor East (from the Wells’ point of view) was defined similarly by Thomas. And they were expected to be at least similar, only with small differences. Herewith the two different concepts are available and offer various possibilities of thinking of this topic. But for purposes of this thesis, the Wells’ concept will be considered as the main one (Wells, 1982, p.470).

Picture 2

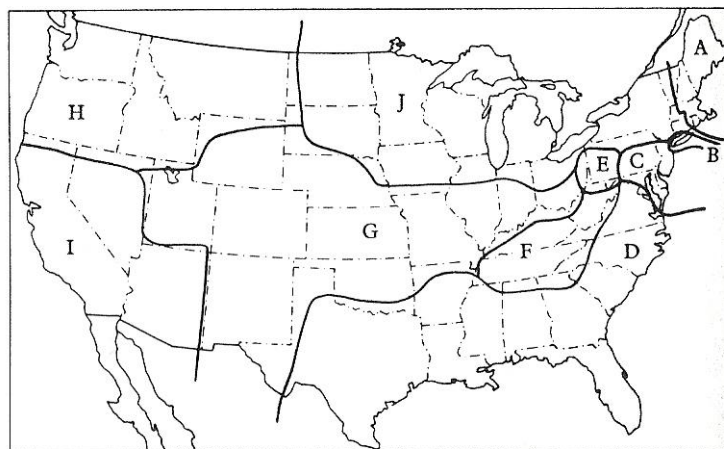


Fig. 17 The major regional speech areas (from Thomas 1958) A: Eastern New England; B: New York City; C: Middle Atlantic; D: Southern; E: Western Pennsylvania; F: Southern Mountain; G: Central Midland; H: Northwest; I: Southwest; J: North-Central

The last event, which crucially influenced the development of the General American accent of English and which should not be omitted in this thesis, is the movement of population in the twentieth century. It belongs again to general knowledge to be aware of the possibilities that are offered by technical conveniences and globalisation at all. This must, without any doubts, have its impact on the appearance of the majority of existing languages. In the United States, the major movements were two. First, it was “the migration of blacks from the south to the cities of the north” (Wells, 1982, p.472). Second important movement was “the arrival of large numbers of Hispanics, speakers of Spanish, both from Puerto Rico and from Mexico and further south” (Wells, 1982, p.472). The blacks brought to the General American accent above all the non-rhoticity. This element is considered as a substandard characteristic of the north (Wells, 1982, p.472).

There are again many differences of the General American from other accents. Some of them, above all the most important, will be presented and described here. First, it should be mentioned that the General American accent contains many minimal pairs and homophones. Second, what should not be forgotten or omitted is the fact that the area that is connected with this accent is very extensive and although it has one name, the differences exist also within the bounds of this accent.

This accent, or more precisely some varieties of this accent, for example lacks the opposition between /ɑ/ and /ɔ/ (Wells, 1982, p.473). This becomes evident above all in pronunciation of the word *on*. Moreover, Wells (1982) presents that this is “a well-known diagnostic for distinguishing the northern speech area of the United States from the midland and southern areas” (p.473). People from the northern part of this area pronounce it /ɑn/, compared to other parts with /ɔn/. Interesting phenomenon described by Wells is the perception of differences by Americans. When they are asked, “whether *on* rhymes with *John* (i.e. /ɑn/) or with *lawn* (i.e. /ɔn/), they may reasonably reply, ‘With both’” (Wells, 1982, p.473). In the east, on the other hand, people keep this distinction. They distinguish the unrounded vowel /ɑ/ in words like *lot* (and also in *palm*) and the rounded vowel /ɔ/ in words like *thought* and *cloth*. But there still occur some minimal pairs such as *cot* and *caught*, *stock* and *stalk*, *knotty* and *naughty* etc. (Wells, 1982, p.473). Moreover, in western Pennsylvania, these are homophones. This merger is labelled by Kurath & McDavid as /ɒ/ (Wells, 1982, p.474).

“For that majority of Americans who retain the opposition between the /ɔ/ of THOUGHT and the /ɑ/ of LOT, there are certain words whose pronunciation varies between the two depending on regional factors” (Wells, 1982, p.475). Similar words as *on* are e.g. *hog*, *log* or *wash*. As was already described above, the pronunciation of these words differs from [hɑg] in the northern speech and [hɔg] in midland (Wells, 1982, p.475).

Another issue to discuss is the lack of opposition between the /ɔ/ and /ɑ/ in words like *tomorrow* or *correspond*. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, *tomorrow* can be pronounced either [tə'mɔ:rou] or [tə'mɑ:rou] (in North American English). Wells (1982) prefers the former possibility. Similar situation occurs by yet mentioned *correspond*. The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary presents two possibilities: either [ˌkɔ:rə'spɑ:nd] or [ˌkɑ:rə'spɑ:nd], Wells (1982) mentions the former one again. On this we can see the variability of accents in one territory. The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary probably uses two different sources: one of them is, in my opinion, the midland speech and second is the northern one. But the examples presented by Wells are commented on as from further west. This presumably deviates to the reality that whatever possibility one decides to use, in fact it is correct. But the unity in preference of the accent should be preserved, if possible.

We can also find contrasts between the General American accent and the Received Pronunciation. But generally it can be said that the /ɔ/ or /ɑ/ are to be found before /r/, according to region of General American in situations where in the Received Pronunciation rather the /ʊ/ prevails (Wells, 1982). One example can be *horrible*. The pronunciation in the North American English, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, is either ['hɔ:rəbl] or ['hɑ:rəbl], for the British English the variety of ['hɒrəbl] is presented.

	GenAm	BrE
TOMORROW	tə'mɑ:rou	tə'mɒrəʊ
BORROW	'bɑ:rou	'bɒrəʊ
SORROW	'sɑ:rou	'sɒrəʊ
SORRY	'sɑ:ri	'sɒri
FOREST	'fɔ:rɪst	'fɒrɪst
ORANGE	'ɔ:rɪndʒ	'ɒrɪndʒ
WARRANT	'wɔ:rənt	'wɒrənt
HORRIBLE	'hɔ:rəbl	'hɒrəbl

Sources: Wells, 1982, p.476; Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (retrieved on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2012)

Quite interesting situation occurs by the word *sorrow*. While Wells (1982) classes it into group of words by which the pronunciation sometimes varies in dependence of the region of the “General American area” and by which also the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary presents two possibilities of pronunciation (either with /ɑ/ or /ɔ/), by *sorrow* the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (retrieved on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2012) offers only one possibility, the ['sɑ:rou]. The Longman Pronunciation Dictionary (2000) in comparison to this presents the only ['sɔ:rou] variety.

On these examples we can see the unity of the Received Pronunciation and the variability of the General American accent. Another interesting topic to discuss are the proper names. As Wells (1982) presents, “Dwellers in *Oregon* are supposed to be able to recognize outsiders by their tendency to pronounce the name of the state with [ɑ] instead of [ɔ].

*Chicagoans*, similarly, pronounce the name of their city /ʃə'kɔɡo/, while outsiders prefer /ʃə'kago/” (p.476). Worthy of mention is also the fact that the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary states the second possibility as typical for the North American accent. What should be also kept in mind is that the differences are sometimes so small that it is quite hard for non-native speaker to distinguish the varieties, even when listening to two possibilities contrastively again and again. Similarly, minimal pairs occur by words like *hoarse* and *horse*, *mourning* and *morning*, above all in the mid west and far west. “It seems that it is not unusual for speakers to be able to perceive the distinction, and know which words belong in which lexical set, while not actually producing it themselves, or producing it only in case of threatening ambiguity” (Wells, 1982, p.483).

Other vowels that should be discussed in this chapter are /ʊ/ and /u/. In General American accent, the distinctions between these two vowels are frequently neutralized. “*You’re* and *your* are both pronounced /jʊr/ (with weak form jər/); *tourist* is /'tʊrɪst ~ 'tʊrəst/” (Wells, 1982, p.484). This applies for the northern and north midland parts of the area which is considered as area of the General American accent, in the south midland, on the other hand, the /o/ prevails (Wells, 1982, p.484). This variety is again closer to the British English, by which the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (retrieved on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2012) presents the /'tɔ:rɪst/ variety.

Also words such as *fire* and *tired* are expected to be pronounced /'faɪər/ and /'taɪərd/ (OALD, retrieved on 7<sup>th</sup> March), Wells (1982) presents that in the midland area these words tend to be pronounced /fæ-/ , which is similar with *far*. Similarly *tired* is sometimes pronounced /tæd/ - this can be homophone of *tarred* (Wells, 1982, p.484). Analogous phenomena parallel, according to Wells (1982), “the situation in RP and many accents of England; it is not known whether it reflects independent innovations in the American midland and England, or whether the former has imported an innovation initiated by the latter” (p.484-5).

Another characteristic, which can be again considered a part of the British stereotype of American accent, is the /æ/ in words like *half* or *pass*. This special allophone /æ/ is “phonetically longer, tenser, and slightly closer, used in a range of stressed environments” (Wells, 1982, p. 477). But Wells (1982) points out that this phenomenon is also in process of change and today the pronunciations as [hæf], [hɛf] or for example [hiɔf] can be heard (p.477). For comparison, the British English variety is [ha:f] (OALD – retrieved on 10<sup>th</sup>

March 2012; Longman Pronunciation Dictionary, 2000). But these changes are not recorded in many materials; Wells (1982) regards this as recent development (p.477). This brings us again to the already mentioned fact that it is quite impossible to find some book of phonetics and pronunciation, which is really current. The progress is so fast that it is not easy to reprint all books when some alternation occurs. But, on the other hand, the internet sources can manage to record these differences and changes. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, which was used as supportive source for this thesis, should be therefore quite up-to-date. According to this, we can presume that the changes or different possibilities presented above were or are not so strongly rooted in the language. Trager presented in 1934 article the idea that "minority of Americans have a three-way distinction /ɛ-æ-ə/ (*merry* vs. *marry* vs. *Mary*)" (Wells, 1982, p.478). The /æ/ is generally quite often mentioned phenomenon. "There is anecdotal evidence (Labov 1972a: 156) of New York City children complaining that a boy, *Ian*, had been given a girl's name (*Ann*)!" (Wells, 1982, p.478)

We should also pay attention to the vowels before /r/. There are words that are quite simply identifiable whether they have /ɪr/ or /ɛr/. These are for example *spirit*, *mirror* (with /ɪr/) or *cherry*, *merry*, *herald* (with /ɛr/). But this Wells' (1982) theory contravenes the results found in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, which presents e.g. *cherry* or *Herald* with /ɛr/ as the North American variety of pronunciation (p.480). To be able to perceive the context and to compare, we can also look for the pronunciation of these words in so called British English. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (retrieved on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2012) states that *cherry* is pronounced ['tʃɛrɪ], *merry* ['mɛrɪ] and *Herald* ['herəld]. From this we can see that the North American accents are not different from the British one. But, on the other hand, clear distinction can be found by the above mentioned triad *merry-marry-Mary*. As the General American speakers pronounce all of them as /'mɛrɪ/, the Received Pronunciation distinguishes between /'mɛrɪ/ vs. /'mæɪrɪ/ vs. /'mɜːrɪ/. To complete this, we can also add the Scottish pronunciation: /'mɛrɛ/ vs. /'mæɪrɛ/ vs. /'mɛrɛ/ (Wells, 1982, p.482). These distinctions are very interesting and on the only three very similar words we can see diversity of one language.

Two consonants, which should also be described here, are /-s-/ and /-z-/. The example was made on the words *greasy* and *to grease*. As Wells (1982) presents, /-s-/ prevails in the north and /-z-/ in the south of the discussed territory. He also adds the information that the noun *grease* mostly appears with /s/ (p.489).

“GenAm is of course rhotic, retaining historical /r/ in all environments” (Wells, 1982, p.490). But even so we can find some cases of lost /r/, so called process of R Dissimilation, above all in words like surprise /sə'praɪz/ or caterpillar /'kætəpɪlə(r)/. This makes the General American accent again closer to the British English, which embodies the same pronunciation of surprise (according to OALD) and very similar pronunciation of caterpillar /'kætəpɪlə(r)/. But on the other hand, as the OALD presents, North American accents generally keep the /r/ in such words: /sər'praɪz/ or /'kætərpɪlə(r)/ (Wells, 1982, p.490; OALD – retrieved on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2012).

The following chart tries to illustrate some differences between the Received Pronunciation (or British English) and General American accent (resp. North American English).

	BrE	NAmE
ADVANCE	əd'vɑ:ns	əd'væns
AFFAIR	ə'feə(r)	ə'fer
AIR	eə(r)	er
ALLITERATIVE	ə'litrətɪv	ə'litərəɪtɪv
ART	ɑ:t	ɑ:rt
BIRD	bɜ:d	bɜ:rd
BLOW	bləʊ	blou
BODY	'bɒdi	'bɑ:di
BOLD	bəʊld	bould
BRONZE	brɒnz	bra:nz
CART	kɑ:t	kɑ:rt
CHAIR	tʃeə(r)	tʃer
CHOLERA	'kɒlərə	'kɑ:lərə
CLOP	klɒp	kla:p
CLOSE	kləʊz	klouz
COAT	kəʊt	kout
COLONISE	'kɒlənaɪz	'kɑ:lənaɪz
COMPOSE	kəm'pəʊz	kəm'pouz
CURE	kjʊə(r)	kjʊr
DEMOCRACY	dɪ'mɒkrəsi	dɪ'mɑ:krəsi
DENOTATION	ˌdi:nəʊ'teɪʃn	ˌdi:nou'teɪʃn
DESERT	'dezət	'dezərt



DICTIONARY	'dɪkʃənri	'dɪkʃənəri
EUROPE	'jʊərəp	'jʊrəp
EPILOGUE	'epɪləg	'epɪlə:g
FAIR	feə(r)	fer
FARROW	'færəʊ	'færou
FAST	fɑ:st	fæst
FOCUS	'fəʊkəs	'foukəs
FOGGY	'fɒgi	'fɑ:gi
FOLD	fəʊld	foʊld
GERMAN	'dʒɜ:mən	'dʒɜ:rmən
GIRL	gɜ:l	gɜ:rl
GO	gəʊ	gou
GOLD	gəʊld	gould
GROW	grəʊ	grou
HASP	hɑ:sp	hæsp
HERO	'hɪərəʊ	'hi:rou
HOLE	həʊl	houl
HOLIDAY	'hɒlədeɪ	'hɑ:lədeɪ
HOT	hɒt	hɑ:t
HOTEL	həʊ'tel	hou'tel
HURT	hɜ:t	hɜ:rt
JOB	dʒɒb	dʒɑ:b
KNOB	nɒb	nɑ:b

MASTER	'mɑ:stə(r)	'mæstər
MIGRATE	maɪ'greɪt	'maɪgreɪt
NOT	nɒt	nɑ:t
OPEN	'əʊpən	'oʊpən
OPERA	'ɒprə	'ɑ:prə
OPIUM	'əʊpiəm	'oʊpiəm
OPPONENT	ə'pəʊnənt	ə'pounənt
OUTWARD	'aʊtwəd	'aʊtwərd
OVER	'əʊvə(r)	'oʊvər
OZONE	'əʊzəʊn	'oʊzoʊn
PAIR	peə(r)	per
PARLAY	'pɑ:leɪ	'pɑ:rlɛɪ
PART	pɑ:t	pɑ:rt
PASTOR	'pɑ:stə(r)	'pæstər
PATENT	'peɪnt	'pænt
PAWN	pɔ:n	pɑ:n
PEAR	peə(r)	per
PERMANENT	'pɜ:mənənt	'pɜ:rmənənt
PERSONIFICATION	pə,sɒnɪfi'keɪʃn	pər,sɑ:nɪfi'keɪʃn
PERVADE	pə'veɪd	pər'veɪd
PERVERT	pə'vɜ:t	pər'vɜ:rt
PORRIDGE	'pɒrɪdʒ	'pɔ:rɪdʒ
POWER	'paʊə(r)	'paʊər

PRODUCT	'prɒdʌkt	'pra:dʌkt
PRONOUN	'prəʊnaʊn	'prounaʊn
QUOTATION	kwəʊ'teɪʃn	kwoo'teɪʃn
ROMANCE	rəʊ'mæns	'roomæns
SCHEDULE	'ʃedju:l	'skedʒu:l
SHOCK	ʃɒk	ʃɑ:k
SHOP	ʃɒp	ʃɑ:p
SHORT	ʃɔ:t	ʃɔ:rt
SPARE	speə(r)	sper
STATUS	'steɪtəs	'stætəs
STUDIO	'stju:diəʊ	'stu:diəʊ
STUPID	'stju:pɪd	'stu:pɪd
SUE	sju:	su:
SUGGEST	sə'dʒest	səg'dʒest
SUPERORDINATE	ˌsju:pər'ɔ:dɪnət	ˌsu:pər'ɔ:rdɪnət
SURFBOARD	'sɜ:fbɔ:d	'sɜ:rfbɔ:rd
THIRD	θɜ:d	θɜ:rd
THOSE	ðəʊz	ðoʊz
TOGETHER	tə'geðə(r)	tə'geðər
TOUR	tʊə(r)	tʊr
WINDOW	'wɪndəʊ	'wɪndəʊ

Sources: Longman Pronunciation Dictionary (2000); Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (retrieved on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2012)

### 2.4.3 Scottish English

Very contrastive to the previously mentioned is the characteristic of Scottish English (abbreviation SE). Its main variety is frequently referred to as Standard Scottish English or Scottish Standard English, abbreviated as SSE (<http://www.wikipedia.org>, retrieved on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012). It should be distinguished from Scots language and Scottish Gaelic. Scottish Gaelic is “the Celtic language closely related to Irish” (Wells, 1982, p.393). It should not be therefore covered in this chapter about Scottish English as a pronunciation model. Scots is, according to Wells (1982), “either a group of dialects of English, or a distinct language” (p.393). Also dialects are not a topic of this thesis; the topic of Scots will be omitted as well.

First, the historical background of Scottish English should be discussed. According to relatively small area of the British Islands, it seems to be quite surprising that “Scotland has always had a linguistic tradition rather different from that of England” (Wells, 1982, p.393). Of course, it belongs to general knowledge to be aware of the distinctions between individual parts of the United Kingdom, but in comparison e.g. to the USA, these distinctions are substantial. In compliance to second volume of *Accents of English*, these distinctions are caused “partly for political reasons: until 1707 Scotland was an independent state, and in the 1970s we have seen a resurgence of national consciousness, an awareness of distinctness” (Wells, 1982, p.393). Because of such national feelings of Scots, we can reason that RP did not and does not have the same status in Scotland as it has above all in England and similarly in Wales. Presumably, Scottish people will prefer to speak either one of their dialects, or the Scottish English to keep their nationality.

History of Scotland and its languages has been connected with Germanic and Celtic nations, as well as with Gaelic one. Wells (1982) also presents that:

Anglo-Saxons captured Edinburgh in the seventh century, and ever since then at least part of Scotland has spoken a Germanic language, although at least part of Scotland has spoken a Germanic language, although at least until the Reformation Gaelic was spoken by a majority of the population and over a wider geographical area than Scots. (p.393)

The Scottish variety of English became to be used in the eighteenth century. It was in the same century when the Union of Parliaments “meant that the official written language

of the whole country came to be the English of England” (Wells, 1982, p.394). After 1761, Scots became domestic dialect (Wells, 1982, p.394). Since that time, Scots has been coexisting with the official and literary language – Scottish English; Standard English, which is “pronounced with a Scottish accent and retaining a few scotticisms in vocabulary” (Wells, 1982, p.394).

Although this pronunciation model of English is regarded as quite simple for ESL or EFL learners from the Czech Republic (generally for all learners from all over the world), it is not so frequently mentioned as a popular or taught variation. This can have different reasons. One fact which cannot be omitted is the number of native speakers of Scottish. It is much smaller than by the General American – in Scotland about 5 million people, in comparison to about 200 million of General American speakers in the USA. Similarly, the influence of Scotland on the world is quite subtle, as compared with the one of United States. Nevertheless, it is not inconsiderable.

As has been already mentioned above, the distinction between the accent of Scottish English and Scots dialect is very important in Scotland. Frequently, many Scottish people speak both of them. Above all in rural areas, the distinction between these two “languages” is quite clear. In comparison with this, in urban and industrial areas there are so many variations, which are not so easy to determine as an accent or a dialect (Wells, 1982, p.395). Wells also presents that “in Glasgow, for example, many would claim that authentic Scots, the traditional-dialect, has died out; yet working-class Glasgow speech includes many features which would normally be considered characteristic of Scots rather than that of Standard English” (Wells, 1982, p.395). Generally said, the number and location of speakers of dialect, accent or both of them is hardly to be described very accurately, because it depends on many factors, e.g. social one.

When describing Scottish English from the phonological point of view, we can find many deviations from other accents of English. When talking about the [e~ɛ] of words like *dead*, *well* etc. in other accents, “Scots may have any of nine or more vowels: in the Perthshire Scots described by Wilson (1915) they include /e/ in *dead*, *bread*; /a/ in *wren*, *let*; /i/ in *well*, *friend*; /ɪ/ in *sweat*; /ʌ/ in *egg*, *chest* /kɪst/; /o/ in *any*, *many*; /ʌ/ in *web*, *cherry*; /ɜ/ in *bury*; and of course straightforward /ɛ/ in *bed*, *bell*” (Wells, 1982, p.396).

The Scottish vowel system lacks for example any oppositions of the kind /ʊ/ vs. /u/ as e.g. in words *pull* and *pool* (Wells, 1982, p.400). “There are no long-short oppositions of

the kind found in other accents; on the other hand duration contrasts may signal morphological boundaries in a way not found elsewhere” (Wells, 1982, p. 400). As the same author presents, this important and frequently noted characteristic of the Scottish English is in fact lack on phoneme /ʊ/. Consequently, many homophones originate, as e.g. above mentioned *pull* and *pool*, *full* and *fool*, *look* and *Luke*. Similarly, there are also many rhyming pairs of words as *good* and *mood*, *wool* and *tool* or *woman* and *human*. (Wells, 1982, p.402) Gareth Jameson, the voice coach from London Voice Lessons, mentions in his video-lesson called “How to Do a Scottish Accent” one example of difference between the British English and Standard Scottish English. This example is the phrase “good with food”. In British English, it is pronounced [gʊd wið fu:d], in comparison with Scottish [gud wið fud]. He also points out the rhyming of these words. Moreover, concerning the Scottish English, “McAllister (1938), the author of an influential Scottish-oriented speech training manual with decidedly prescriptive views, is obviously quite unaware of the possibility of having a phonemic opposition between /ʊ/ and /u/; she treats [ʊ] as an anglicizing optional variant of [u]” (Wells, 1982, p.402). But it must be again kept in mind that the quality of /u/ in words like FOOT and GOOSE varies socio-linguistically (Wells, 1982, p.402).

Similar situation as with homophones containing /u/ occurs by phoneme /ɔ/ in words like *lot* and *thought*. These homophones are of the type *cot* and *caught* (pronounced [kɔt]), *knotty* and *naughty* or *don* and *dawn* (Wells, 1982, p. 402).

Also by the diphthongs, we can find differences from other accents of English. Wells presents that “many speakers of Scottish English have two perceptibly distinct diphthongs in PRICE (not. - words which are similar as *price*) words” (Wells, 1982, p. 405). This situation is presented in the list of words with different pronunciation bellow. Words belonging to the same group and characteristic as PRICE are e.g. *tied*, *tide* (minimal pair); *spider* or *wider*. (Wells, 1982, p.405).

As Wells (1982) presents, “the consonant system of Scottish English has remained very conservative” (p.408). /x/ is restricted to proper names, as Tulloch /ˈtʌlɪx/ or Tough /tʊx/. Also initial /p, t, k/ are not or only little aspirated. As the opposite, Wells suggests the aspirated RP [p<sup>h</sup>, t<sup>h</sup>, k<sup>h</sup>] (Wells, 1982, p. 408).

The other issue, mentioned not only by Wells (1982) in his *Accents of English*, but also by Gareth Jameson in his video-lesson, is the /r/ consonant. As Wells (1982) presents,

“Scottish English is rhotic, and most of all vowels can occur before tautosyllabic /r/” (p.407). For example middle-class Edinburgh speech contains perfect rhymes as *dirt, pert* and *hurt* or *bird, heard* and *word*. All of them have an r-coloured [ɜ], which is analysed as /ɜr/. This is considered as exception in Scotland (Wells, 1982, p.407). Gareth Jameson points out that Scottish English has only one roll, not few of them repeating, as maybe some non-native speakers think. Wells supports Jameson’s opinion by statement: “The popular stereotype is that Scotsmen ‘roll their r’s’, which should mean that /r/ is realized as [r]” (Wells, 1982, p.410). But on the other hand, this is partially negated by Wells’ argument that the [r] is still to be heard today but some investigations before the Second World War reported that “not more than three Scottish students out of ten used [r]” (Wells, 1982, p.411). In his book *Accents of English*, he also presents that the proportion would be still lower. But this book is from 1982 and any other investigation were not found, which would confirm or negate it. Probably, the video from Gareth Jameson could be taken into account because of its topicality, despite being less confidential source of information in comparison to Wells or McAllister.

Another aspect of the Scottish English accent is no H Dropping, which distinguishes it from England. The exceptions are unstressed pronouns and auxiliaries (Wells, 1982, p.412). “Thus *heat* is always [hit], never \*[it], even in the lowest-class urban casual speech; *half* is always [haf ~ haf]; but *him* has a weak form [ɪm] alongside its strong form [hɪm]” (Wells, 1982, p.412).

“Scottish English does not exhibit the alternation of clear and dark /l/ found in, say RP. Any given speaker tends to use much the same kind of /l/ in all phonetic contexts” (Wells, 1982, p.411). Gareth Jameson mentions this in his video-lesson as well. He talks about /l/ in words like *girl* and *world*, in connection with /r/. According to this video, they are pronounced [gɜrl] and [wɜrld]. This aspect can be the reason for relative simplicity of this accent to be learned by Czech learners.

## Examples of pronunciation of individual words in chosen accents

	SE	BrE	NAmE
KIT	[kɪt]	[kɪt]	[kɪt]
DRESS	[dres]	[dres]	[dres]
TRAP	[trap]	[træp]	[træp]
LOT	[lɒt]	[lɒt]	[lɑ:t]
FOOT	[fut]	[fʊt]	[fʊt]
BATH	[bɑθ]	[bɑ:θ]	[bæθ]
CLOTH	[klɒθ]	[klɒθ]	[klɔ:θ]
NURSE	[nɜrs]	[nɜ:s]	[nɜ:rs]
FLEECE	[flis]	[fli:s]	[fli:s]
PALM	[pam]	[pɑ:m]	[pɑ:m]
THOUGHT	[θɒt]	[θɔ:t]	[θɔ:t]
GOAT	[got]	[gəʊt]	[gout]
GOOSE	[gus]	[gu:s]	[gu:s]
PRICE	[praes], [prais]	[prais]	[prais]
CHOICE	[tʃɔɪs]	[tʃɔɪs]	[tʃɔɪs]
MOUTH	[maʊθ]	[maʊθ]	[maʊθ]
NEAR	[nɪr]	[nɪə(r)]	[nɪr]
SQUARE	[skwer]	[skweə(r)]	[skwer]
START	[start]	[stɑ:t]	[stɑ:rt]
NORTH	[nɔrθ]	[nɔ:θ]	[nɔ:rθ]



#### **2.4.4 Generally about GA and SE**

These both accents are easier to acquire than the Received Pronunciation in several ways. They are “phonetically simpler accents with none of the negative connotation nowadays associated with an RP accent” (Brown, 1991, p.36). The popularity of the General American accent is also caused, at least to a certain degree, by the above mentioned influence of the United States in branch of tourism, media and for example oil-business as well. But we must also suppose that this agency is declining in importance. The power of language reflects in certain way the political and economical situation in the world and the current circumstances do not support the General American remaining the leading accent of English. It is a question whether English will still be the lingua franca fifty years later, but the answer is not this thesis’ affair. But we already know that, according to David Crystal, another phenomenon occurs.

#### **2.4.5 International English**

International English is also frequently referred to as Global English, World English, Continental English, Common English or General English. (Wikipedia, retrieved on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012). According to Seidlhofer (2003), it means rather the English as an international language. Seidlhofer (2003) defines it as follows:

International English is used by native speakers of English and bilingual users of English for cross-cultural communication. International English can be used both in a local sense between speakers of diverse cultures and languages within one country and in a global sense between speakers from different countries. (p.8)

It is a very new phenomenon; it has not been therefore many times defined in some books or such printed media yet. The sources are thus very restricted and frequently not verified. Despite of this, the author will try to present this issue.

In the history, people who were learning English were frequently doing so because they wanted to be able to speak with the icon of this language, with the Queen of England. These were above all people from British colonies and Commonwealth of Nations, who were probably also obliged to do so. Later, the reason became a bit different. After the World War II, the United States of America got their political and economic power and for some countries and nations it was important to speak English because of political and economic reasons. Similarly, the cultural power of the United States grew and their

influence was supported by the media – films, music etc. As David Crystal presents, power is the most important word when talking about English as global or international language (<http://www.davidcrystal.com>, retrieved on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2012).

Today, the situation is a bit different again. People do not learn English to be able to talk to the Queen or to know how to speak with people from English speaking countries. Simply said, English is not anymore a tool for discovering places in English speaking countries. Today, the task of this language is absolutely different. Native speakers do not play so crucial role in this situation as earlier. For example people from Korea, Brazil, Egypt and Czech Republic as well learn English to be able to run business with other countries that are not again native speakers of this language. They want to trade with the same countries, Korea with the Czech Republic, Egypt with Brazil etc. As Crystal on his website presents, people from the UK and US no more own English. Today, there are five non-native speakers of English on one native speaker. Consequently, this means that there are so many non-native speakers of English that they are the ones who decide about the face of this language. As Barbara Seidlhofer (2003) in her writing presents, “The ownership (by which I mean the power to adapt and change) of any language in effect rests with the people who use it, however they are, however multilingual they are, however monolingual they are” (p.7). This can seem like a very strict opinion, but it defines the current situation quite well. Today children do not learn English and other languages because they want to spend their lives by travelling and discovering new English or other language speaking countries. Much more frequently they do so because the economic is so open and global today and in fact very little number of companies can handle only with other companies in their country. People need foreign languages for their job and they need above all English. According to Seidlhofer (2003), English as international language should not replace the individual local languages. It should coexist with them and serve above all as a tool; it should not “constitute a threat” to other languages (p.11).

Today, English as international language is respected by the European institutions and its role is defined in the European curricula; it is acknowledged. Seidlhofer explains it as follows:

This means that curricula typically mention the global role of English as econocultural fact and give basically one or both of the following kinds of motivation for learning it: the utilitarian one, i.e. importance for international

business, and the idealistic one, i.e. the potential it affords for furthering cross-cultural communication and mutual understanding. (p.12)

Despite being defined in the European curricula, the International English does not have any important role in English teaching so far. Today, the goal of many teachers of English is in fact to make their students better than native speakers are above all in field of grammar, sometimes also literature and culture etc. But the aim of International English is different, as has been already described above (Seidlhofer, 2003, p.12). According to this, students and their teachers are allowed to create their own pronunciation model, which will vary from country or region. There will not be one or two adored models anymore.

### 2.4.6 Other accents of the British Isles

The accents of the British Isles are (near the Received Pronunciation and Scottish English) further categorized as accents of London, of the south, of the north, of the Wales, and of the Ireland.

### 2.4.7 Accents of English beyond the British Isles

English is, near the British Isles and the United States of America – the General American accent, spoken in other varieties in following states or areas:

- Canada
- New England
- The south of the United States of America
- The West Indies
  - Carribean English
  - Jamaica
  - Trinidad
  - Guyana
  - Barbados
  - The Leewards
  - Bahamas
- Australia
- New Zealand
- South Africa
- India
- Africa
- The Far East
  - Singapore
  - The Philippines
  - Hawaii

(Wells, 1982)

### 3 ANALYSIS

#### 3.1 Method

As an objective of practical part of this thesis I chose the topic of status of pronunciation in frames of education of English and by individual students of English. To research this situation, I compiled the questionnaire with eight questions. These questions are following:

1. How long have you been studying English?
2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?
3. Why did you start to learn English? Why did you choose this language?
4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?
5. Who did impress you through your English learning?
6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?
7. What variation of English do you prefer?
8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

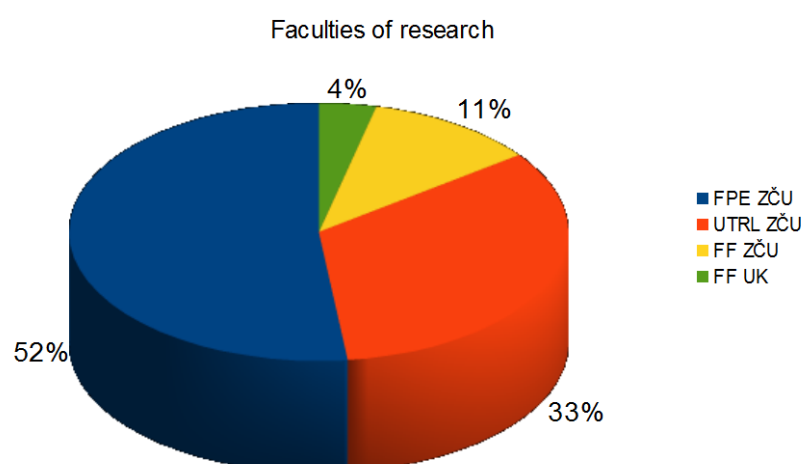
These questions were chosen to elicit and then describe the relationship of students to pronunciation, to individual pronunciation models, to education of pronunciation; also to find out how is the situation with staying abroad among these respondents. On basis of this research I will try to evaluate the status of the above mentioned issues connected with learning pronunciation, choice of pronunciation model and above all with the consciousness of pronunciation learning.

These questions were given to twenty seven respondents. Part of them received it in written form, part of them were interviewed and recorded. These recordings are available on the enclosed CD and all the questionnaires are in appendix of this thesis.

All respondents are students of English; the differences are in their age and field of study. As the following diagram shows, about half of them are students of Faculty of Education of the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen. They are very important for this research;

these results can be used by Department of English in some way. Other respondents are from the Institution of Translation Studies of the Charles University in Prague, from other departments of Faculty of Arts of the same university and also from the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts of the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen. They were chosen to provide this thesis with wide variety of opinions and attitudes and experiences of individual respondents. This gave me also possibility to compare the individual answers in the opposition of two bigger departments – Department of English of the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen and the Institution of Translation Studies of the Charles University in Prague.

*Diagram 1*



Below in this chapter I will present individual questions and responses (above all in form of diagram), comment these responses and cite some interesting answers. When appropriate, I will compare answers of students of Department of English of the Faculty of Education here in Pilsen, and of students of the Institution of Translation Studies in Prague. Some of these comments will be rather statistical; some of them will try to find some rationalisation on basis of facts described in the theoretical part of this thesis. Following subchapter will provide the comment of these results according to our field of study – education.

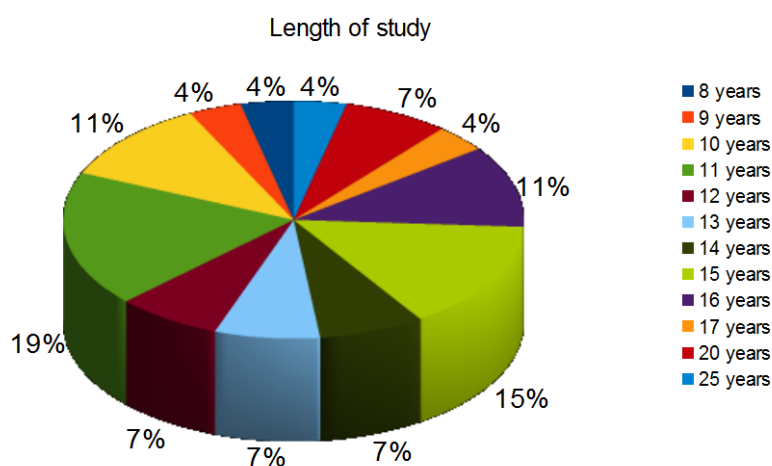
## 3.2 Results

### 3.2.1 How long have you been studying English?

This question was asked to show the length of study and the differences between individual students. It is worth mentioning that the majority of respondents is in the “classical

academic age”, this means they are between nineteen and about twenty five years old. Of course, some of them are older; there are e.g. three students from Pilsen who are teaching for some longer time and study to complete their qualification. The structure of length of study is following:

*Diagram 2*



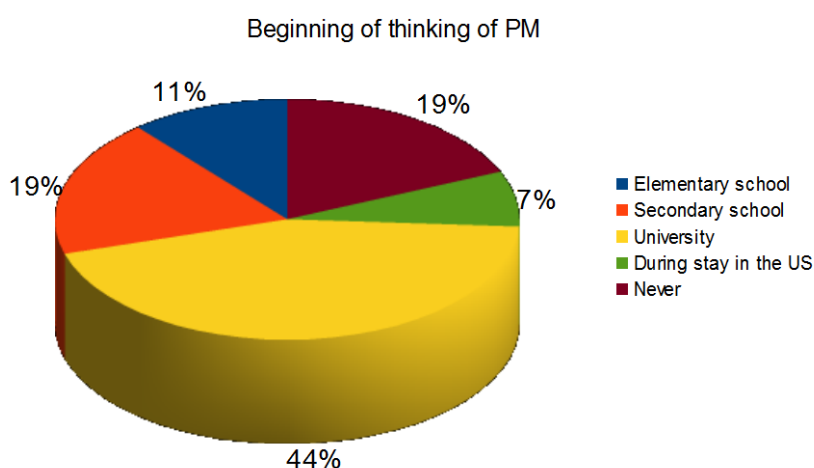
Average length of study of all respondents is thirteen years. It is very hard to consider, whether it is enough long time to be able to teach other students. The qualities of acquired knowledge and competencies often do not depend on the length of study. My own experience does support this statement. In my grammar school, we had two groups which were learning English. One of them started with it as with first language in the age of about eight or nine years at primary school. Second group began to study English in the age of thirteen or fourteen, their first language was German. And in the end, by the final exam, there were many successful students who passed the final exam in English or in both languages, English and German, and many of them were those students who started with English much later. Unfortunately, I do not have any concrete statistics, but I know that this phenomenon occurred also in the parallel class.

But generally I think that eight years of English studies, which is the shortest period resulting from this study, is quite good basic for following job. Moreover, I think that the abilities and competencies depend very frequently more on the motivation and effort of individuals, rather than on the length of study.

### 3.2.2 When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

This question seems to be quite interesting to me. I wanted to elicit when the respondents realised that there are some differences at pronunciation, that some models actually exist. I think that this point of realization is quite important in the language-life of each student of English on such high level. This realization and the following work with it can improve the appearance of their language-product very much. In my opinion, the unity of discourse in the field of pronunciation and also of grammar and vocabulary looks very good. Therefore I included this question in the questionnaire. Results are following:

*Diagram 3*



As I expected before I started this investigation, almost half of the respondents became to think of the choice of one pronunciation model at the university. This is the time when probably majority of them decided to become professionals in this branch and wanted to improve their discourse, as was already described above. Quite surprising was for me the finding that there were some respondents who became to think of it at the primary school. I have thought that this is, let say, quite impossible. Probably, it is not so hard when the teachers consciously draw attention to this, when they speak about such differences from the beginning of English learning, but I thought that in this age there are other aspects that are much more important during language learning. Not so good result is the fifth of respondents who have never thought of such question. From my point of view, people on such high level of language studies should be at least aware of such issue.

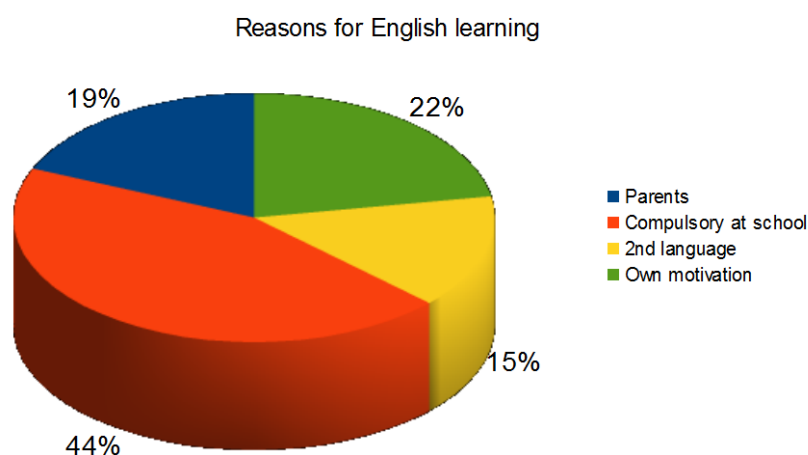


One result which probably should not be omitted in this text is the fact that all respondents who answered that they have never thought of the choice of pronunciation model are students of the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, mainly from the Department of English of the Faculty of Education. No-one from the Charles University answered this question with “NEVER”. I am not sure whether this happened only by chance or whether it has some justification – this question will be discussed in the following chapter, which will focus on the consequences or recommendation according to study of education.

### 3.2.3 Why did you start to learn English? Why did you choose this language?

As was already mentioned above, I am convinced that the ability and level which can be reached during language studies does not depend so much on the length of study as on the motivation of individuals to do so. This is the reason for engaging of question about reason of studies in this thesis. Results follow:

*Diagram 4*



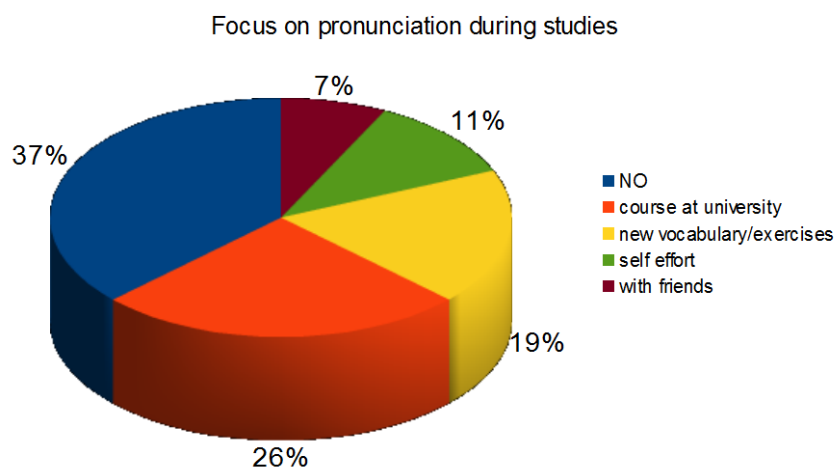
As I perceive it, reasons and motivation for English learning are very closely connected with the age of beginning of learning. It is quite logic that children in the age of about eight years are not able to appraise the importance and usefulness of particular language for future life and job. Considering this fact, the percentage of “Parents wanted me to study English” is quite low, surprisingly. A bit different is the result of 44% answers saying that English was compulsory at school. I think that people should still have a possibility to choose on their own (or their parents) about the language they perceive as very important. Other languages, for us in the West Bohemia especially German, should not be disadvantaged by English. Moreover, I heard one very interesting opinion of tutor of

German, Jens Krüger (working for Polyglot Publishing House), who told us in one seminar about teaching German that for students (thought about Czech learners) is much easier to acquire German as first foreign language and then continue with English. I have to say that I quite agree with this idea and this is supported by the experience described above, by the question about length of study of English. Very good result is, in my opinion, the 22% of own motivation by learning English – this includes friends, who the respondents wanted to be able to talk to, English written books and films, some respondents present the importance of English in the global world, one reason was also the simplicity of learning this language. This, I think, can be the basis for very effective English learning. In this case, the more self-motivated students were those from the University of West Bohemia.

### 3.2.4 Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

When I was asking this question, I was always very curious about the answer. I am convinced that lessons of phonetics and phonology, or maybe rather more simply lessons of pronunciation, should be a part of all English studies at academic level. I personally have no compulsory lessons of phonetics and I think that I would need it very much. As I presented above, correct and pure pronunciation can, in my opinion, improve the spoken discourse very much and our discourse as discourse of future or sometimes already active English teachers is very important. But the results of research do not confirm this opinion very much:

*Diagram 5*

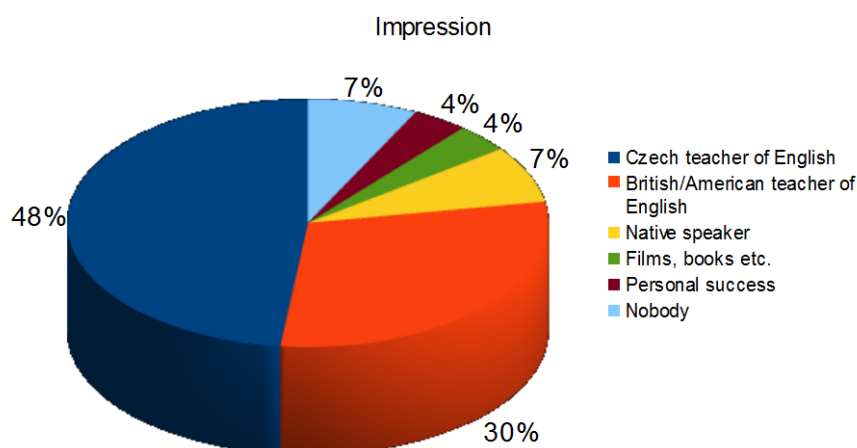


The largest number of respondents (more than one third of them) presented that they have never focused separately on pronunciation during their English learning. I think that this is very sad, above all because of the reason presented above. These respondents were above all from the University of West Bohemia, whether from the Faculty of Education or from the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts. Quite many respondents, about one fifth stated that they were learning pronunciation only when they were acquiring some new vocabulary. Here is worth mentioning that when we talk about pronunciation, the pronunciation of individual words is not the only important aspect of pronunciation as whole. But for purposes of this thesis, it seems to be sufficient. The differences in pronunciation between individual words consist above all in pronunciation of individual words. In this case, the education can include the aspects of differences in pronunciation of individual words according to issue of pronunciation models. And as I have experienced, sometimes it runs so. I remember above all the moment we were talking about differences in pronunciation of word SCHEDULE in the American English and in the Received Pronunciation. Less than one third of respondents presented that they have passed some courses of phonetics and phonology. These were above all from the Institute of Translation Studies in Prague and partially also from the Department of English of the University of West Bohemia. Very interesting were the answers that people were trying to learn the correct pronunciation on their own or with friends. This demands, in my opinion, a great deal of motivation and discipline.

### **3.2.5 Who did impress you through your English learning?**

As I perceive it, the aspect of model is very important during English learning. For me, the personality of teacher was crucial during my English learning. And results of research support it:

Diagram 6

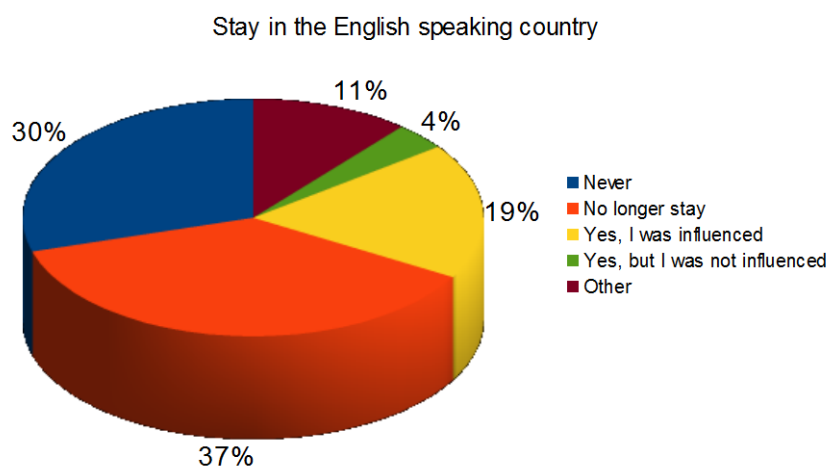


As we can see from the graph, more than three quarters of respondents were influenced and probably also motivated by their teachers. The questionnaires in the appendix show that it frequently does not depend on whether they are native or non-native speakers. The personality of teacher simply functions as very important factor. The native teachers who impressed our respondents were above all from the Great Britain or from the United States. Very interesting is the fact that I have found only few direct connections between the nationality of impressing native speaker – teacher and the chosen preferred model of English. According to this survey, this functions usually logically – respondents impressed by native speaker from the US prefer the American variation of English. But sometimes this connection was not so logical – two respondents presented that they were influenced either by American or by British teacher and they prefer the second variety of English. Very interesting answer was also the personal success. This confirms the pedagogical theory that students should at least sometimes experience success – it is very motivating for them and it is above all important when they learn only on their own. Only 7% of respondents do not feel that they could be impressed by anything during their English learning. From the questionnaires results that teachers – native speakers occur in all degrees of education and they are above all from the United States and from the Great Britain. Sometimes also tutors from Canada or Australia were mentioned. This partially supports my choice of pronunciation models that were presented in the theoretical part of this thesis. Czech students of English usually do not meet teachers of other nationality. That is why I focused only on those three models.

### 3.2.6 Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

When I was thinking of this question, I was convinced that there are many future-teachers and future-interpreters and translators who experienced some longer stay abroad in some English speaking country. I also still think that such stay could help to improve our pronunciation very much. Unfortunately, I am not persuaded that it helps very much in other directions, above all the Erasmus-stays. But this is not the issue of this thesis. Much more important are the results:

*Diagram 7*



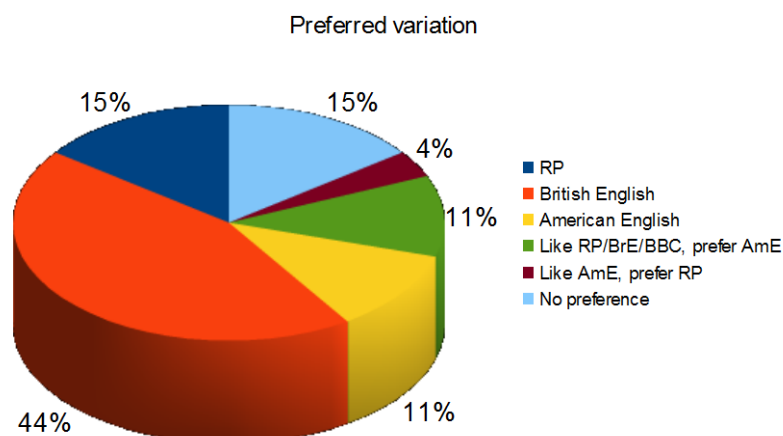
Surprisingly, two thirds of respondents presented that they have never been to any English speaking country or that they have never been there for longer time than for one or two weeks. I think it is sad. But I also have to say that I understand it. I cannot imagine that I would leave for some Erasmus-stay. From the survey also results that the majority of people who have been to any English speaking country for longer time feel that their pronunciation was influenced. Only one respondent presents that he was so far in his language competences that he has not registered any influence. Interesting is also one answer which says that also very short stay (about one week) can influence pronunciation or make a person to start to think of it. One respondent wrote that he/she did not experience any stay in the English speaking country, but longer stay in Germany improved his/her German very much. Some answers sound that there are cases where also only stay with native speakers in some not-English-speaking country can influence the pronunciation very much. And another interesting fact is that despite quite long stay e.g. in the United States and life with American, two months long stay in the Great Britain can change

the pronunciation to sound much more British. Generally, the stays in some English speaking country were mentioned above all by people who study in Prague. And the answers appeal that the respondents who have experienced such stay are satisfied that they have done so.

### 3.2.7 What variation of English do you prefer?

As a very crucial question for this thesis I consider the question of model preference. As I was thinking about chapter to be included in the theoretical part of this thesis, I was thinking about the possibility to describe quite closely only those models, which are somehow used and preferred by Czech learners of English. On basis of my general knowledge and feelings I chose the Received Pronunciation, General American accent and Scottish English (which I classify under the term British English). And from the survey results that I was quite right:

*Diagram 8*



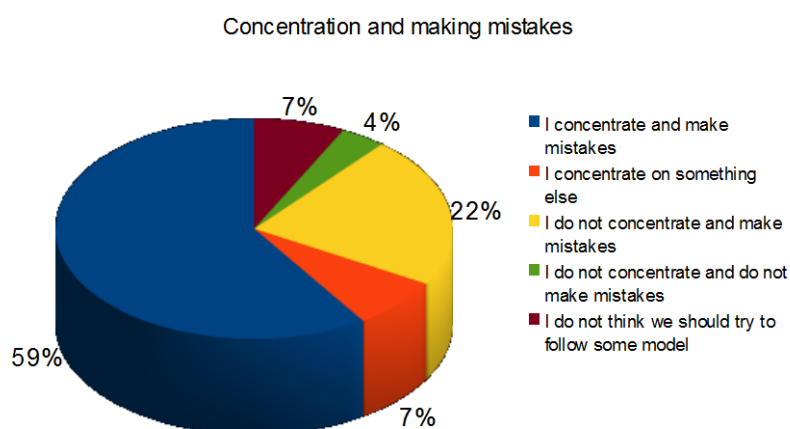
As the diagram shows, almost half of respondents presented that they prefer the British English. This was a bit puzzling answer for me because as I was dealing with the issue of individual pronunciation models and variation, I rarely met the term British English in literature. As I perceive it, the expression British English is in principle the superordinate term for all accents of the Great Britain. Moreover, the Longman Pronunciation Dictionary excludes the RP from this group. It presents the transcription as “BrE non-RP” (Longman Pronunciation Dictionary, 2000). This prompts us to perceive the accents of the Great Britain as British English, despite its variation, and to consider the Received Pronunciation as individual group or phenomenon. This is for example the affair which became quite

clear to me after quite long work with pronunciation models and I am quite perceived, also based on the post-pollings, that many respondents do not have really clear knowledge of this difference. This is also supported by answers which sounded that the particular respondents prefer RP, British pronunciation (paraphrase from questionnaires). This naturally is not possible to apply on all the respondents; I am convinced that many of them really know what they actually prefer. Not so surprising was for me the finding that quite half of respondents (or let say more than half of respondents, when we consider the above described premise of perception of differences between RP and British English) prefer British English or RP. Only 11% of respondents presented the American English as their favourite accent of English. This is very interesting finding because as e.g. Adam Brown in his book or Bradley Vice in his lessons presents, the American English is easier to be acquired by learners. But on the other hand, Adam Brown in his book *Pronunciation Models* presents that also the Scottish English is easier to be learned by non-native speakers of English (Adam Brown), so when we consider the above mentioned superordination of term British English to the Scottish English, the results of survey do not necessarily negate this hypothesis. Quite interesting seem to me the answers which say that the respondent likes one model but prefers another one. This reflects still high status of the “Queen’s English”, which was discussed in the chapter of Received Pronunciation. Some respondents also presented that they prefer one model but that they are able to switch to another one, when they talk to e.g. Americans, although they prefer the British English. 15% do not have some preferred model of English.

### **3.2.8 Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?**

When I was asking this question, I wanted to know whether the respondents work on their pronunciation, whether they are somehow interested in this topic and want to improve their discourse. The survey shows following:

Diagram 9



The results seem to be quite satisfactory to me. Almost two thirds of respondents presented that they concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation; they also added that they are aware of the mistakes they make. 7% of respondents (in fact two of them) presented that they focus on something else when speaking English. One of them is the future interpreter who presented that by interpreting, the concrete information of the discourse is much more important than the correct pronunciation. Second respondent answered this question similarly, with the only differences in the future profession – this one will teach children at the elementary school – and in the other field of concentration. In this case, grammar is the most focused aspect of discourse. Very important for this thesis were, in my opinion, two answers which presented that the desire to have the same pronunciation as native speakers is in fact pointless. This supports my decision to cover in this thesis also the topic of International English and I think that for these people this variety of English can be the preferred one.



## 4 CONCLUSIONS

To conclude the survey, the most frequently presented answers on given questions will be summed up here. This will also serve as the result of research generally.

The research has shown that students of English on the academic level study English for an average length of thirteen years, but the real length of English learning varies by respondents between eight and twenty five years, which is quite broad spectrum. But in reaction on this results the hypothesis was presented that the length of study is less important factor for acquisition of language than for example motivation can be. Other results say that students of English usually begin to think of the choice of one pronunciation model when they start to study university. This is not surprising finding; in this phase of study they are usually more aware of need of proficiency and want to improve their language. Students of English are usually influenced, or sometimes also motivated to learn English, by their teachers of English. The research showed that they are very important factor by English learning, irrespective of their nationality. Czech teachers can impress students similarly as the native speakers can. What is not so positive result is the fact that very low percentage of students who experienced some course specialized only on phonetics and phonology. This is, in my opinion, quite sad situation for future pupils but it does not have to necessarily decrease the quality of English education generally. Other result is that students of English usually do not experience longer stay in any English-speaking country. Such stay is generally considered as quite important and positive factor within the process of acquisition of foreign language. Reasons against such stay can be different and I think that it has no sense to force students to undergo some Erasmus stay because the results are very strongly dependent on the self-effort expended on the impact and improvement. What confirmed my expectations in the beginning of thinking of this topic is the finding that Czech learners of English really prefer Received Pronunciation, British English and General American accent. Very positive is also the fact that people usually try to concentrate on having the correct pronunciation.

Generally, the status of pronunciation among Czech learners of English is not on the top of the list, as the research showed. But it is not absolutely forgotten part of language and experts should always consider the real importance of it and properly emphasise it.

## 5 PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The information resulting from the research is, in my opinion, quite useful for future teachers of English as well as for the Department of English. I am convinced that already the statistics are interesting and can show many facts. But there are also some, let say, recommendations or suggestions how to cope with these results.

First thing that should be mentioned here is the objective which was set by the Department of English regarding to pronunciation. Unfortunately, I do not know these objectives and they are certainly very different for individual degrees of study. But I think that there are many results, which are quite negatively surprising. In my opinion, many of them result from the fact that there are so many students of English on the master level who studied another subject on the bachelor level and who did not passed all the important subjects from the English studies. But these students are, according to survey, not the only ones who did not have e.g. some course of phonetics and phonology. Such subjects are often “played down” so that other aspects of language can have sufficiently high amount of lessons. This should not be considered as really negative but there is still some knowledge students should, in my opinion, have and it is not so. After I read some texts about pronunciation models and wrote this thesis, I am convinced that future teachers, translators and interpreters should be aware of the existence of pronunciation models, should think of it at least once and try to improve their language in this direction, when they prefer some local model. In case of recognition of the International English as somehow accepted and maybe possibly preferred variety of English this is not so important. But as I perceive it, the current tendency is not like this; students should therefore think of it at least a bit.

Very interesting topic for another research can be, in my opinion, the comparison of perception of pronunciation topic by not only Czech students of English, but also by students from e.g. Slovakia, Poland or other countries, possibly also from other continents, which are closer to e.g. Australia to realise whether the geographical location determines the preference of individual accents. Another possibility could be to ask students about their preference of particular pronunciation model and together with this analyse their discourse whether some crucial words correspond with their preference.

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## 7 SUMMARY IN CZECH

Cílem této závěrečné práce je popsat vybrané akcenty angličtiny, které jsou považovány za preferované Čechy učící se angličtinu, a vyzkoumat, zda jsou tyto popsané akcenty skutečně upřednostňované studenty jako výslovnostní modely.

Teoretická část popisuje jednotlivé akcenty - Received Pronunciation, General American accent, Scottish English a International English. Tyto všechny jsou autorkou považovány za nejčastěji vyučované a používané akcenty či modely angličtiny. Jsou popsány nejen z fonetického a fonologického, ale také z historického úhlu pohledu. U tří hlavních a všeobecně uznávaných akcentů jsou uvedeny příklady a kontrastní příklady.

Praktická část této práce se zabývá průzkumem skutečné aktuální situace a statusu výslovnosti a jednotlivých akcentů. Průzkum byl prováděn mezi studenty angličtiny ve dvou institucích – Západočeské univerzitě v Plzni a Karlově univerzitě v Praze. Výsledky jsou popsány a zhodnoceny v závěru této práce.

Výsledky výzkumu stejně jako poznatky z teoretické části mohou sloužit budoucím učitelům angličtiny, kteří chtějí svým studentům poskytnout nějaké informace o různých výslovnostních modelech. To může být velice vhodné a také by mělo být žádané a požadované jejich nadřízenými, protože výslovnost a jednotlivé výslovnostní modely tvoří velice důležitou část anglického jazyka.

## 8 APPENDIX

### 8.1 Questionnaires in written form and transcribed recordings

1. How long have you been studying English?

*I have been studying English for sixteen years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*I had to choose in my secondary school because of my teacher wanted me to, so I chose the British pronunciation, because it was most common pronunciation in our school.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*I do not know the real reason why. I only know that my mother wanted me to, because my sisters learned German, so she wanted me to learn English.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*Yes, I think that when we learned some new vocabulary, so we had to pronounce it properly, so we had to learn the pronunciation, so with every new vocabulary.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*I do not know, maybe my cousin. He lives in America since my ten years old, so I wanted to speak with him and be in connection with him and I like to talk in English, so he impressed me, I think.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*So, I was in Ireland for two weeks and I realized that my pronunciation is extremely different, so that made me thinking about it, but no influence.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*I prefer the RP pronunciation, British English, because I was taught this way, so I prefer the RP.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*I am more focused on grammar than pronunciation because I make mistakes in grammar more than pronunciation, but I am also concentrated on pronunciation, because my part time job is teaching young learners, so I have to pronounce properly because of them, not because of me.*

1. How long have you been studying English?

*15 years*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*3 years ago*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*It was compulsory at my school*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*Yes, I took specialized pronunciation seminars during my BA studies.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*I cannot think of anybody.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*No stay abroad*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*RP*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*A little, I rather concentrate on stresses and rhythm.*

1. How long have you been studying English?

*I have started studying English in 3<sup>rd</sup> degree at elementary school, so nowadays it is 17 years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*I think that I just follow the rules in my textbooks.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*At first, I learnt German (one week at elementary school). But a friend of mine told me that English is better so I changed my mind and I started to learn English.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*I had pronunciation lessons several semesters at university. It was an compulsory subject at bachelor study*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*Learning English was compulsory for me at elementary and secondary school and actually it was one of those few subjects in which I was good at. So I have continued to learn.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*No, it has not. I spent only a week in Brighton so it had not any impact on me.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*I do not like any special variation of English. I like Great Britain – but mainly in field of movies, books and music. I do not think that British English is better than American one. I think that I prefer such a variation of English which is understandable.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*I think that slight mistakes which do not obstruct to understand the meaning are ok.*



1. How long have you been studying English?

*I have been studying English for ten years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*I become to think about it three years ago.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*I think English is the best language. You can speak with this language, you can speak with this language in almost all states I think.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*No, I have not.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*I was impressed by my English teacher at school about five months ago, he is native speaker - from England.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*I have not been abroad for long time, but I am going to Ireland for 2 months and I think it will be better with my pronunciation after staying there.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*I prefer the American English, I think they have... in some words they have easier pronunciation for me.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*If I do not speak some important sentences I do not concentrate on it. But that is why I make mistakes.*

1. How long have you been studying English?

*I have been studying English more than ten years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*I've never thought about that.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*My parents decided when I was younger but I think it was very good thing.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*No, no, I can't remember.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*It was my English teacher at the primary school; she was great as a personality and teacher too. And she was a native speaker or? No, but she has lived in England for some time.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*I stayed in France for two months but for studying French and I have never stayed in Great Britain, America or Australia or any country.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*I don't know; I am not sure.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*It's problem to say what's the pure pronunciation and I think that I make mistakes, a lot of mistakes, but I don't have any special pattern to follow it.*

1. How long have been studying English?

*I have been studying English for eight or nine years since I was at high school. And then? What then? Now you are at the university. Yes. So for five years. No, for more than eight years because I started with English at high school, but before that I had some English lessons or classes. But basically it was when I was attending the high school that I started with English.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*When I was at university, because there we had a really great teacher of pronunciation and phonology and phonetics and she made us aware of various kinds of pronunciation models.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*Well basically, I started to learn English because it was compulsory at high school, but I wanted to be able to understand music or films or books, so it was, I can say it was from my motivation. If you know what I mean.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*Yeah, it was at university, because there we had the subject phonetics and phonology and we had to focus on our pronunciation and improve it, so it was this occasion.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*Well first, it was my teacher of phonetics and phonology and she was really great and she had really beautiful pronunciation and we all thought she is a native speaker, but she was Czech. It was really impressive. And then it was my another teacher at the university. He was my advisor during my bachelor thesis, so it was him because he had really impressive knowledge of literature and I love literature, so that is why.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*I have only been once in Great Britain and it was for one week so I think it did not influence my pronunciation much.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*I prefer American English because it sounds nicer to me than RP.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*Yes, as you can hear, I try to concentrate really hard on my pronunciation, but it is really difficult because I have to concentrate on many things, first, If I do not make many mistakes, then whether or not my pronunciation is correct or then whether my speech is understandable. So pronunciation is really important part of the way I speak English.*

1. How long have you been studying English?

*16 years*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*7 years ago*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*I was 8 years old. There was an eligible subject at my basic school.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*Yes, because wrong pronunciation can change meaning of the word. We focused separately just in case there was some tricky word. Teacher pronounced the word and we repeated...*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*In my case it would be more like "What" than "who". I watch a lot of movies and series in English and I don't like reading subtitles and I hate dubbing. Internet. Also I have cousin in Netherland and English is the only way to talk to her friends. We have foreign students at our school and I like to be able to communicate with them.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*I only visited non English speaking countries, so there was no influence. Perhaps I was a little influenced by native speaker we had in high school.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*I suppose you mean British/American? I like both of them. I prefer British, but it's more difficult for me, so I guess my accent is more American.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*I try. It is complicated. I realize I'm doing some mistakes, especially when talking quickly.*

1. How long have you been studying English?

*About 15 years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*About 8 years ago when I was in California for the first time.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*It was the first foreign language taught at all elementary schools then and nobody could really choose any other language. And, to answer your first question, usually when you start learning a language you are not able to think about the reasons or benefits it has later on.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*Yes, I have, but it wasn't much. When reading out or speaking, I used to be corrected by my teachers but in a very simple way, that is only the "th" sounds, the "a" sound (as in the word "fan"). Everything else was "Czenglish pronunciation".*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*Mostly natives, at first Americans, then British and Australians.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*Yes, it did for a while. I have been to California three times for two or three weeks so my accent was influenced that way. However, it has changed to British as I have talked to British more (and listened to British English).*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*I prefer to speak British English but I tend to switch between accents depending on with whom I am speaking at the moment. This reflects the fact that I like talking to people with various accents (mostly British, American, especially Californian, Australian).*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*Yes, I really do. I think it needs first time and then regular feedback. I usually make mistakes in grammar or collocations, not in pronunciation. I think concentrating on the correct pure pronunciation makes me speak slower and a bit jerky.*

1. How long have been studying English?

*I have studied English for almost twenty years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*In fact I would say I have never thought about choosing one pronunciation model of English.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*I started learning when I was attending basic school, because there was only choice between English and German language and I do not like German language. That is the reason why I chose English and also I like it and I take it for international communication language.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*I would not say I have ever focused just on pronunciation in some of the seminars that I attended at the university. Maybe it was part of some semiological seminar, but I have never had subject that would focused only on pronunciation.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*It was probably my first native English speaker. He was Australian, when I was attending grammar school and also later Canadian lector, I just liked the way of pronunciation, I mean the Canadian English, and the way they taught English, I liked this.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*In fact I have never stayed abroad in an English speaking country for longer than few days so I cannot actually answer this question properly.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*I probably prefer British English than American one.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*Sometimes I concentrate, sometimes not. ... complicated and I am sure I make many mistakes in pronunciation because sometimes I pronounce some words in American way, some words in British English pronunciation model so it is, I am not concentrating a lot on the concrete pronunciation.*

1. How long have you studied English?

*11 years*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*5 years after I started studying English*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*It was compulsory at my high school.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*Yes. The first year of studying English I asked my English teacher to recommend me a textbook with a tape/CD that would help me to learn the pronunciation and it really did.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*My first English teacher and some of my colleagues and professors at the university.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*Well, I stayed abroad for one semester in Moscow, but I lived with Americans for about four years in Prague which I guess helped me.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*British, but I tend to switch to the American variation while speaking with Americans/Canadians.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*I do try to concentrate. It depends on how difficult and new the word is for me. Sometimes I guess I do mistakes, but when I learn new words I try to learn them with their pronunciation.*

1. How long have you been studying English?

*I have been learning English for eleven years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*I guess that in Czech schools there is preferred the British English. I personally thought about it when I started university, met American teachers and watched American series. I was influenced by American English. However, I prefer British English after my stay in England.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*I started to learn English as my second foreign language, because my parents wanted it. English was a simple choice because it is a very common requirement when applying for a job and it is a foreign language number 1, you can use all over the world.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*Yes, when I have been to England I asked my English friends to correct my pronunciation. And I usually look for the pronunciation in dictionary, when I learn/meet a new word. So yes, I focus on pronunciation individually.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*I really liked most of my English teachers, some of them were Czech, and some of them were native speakers. It depends on the personality of the teacher.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*I have been to Plymouth, England for 3 months. I must say that my English improved a lot and within my pronunciation too.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer? RP/GA etc.

*I liked both American English and British English, because I have met American teachers and I have been to England. But I prefer now British English because of my stay there and friends I have met.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*I think that pronunciation in English is very important and to be able to express yourself in a right way you need to pronounce correctly. It is complicated when I meet new words which I don't know, so sometimes I hesitate how to pronounce them and I also make mistakes. I don't concentrate on the words I usually use, it became somehow automatic.*



1. How long have you been studying English?

*I have been studying English since the fourth grade at the elementary school, so about 14 years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*Probably at university, during my bachelor university studies.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*We had to choose between English and German and all at my elementary school decided for English so there was no another choice.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*I don't think so and I think it's a bit shame because pronunciation is definitely important, it's not the most important thing, but I think it is a shame, definitely.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*Some native speakers probably. We had for example ... at my master studies, we had one Scottish man who is about 80 years old and is really perfect.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*I have not been abroad for longer time yet.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*RP, probably BBC English.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*I definitely do mistakes. And I try to concentrate on my pronunciation but it depends, because when I'm e.g. interpreting, the most important thing is to pass the message and not to speak correctly so you have to concentrate on so many things that pronunciation is probably the last one, unfortunately.*

1. How long have you been studying English?

*So I have been studying English for 15 years already.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*I have never thought about such pronunciation model, so I learned such pronunciation model as my teacher taught.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*Maybe because English is easier to learn and I think that I need much more to speak English than any other language.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*I don't know. Never. No lessons. I can't remember any special pronunciation lessons in my study.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning? Some native speaker or some really good teacher of English?

*It was my decision to start to learn English, I have no model or idol or impressor.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*I was once in London, but it was only a trip so I have never been abroad for a long time to be influenced or to my pronunciation to be influenced by any stay*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*British, maybe I prefer British variation of English. And do you know what does it mean, the British English? No. I don't know what does mean. It is only a kind of, the way of pronunciation. On British islands. Yes. Generally.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*I am sure that I make a lot of mistakes and I have never been concentrated on my pronunciation, I am just speaking, I am just talking and for me is the most important thing to be understood.*

1. How long have you been studying English?

*I have been studying English for twelve years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*Well, I have always been taught the RP so I never had a chance to think of it.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*It was my parents' choice for me, because my father has been an English teacher and I really like English, I like this sound of English so that was why I decided to learn it.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*Probably only when dealing with new vocabulary, so we went through pronunciation, how to say it properly, but otherwise I don't think so.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*After my graduation I spent one year at the language school and there was one American teacher and he was really great and I really liked his way of pronunciation so we spent many many hours speaking in American.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*I have never been to English speaking country before, I have only been in Ireland for two weeks and it was really great experience, because I met many different dialects and sounds. It was very good and since that I started thinking of pronunciation much much more.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*I really like American English because I can meet it everywhere, especially when watching some movies, but in class I prefer Received Pronunciation because that's what most of my students can meet.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*So, I definitely try to focus on pure pronunciation, but everybody makes mistakes and so do I and I would like to speak properly, but sometimes it's not so easy, especially when I meet some new vocabulary I don't know.*

1. How long have you been studying English?

*I started at secondary school so approximately 11 years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*At secondary school I learned some features of American English pronunciation, but I started focusing on pronunciation at university (a course of phonetics).*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*It was one of the two languages offered by my secondary school so I chose English as my first second language ☺*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*Only at university during phonetics lessons.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*Various teachers.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*Yes – I lived in Bratislava and went to an American school for two years. I picked up a bit of American pronunciation but still sounded very Czech ☺ Now I speak British English which I learned at university*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*RP English*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*Yes, I do. I enjoy it and think I'm doing pretty well. Only when I'm concentrating hard on what I am saying I guess my pronunciation is sloppier and more Czech.*

1. How long have you been studying English?

*I have been studying English for about eleven years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*It was at the university... Or maybe at high school because there we had one really bad teacher and one really good teacher and I wanted to be as the good teacher and not as the bad one. She was terrible so we did not want to have the same pronunciation as she had. And later I was thinking about the choice between the British and American English, but until now I have not really decided which one I want to choose. I like the British one, but my pronunciation is some mixture of both of them.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*When I was at the primary school, I started with German so the next language I wanted to learn was definitely English.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*I have to say that we have never focused separately on pronunciation. Last year I had some subject about pronunciation or phonetics and phonology, but it was not obligatory so I was not there regularly.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*It was definitely one teacher at high school; she was very young, impressive and full of enthusiasm and she made us excited about this language. Before her, we did not want to learn English but with her it was really good and easy for us, so she was the first person who impressed me and then some teachers at the university, because when they had very good pronunciation, of course I wanted to have the same or very similar, so I tried to but I am not good.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*I have not been abroad for longer than one week, so I think nothing has influenced my pronunciation... Nothing like some stay.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*I like the British one; I do not like the American one so much. And I know there are some others as Canadian or Australian and I think that they can be quite nice, but I like the British one it is a bit more complicated and I like the more complicated things, so I would say that the British one.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*Sometimes I try to concentrate on having correct pronunciation, but sometimes I want to express myself in some very complicated way and then I do not have capacity to think of pronunciation. So I very often make mistakes and I am trying not to make it, so I am looking for pronunciation in dictionaries or I am playing some words or singing with songs, so I am trying to improve it.*

1. How long have you studied English?

*It hurts to say that for about twenty years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*At the very beginning of my studies, i.e. age of eight or nine approx. The textbook and recordings were following British standards, which influenced my decision making.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*It was a compulsory elementary school course.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*Yes, I have. By paying close attention to phonetics as explained in textbooks, first, and second, by listening to native speakers thoroughly.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*One particular teacher. And Monty Python's.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*No, it did not. My pronunciation patterns had already been developed when I got abroad (which was too late, at the age of twenty two). The longest stay – Midlothian, Scotland, two months – affected only certain aspects and rather sharpened what I had already grasped.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*British English; strong influence of the North and dialects of the Celtic Fringe.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*Yes, I struggle to. I dare say I make few mistakes in common words I have used thousands of times before. New or complicated vocab needs a kind of focus. However, I tend to be able to guess what the correct pronunciation is in the majority of cases (notable exception: foreign words in English).*

1. How long have you been studying English?

*I have been learning English for 14 years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*It could be maybe in the sixth class of primary school when we learned something about the pronunciation of British English.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*I did not choose it because it was obligatory.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*From time to time and it was in form of some exercises, pronunciation exercises.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*Maybe it was my teacher at the grammar school, it was Mrs. Picková because her English was absolutely great and she has really great style of teaching.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*I was in England but only for one week, so it is not possible to learn many new things. But yes, maybe in pronunciation it was useful in some direction but I cannot describe how.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*I prefer British English, I like British English.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*I really try to concentrate on it but it is not so easy because there are some words which can make problems.*

1. How long have you been studying English?

*I have been studying English for eight years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*When I was seventeen years old, I went to America and that is actually how I learned English I think that my English is American.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*Because, like, how I said, when I was seventeen my parents made me go to the US so that is why I started to learn English.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*I do not think so, not that I would focus. I think... Because I was learning abroad I think my pronunciation was learned in the process.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*Definitely my husband whom I met in America seven years ago and since that I am with him every day so he is definitely my model.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*Yes, definitely. My English is very American I think and it is of course because when I started to learn, I was there, and I have to say for two months I was in England and when I came back, my English was very British, so I think that it is very influencing, the environment is very influencing on your English. And how long have you been to the US? For the first it was whole year.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*Definitely American.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*I do not think I concentrate on my pronunciation. And yes, it is very complicated and yes, I do make lot of mistakes.*



1. How long have been you studying English?

*I have been studying English for eleven years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*Last year, before my teaching practice, I was thinking about choice of one pronunciation model because I wanted to present to my student somehow pure language.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*My first foreign language is German and I think that English is very important, useful and international language, so I chose it.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*I had seminars of phonetics and phonology and there we focused on pronunciation and intonation.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*Our first teacher had terrible pronunciation, so I did not want to have the same. My ideals were my sister and our second teacher of English, who was young, enthusiastic and qualified.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*I have not been to some English speaking country yet. But now I am going to spend some time in Scotland and I think that this will influence my pronunciation.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*It depends on individual speakers. Some of them do impress me, irrespective of whether they are Brits or Americans.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*For me, it is very hard to use only one pronunciation model. I was influenced by many different native speakers, from UK, Ireland and USA as well and I often do not recognize which model I actually use. But I know that I do not use pure model and make mistakes.*

1. How long have you been studying English?

*For about 10 years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*4 years ago, at the university.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*My first foreign language at the basic school was German, the second one was English – it was obligatory, but I knew it was important to start learning it.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*At the university, within my phonetics course – we learnt about pronunciation and analyzed recordings of our own English pronunciation.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*Several English teachers, especially the British ones.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*No, I have only spent some time in German speaking countries yet.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*British English*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*I don't concentrate on pronunciation, my language production is spontaneous. I probably make mistakes with some words I only know passively.*

1. How long have you been studying English?

*I have learned English since I was 11, so due to my age I have learned this language for over 25 years. However, I cannot say that I can fluently speak English.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*During my studies at the University and hearing the native speakers.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? Why did you choose this language?

*When I was 10 I began to learn German and I liked it. My private German teacher taught English, too. So I decided to visit also her English lessons. In that time, all pupils had to learn Russian. German or English meant for me more opportunities to be better, to be able to communicate with the "West", to have a chance to travel abroad and maybe once to visit my relatives in Australia (which unfortunately has not happened yet).*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*Not much. My old private English teacher from my childhood was not in contact with native speakers, my secondary school teacher did not like teaching English,... First I have focused on pronunciation during my studies at the University where I was taught by native speakers. It was the first time I have heard the real English.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*I was mainly influenced just by my tutors at the University and in the International Summer Language School where we (students) were forced to speak only in English because of the fact that in particular groups there were students from other countries.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*Unfortunately I have not stayed in any English speaking country for longer time yet. However, I spend four years living in Germany. This stay has strongly influenced my German pronunciation and my vocabulary. I learned not only to speak the literary German but I learned spoken language and dialects.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*I prefer British English which I am able to learn from various learning materials (course books, CDs,...), which I am able to understand and to teach my pupils.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*I try to concentrate on having the correct pronunciation. Because of the lack of experience with the native language I feel doubt in my English. In comparison with my German I am absolutely not sure about the correct pronunciation. But I think my pronunciation is not influenced by any wrong aspects like colloquial expressions, slang,... I am sure I make mistakes.*

1. How long have you been studying English?

*I have been studying English for thirteen years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*I think that I started to think about it at the university for the first time because there were lot of people with the different pronunciation. For example at the primary school it was only kind of Czenglish.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*At the primary school we could choose from two languages – French and English and I chose English because it is international and more useful language in my opinion.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*No, I have not, I learned pronunciation with words.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*I was impressed by the teachers at the university. Part of them were native speakers and another part were really professionals in their field.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*I think it has not because I have never been so long abroad. It has been only for a few days in London.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*When I speak I prefer the American English but I really like the British accent.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*Yes, I concentrate myself on having the correct pronunciation. And I think it is complicated when you learn some words with the wrong pronunciation. Then it is hard to get used to the correct version. And if I make mistakes? I am not the native speaker so I think it is possible that I make some mistakes but of course I do not want to.*

1. How long have you been studying English?

*I have been learning English for about 15 years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*Well, first I thought of that when I came to the university.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*Because I thought that English is very important language nowadays, it is international language, lingua franca, and I think it is really important to know at least one international language.*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*Never.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*Well, mostly my native speaker teachers at the university because at grammar school I met only one native speaker.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*I have never been to English speaking country, so no. Not yet.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*British, because I really love the British pronunciation. I love British nation, habit, you know, the whole package. And I think that British is really sweet and brilliant.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*Well, yes, I think that I do really many mistakes. I think I speak well when I am alone and when I am reading loudly, etc. But when I am not concentrating, I feel that I speak something really in terrible way.*

1. How long have you been studying English?

*I have been learning English for 13 years.*

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

*I started to think about pronunciation when I was at the primary school. There we had only teachers with British accent so I had no choice.*

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language?

*I have started to learn English at the elementary school, have chosen English because it is considered to be a "Lingua Franca".*

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How?

*I did not focus much, in other words my teachers did not, and there were a few exercises that concentrated on pronunciation.*

5. Who did impress you through your English learning?

*The person who impressed me much was my teacher at the grammar school, who really made the effort to teach me English properly.*

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

*I have spent some time in London, which had a big influence on my English language.*

7. What variation of English do you prefer?

*I do not prefer any variation of English.*

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

*I am trying to pay attention to my pronunciation, because if not it can be difficult to understand me. And of course I do mistakes, because I am not a native speaker.*

1. How long have you studied English? *About 16 years.*
2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English? *Only after I started studying English at a university.*
3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language? *Compulsory foreign language classes in primary school.*
4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused separately on pronunciation? How? *Yes; mostly focused on pronunciation of separate words, repeating words after teacher and such.*
5. Who did impress you through your English learning? *First teachers, later films and TV.*
6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay? *I've never been abroad for more than a week, so I'm not aware of any influence it might have had.*
7. What variation of English do you prefer? *British (Received Pronunciation).*
8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes? *I do try to pronounce correctly, but I often mix in American pronunciation by mistake and I pronounce some of the vowels wrong.*

1. For how long time do you learn English? (*age – this can influence the awareness of pronunciation and possible choice of preferred model*)

I have been learning English for twelve years. Now I'm 24.

2. When did you become to think of the choice of one pronunciation model of English?

When I was at high school, our teacher spoke about differences between American and British English. She taught us according to British model of pronunciation but the American movies, songs or series influenced me as well.

3. Why did you start to learn English? / Why did you choose this language? (*integrative/instrumental reason*)

I started to learn English because my parents told me it is necessary. And they were right because this language is used all over the world and nowadays it is something like universal language for many countries.

4. Within your English lessons, have you ever focused individually on pronunciation? How?

Yes, I asked my friend from USA how my pronunciation was and she helped me with it.

5. Who did impress you through your English learning? (*some native speaker or competent Czech teacher...*)

I like all my English teachers, some of them were British, some Americans, but I also like my Czech teachers. I can't say who impressed me more.

6. Has your stay abroad influenced your pronunciation in any direction? How long and where was the stay?

I didn't stay in any country more than a month so I think this experience didn't influenced my pronunciation.

7. What variation of English do you prefer? *RP/GA etc.*

I have to say I like the BBC English because it sounds nice and sophisticated. But in my experience I prefer American model of pronunciation because I think it is more easy for me and I don't have greater problems with it.

8. Do you really concentrate on having the correct pure pronunciation? Is it complicated? Do you make mistakes?

Yes, when I am teaching my students, I try to concentrate on it, speaking slowly and in a right way. But when I am talking with my friend I speak naturally without long concentrating on it. I think that pronunciation is important part of English but I also think that non-native speakers should speak in their way and if it is not disturb understanding of the meaning, their pronunciation needn't be according to any model.