

English Pronunciation Difficulties among Czech Students: Causes and Compensation Strategies

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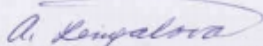
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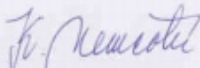
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ABSTRAKT

Tato práce se zaměřuje na anglické výslovnostní problémy mezi českými mluvčími, jejich příčiny a případné kompenzační strategie. V práci jsou navrženy čtyři hlavní problematické oblasti anglické výslovnosti, které zahrnují sedm konsonantů. Tyto oblasti byly pozorovány ve výzkumu pomocí komparace audio nahrávek rodilého mluvčího a českých mluvčích angličtiny. Dále tato práce nabízí kompenzační strategie, které byly zpracovány formou příručky, která je také součástí práce.

Klíčová slova: výslovnostní problémy, příčiny, problematické oblasti, konsonanty, kompenzační strategie

ABSTRACT

The thesis in hand focuses on English pronunciation difficulties among Czech speakers or learners of English, their possible causes and possible compensating strategies. It proposes four main problematic areas of English pronunciation which include seven consonants. These areas have been observed in a comparative research through the voice recordings of a native speaker and the Czech speakers of English. Furthermore, this thesis also offers several compensation strategies compiled in a form of a booklet which is also a part of the thesis.

Keywords: pronunciation difficulties, causes, problematic areas, consonants, compensating strategies

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	10
1.1 Motivation.....	10
1.2 Objective of the Thesis.....	10
1.3 Structure of the Thesis.....	11
I THEORY	13
GLOSSARY	14
2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	16
3 EXPLANATION OF THE GENERAL TERMS	17
3.1 ‘Good’ speech and ‘bad’ speech.....	17
3.2 ‘International’ English.....	17
3.2.1 Foreign language.....	18
3.2.2 Second language.....	18
4 INTRODUCTION TO THE SYSTEM OF CZECH AND ENGLISH CONSONANTS	19
4.1 Introduction to the system of English consonants.....	19
4.2 Introduction to the system of Czech consonants.....	20
4.3 English consonants mispronounced by Czech speakers.....	21
4.3.1 Dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/.....	22
4.3.2 Aspirated plosives /p, t, k/.....	23
4.3.3 Bilabial approximant /w/.....	24
4.3.4 Velar nasal /ŋ/.....	25
II ANALYSIS	26
5 INTRODUCTION	27
5.1 Methodology.....	27
5.2 Material.....	28
6 ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH	29
6.1 Speakers’ background information.....	29
6.1.1 Speaker No.1 - 8.....	31
6.1.2 Speaker No.9-16.....	33
6.2 Analysis of the voice recordings.....	34
6.2.1 Pre-self-assessment.....	35
6.2.2 Mistakes in production of /θ/.....	35
6.2.3 Mistakes in production of /ð/.....	37

6.2.4	Mistakes in production of /p/	38
6.2.5	Mistakes in production of /t/	38
6.2.6	Mistakes in production of /k/	39
6.2.7	Mistakes in production of /w/	40
6.2.8	Mistakes in production of /ŋ/	41
6.2.9	Post-self-assessment	41
7	CAUSES OF THE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES	43
7.1	Foreign Accent Interference	43
7.1.1	Critical Period Hypothesis	43
7.2	Teacher's pronunciation ability	44
7.3	Music aptitude absence	44
7.4	The Four Modalities	45
7.4.1	Auditory channel (A)	46
7.4.2	Visual channel (V)	46
7.4.3	Kinesthetic channel (K)	46
7.4.4	Tactile channel (T)	47
7.5	Avoidance of imitation	47
8	COMPENSATING STRATEGIES	48
8.1	'Overdo' mode	48
8.2	Adjustment to the types of learners	49
8.3	Teacher as the pronunciation model	50
8.4	Imitation	50
	CONCLUSION	53
	LIST OF FIGURES	56
	LIST OF CHARTS	57
	APPENDICES	58

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation

Teaching correct pronunciation, extendedly intonation or an accent has never been given much attention in the Czech educational system. As a consequence, the students of English did not consider the pronunciation to be something that matters. However, when it comes to the point of checking for an appropriate level of English pronunciation, we find out that very few of advanced students are aware of the specifics of English pronunciation.

I personally experienced a negative reaction from my English teacher to my pronunciation at grammar school. My nonspecific pronunciation (understand the inconsistent usage of different varieties of English) was considered a drawback in my overall knowledge of English. It served me as motivation to choose a particular kind of pronunciation, which was the British English variety in my case. I have also gained further knowledge about the peculiarities of English pronunciation in the course of Phonetics with Dr. Nemčoková. During my studies at the university I was asked many questions concerning my pronunciation, therefore, I decided to put my interest into this area as I do believe that pronunciation is a crucial part of language acquisition and all it requires is a mere practice.

I have experienced attempts by students on various levels to achieve the correct pronunciation and as I observed the level of English is no indicator of success. Naturally, the very beginners find some of the English consonants extremely difficult and so do students on higher levels. Not all pronunciation mistakes cause such a disturbance, word stress for example; however, there are some recurrent errors which certainly contribute to a non-native impression.

1.2 Objective of the Thesis

The objective of the thesis is to uncover the common English pronunciation difficulties that make the Czech speakers sound non-native. It is followed by an analysis of the causes and also some possible strategies for compensation.

In my research I have asked myself: What are the most common English pronunciation errors that make the Czech speakers sound non-native?

I argue that there are four main pronunciation difficulties among the Czech speakers:

- dental fricatives /θ/, /ð/

- aspirated plosives /p/,/t/,/k/
- bilabial approximant /w/
- velar nasal /ŋ/.

I assume that these errors are the result of a dominance of the phonetic system established in the L1 learning process which has become a model for the acquisition of L2. Naturally, students who tend to mix the sounds of two languages (Czech, English) will be automatically perceived as non-natives and in worse cases hardly intelligible.

For the purpose of my thesis I have focused on Czech speakers of English, concretely grammar school students on B2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. For one thing, the students have not attended a specific phonetic course, which allows us to make the observations in an ‘untouched’ area and reach the results which will be applicable to a greater number of English students as majority of Czech speakers of English do not attend a specialized phonetics classes. For another, the process of English acquisition on this level still covers all areas of the language learning process so raising the awareness of the importance of the correct English pronunciation may serve the students well not only in everyday English situations but also in their further studies, should they perhaps choose to study English philology. It should be mentioned that just a few students begin their English studies with an awareness of the correct pronunciation and fixing the pronunciation errors on higher levels seems to be a rather last-minute solution. Therefore, I would like to focus on pronunciation mistakes, their causes and compensating strategies in such a stage where the students have a thorough knowledge of the language itself, however, still have not experienced any phonetic education.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into three parts: the theoretical part, the practical part in which the research project is described and the analysis is processed and finally, the compensating strategies which will be enclosed in a form of a booklet. Data and material are to be found in the appendices.

The theoretical part deals with the general terms which are tied to the area of pronunciation and to the phonetic system of both Czech and English. Since the hypothesis states that the pronunciation difficulties are expected to occur in four groups of consonantal phonemes according to the place of articulation, these consonants will be

closely described in the theoretical part with some possible mispronunciations made by the Czech speakers.

The practical part will introduce the research project made by myself among the students of grammar school in spring 2014. The voice recordings of the Czech students will be compared with the voice recording of a native speaker. Consequently, I will evaluate the voice recording and analyze the pronunciation errors. As a completion of the research I will also analyze the causes of the pronunciation errors.

In the last, proposing part, I will try to introduce some compensating strategies which might enhance the pronunciation acquisition process and serve both students and teachers of English as a referential material. This material will be enclosed in a form of a booklet in the appendices.

I. THEORY

GLOSSARY

<i>ITEM</i>	<i>DEFINITION</i>
Alveolar	Adjective describing the area between the top front teeth and the hard palate
Articulating organs	Also articulators, are different parts of the vocal tract that enable us to produce different sounds of speech
Aspiration	Fortis plosives are accompanied by aspiration in initial positions of the accented syllable; aspiration is a voiceless interval consisting of strongly expelled breath between the release of the plosive and the onset of a following vowel (Gimson 1989)
Assimilation	Tendency of a phoneme to change its quality according to the neighbouring sound either fully or to some extent
Bilabial	Adjective describing the sounds made with lips pressed together, such as /m/ or /b/
Breathed	“Synonymous word for <i>voiceless</i> or <i>fortis</i> , which is characteristic for plosives like /p/, /t/, /k/ and where the usage of vocal chords is excluded”(Jones 1992, 13)
Labio-dental	Adjective describing those phonemes which are produced with the upper teeth touching the lower lips
Cerebral lateralization	It refers to the transfer of the functions from one half of the brain to another
Palatal	Adjective referring to the place of production of a phoneme in which the tongue and the soft palate is included
Palato - alveolar	Adjective referring to the place of production of a phoneme in which the tongue is moving from the palatal position to the alveolar ridge, as in /ʒ/
Glottal stop	One of the English phonemes recognized as a plosive consonant; in its production the obstruction of the air is formed by the vocal folds (Gimson 1989)
Phoneme	It is the smallest unit in phonetics which is used regularly in

	any language. It is represented by vowels and consonants as in e.g.: <i>pin</i> [pɪn] where /p/ stands for a consonant and [ɪ] for a vowel (Roach 2000)
Phonetic system	It is a complete set of all the phonemes in a language
Protruding tongue	The manner of pronunciation in which the tongue is in a position between the upper and lower front teeth; this sound in which the tongue protrudes between the teeth may be also called <i>interdental</i> (Ladefoged and Johnson 2014)
Segmental features	“Those features involve vowels and consonants, their airstream mechanism, states of glottis, primary and secondary articulations and formant frequencies” (Ladefoged and Johnson 2014, 253)
Subsegmental	“Those features are represented by nodes which group some of the features by reference to the notion of an articulator; gestures of those articulators specify the different places of articulation for vowels and consonants” (Wiese 2000, 28)
Suprasegmental	Adjective referring to those features, also known as <i>prosodic</i> , which are determined by length, pitch, intonation and a degree of stress (Gimson 1989)
Velar	Adjective referring to the manner of production of a phoneme in which the back of the tongue is raised against the palate, such as in /k/, /g/ and /ŋ/ (Roach 2000)
Voiced	Adjective referring to the manner of pronunciation of a phoneme in which the vocal chords are used, as e.g.: /b/, /d/, /g/.

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It was not until the Velvet Revolution in 1989 that the English education underwent radical changes. Before that, the communist era was not supportive of teaching of English and there were only few qualified teachers. The drawback of a general inability to visit the target English speaking countries was mainly demonstrated in the oral performance of English teachers and students as well.

Since the post-communist years went hand in hand with a huge interest in learning English, there was a great need for quality teaching practice and as Ondráček adds, this could not be reached without a thorough research (Ondráček 2011). He explains further that it was just a first step towards the re-establishment and that the individual subject teaching and its didactics should be rehabilitated as an individual science (Ondráček 2011).

With the membership in the European Union in 2004 the Czechs also realized that most of them will have to adapt to the English environment and that English will become the main tool in the communication not only among the member states but also with the whole world. Therefore, there is a need for educational researches in the field of quality teaching practice and subject didactics dedicated to the foreign languages as for example Ondráček did in order to provide the future English teachers with appropriate knowledge of teaching pronunciation. The fact that teaching pronunciation and teacher's ability to pronounce correctly is important can be manifested on the way the information is conveyed. Since most of the instructions, explanations, comments and also teacher-student discussions are held orally, the pronunciation has become a key element of pedagogical interaction (Ondráček 2011).

3 EXPLANATION OF THE GENERAL TERMS

Since English is used in various contexts by various speakers all over the world, it follows that the pronunciation does vary significantly and the deviation of the ‘correct’ or standard pronunciation has taken place widely. Since the focus of the thesis is the correct English pronunciation, we should get familiar with the actual meaning of the term ‘correct pronunciation’ as well as with the cursory divisions of English.

3.1 ‘Good’ speech and ‘bad’ speech

The reason for this thesis is so called ‘bad speech’ of the Czech speakers. However, such term might call for discussions what the ‘bad speech’ actually is. Roach suggests that it might be understood as “a way of talking which makes it harder for the listeners to understand” (Roach 2000, 6). Even more specific explanation is given by Jones who claims that ‘bad’ speech means that “it is caused by mumbling or lack of definiteness of utterance” (Jones 1956, 4). He also suggests that “for speech to be ‘good’ it must not only be clearly intelligible but also ‘pleasing’ to the hearer” (Jones 1956, 5).

Though, what we are doing here might seem as an attempt to perfectly copy certain pronunciation. There are many people among us who may speak with different sounds as Roach claims. “These people may use different sounds from those used by their listeners; however, when articulating clearly, the speech may be perfectly intelligible for the audience” (Roach 2000, 6).

3.2 ‘International’ English

With English spreading through the world and with 1.5 billion of people speaking English, it is logical that different emerging varieties of English will find their place next to those which are officially recognized (Crystal 2000).

English is the official language used in the English speaking countries like Great Britain, the United States, Australia and New Zealand or some states of Africa. However, the purpose of the English language usage does not lie solely in its official role but is rather referred to as the second language or foreign language due to the increasing number of non-native English speakers.

3.2.1 Foreign language

As Gramley states, in an unambiguous case, a foreign language is a language learned in school and employed for communicating with people from another country (Gramley 2004). This case truly reflects the position of English in the Czech Republic. The overall idea of teaching English in Czech schools is that students will then use their command of English in foreigner-to-foreigner situations. However, hand in hand with such an approach comes the lack of motivation of students of English to practice their pronunciation. As a consequence, students find themselves unable to understand in situations when they are forced to speak with a native speaker.

3.2.2 Second language

‘A second language, in contrast, may well be one learned in school, too, but one used within the learner’s country for official purpose and reinforced by the power of the state and its institutions’ (Gramley 2004, 314). Since there are many countries in Asia or Africa where English is the official or semi-official language, second language status is quite common. This is not a case of Czech Republic since English does merely have the foreign language status here and the official language has been Czech.

4 INTRODUCTION TO THE SYSTEM OF CZECH AND ENGLISH CONSONANTS

In comparison with the Czech phonetic system, English phonetic system contains several phonemes which are considered to be troublesome by most of the Czech speakers. The reason is relatively understandable since none of those phonemes appear in the Czech phonetic system and so Czech speakers of English tend to struggle in pronouncing them and in most of the cases they replace them with familiar Czech phonemes they find usable in a particular case. However, this often leads to misunderstandings as each phoneme has its own place of production and by changing those places of productions we may pronounce a different word with different meaning.

4.1 Introduction to the system of English consonants

‘English articulated sounds are called consonants while all the others produced without any obstruction in the mouth are called vowels’ (Jones 1956, 12).

As O’Connor explains, English consonant might be breathed or voiced. To every breathed consonant there is a voiced consonant. O’Connor further explains that breathed and voiced corresponding consonants are produced with the same position or movement of the articulating organs, but with voice substituted for breath and vice versa (O’Connor 1980). Another description is provided by Roach (2000, 49) who refers to the breathed (voiceless) consonants as to *fortis* (strong) and to the voiced as *lenis* (weak).

Jones (1956) introduces the English consonants as follows:

- Plosives
 - Breathed (voiceless) plosives (these plosives bear an aspiration)
 - Breathed (voiceless) bilabial plosive /p/
 - Breathed (voiceless) alveolar plosive /t/
 - Breathed (voiceless) velar plosive /k/
 - Their voiced counter-parts – voiced plosives
 - Voiced bilabial /b/
 - Voiced alveolar /d/
 - Voiced velar /g/
 - Glottal plosive /ʔ/ known as ‘glottal stop’
- Affricates

- Breathed palato-alveolar affricate /tʃ/
- Voiced or partially voiced palato-alveolar affricate /dʒ/
- Nasals
 - Voiced bilabial nasal /m/
 - Voiced alveolar nasal /n/
 - Voiced velar nasal /ŋ/
- Lateral
 - Voiced alveolar lateral /l/
- Fricatives
 - Breathed (voiceless) fricative
 - Breathed labio-dental fricative /f/
 - Breathed (voiceless) dental fricative /θ/
 - Breathed alveolar fricative /s/
 - Breathed palato-alveolar fricative /ʃ/
 - Breathed glottal fricative /h/
 - Voiced fricatives
 - Voiced or partially voiced labio-dental fricative /v/
 - Voiced or partially voice dental fricative /ð/
 - Voiced or partially voice alveolar fricative /z/
 - Voiced or partially voiced palato-alveolar fricative /ʒ/
 - Voiced post-alveolar fricative /r/¹
- Semi-vowels
 - Palatal semi-vowel /j/
 - Labio-velar semi-vowel /w/

4.2 Introduction to the system of Czech consonants

As Palková states, the Czech language consists of 31 sounds, 24 consonants and 7 consonant pairs which create other variations of one phoneme (Palková 1994). Contrary to

¹ According to Roach the articulation and distribution varies greatly among the English accents and the only recommended articulation is that what is called post-alveolar approximant in which the articulators approach each other but never actually makes a contact with any part of the roof of mouth (Roach 2000).

English we cannot find any traits of palatalization or aspiration in the Czech phonetic system.

In terms of production of the Czech consonants we differentiate 4 main characteristics of articulation:

- place of articulation
- manner of articulation
- soft-palate position
- vocal chords position (Palková 1994, 208).

According to Palková (1994, 209), the distribution of the consonants in terms of the place of articulation is as follows:

- Labial
 - bilabial - /p, b, m, ɸ/
 - labio-dental - /f, v, ɱ/
- Alveolar
 - prealveolar - /t, d, n, s, z, c, ʒ, ʃ, ʒ̣, r, l/
 - postalveolar - /š, ž, č, ʒ̣/
- Palatal - /tʃ, dʒ, ŋ, j/
- Velar - /k, g, ŋ, x, ɣ/
- Glottal - /ʔ, h/

Skaličková (1984, 76) distributes the consonants according to the manner of articulation as follows:

- Occlusives - /p, b, m, ɱ, t, d, n, tʃ, dʒ, ŋ, k, g, ŋ, ʔ/
- Semioclusives - /c, z, č, ʒ̣/
- Constrictives - /ɸ, f, v, s, z, š, ž, j, x, h, ɣ /, center - /l/, vibrants - /r, ř, ʃ̣/.

4.3 English consonants mispronounced by Czech speakers

From the general point of view, the most problematic area in which the Czech speakers of English tend to struggle will be understandably those consonants which cannot be found in the Czech phonetic system. Typically these are and for the purpose of the thesis were chosen:

- Dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/
- Aspirated Plosives /pʰ/, /tʰ/, /kʰ/

- Voiceless approximant /w/
- Velar Nasal /ŋ/

4.3.1 Dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/

As we mentioned above, there are certain consonants in English which are considered to be problematic for Czech speakers of English. Should we start with the most problematic ones, we would probably introduce the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ at first.

The production of the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ could be described as if the tongue were placed between the teeth (Roach 2000). At least, this is how the teachers usually describe the place of production to their students. From my own experience with elementary students, for the purpose of clear explanation, I also used this simplified version of description of the place of production. What tends to be an indicator of the dental fricatives in the speech seems to be a protruding tongue for which the students are usually motivated. I assume this has much to do with exaggerating as a promising tool leading to the effective pronunciation. However, as Roach explains further, the tongue is normally placed behind the teeth with the tip touching the inside of the lower front teeth and the blade touching the inside of the upper teeth (Roach 2000).

As far as the advanced students are concerned, pronouncing /θ/, /ð/ in isolation does come relatively easily. However, struggles appear when some other sounds accompany /θ/ and /ð/. For instance, a phrase “*No, thank you.*” is usually pronounced by Czech speakers either as /s/, therefore “*nou sank ju*”, or like /t/ without aspiration, therefore “*nou tank ju*”. As Jones explains, when /θ/ occurs between two consonants it is sometimes dropped or replaced by t, e.g. *mans* or *mants* for *manθs* (months) (Jones 1956). Similarly, assimilation of the neighboring sounds occurs when /θ/, /ð/ is accompanied by /s /t/ or /d/, e.g.: **/dəʊntjuθɪnkθəʊ/*, **/ðəðŋg/* or **/θɔrθrəʊt/*.

4.3.1.1 /θ/ mispronounced by Czech speakers

Most of the English speakers tend to pronounce /θ/ carelessly, either due to the inability to do so or simply because they do not find it necessary. This usually results in a replacement of /θ/ with different sound, such as /s/ or /t/. We can find such replacements in words like *something* - **/sʌmsɪŋ/*, *think*- **/sɪnk/*, here we can notice possible misunderstanding in terms of different meaning as English contains a word *sink* as well.

When talking to such a speaker we need to be familiar with the context in order to understand. However, *think* can also be pronounced with /f/ - */fɪnk/, this does not cause such a disturbance but the foreign accent interference is obvious here as the Czech speaker does not differentiate between two different phonetic systems in his phonetic learning.

4.3.1.2 /ð/ mispronounced by Czech speakers

Dental fricative /ð/ is mispronounced more often than /θ/. Though, the place and manner of articulation are the same, /ð/ is voiced while /θ/ is voiceless. Generally, we observe that /ð/ is being frequently replaced by /d/ in possessive pronouns *they*, *them* or determiners *the*, *this*. As Jones claims some RP speakers use /ð/ others /θ/ in words like *withdraw*, *withhold* - *wɪðdrɔː* or *wɪθdrɔː*, *wɪðhɔʊld* or *wɪθhɔʊld*. Typical error also occurs when /ð/ appears immediately in front of the alveolar plosives like /t/ or /d/ in combinations of prepositions and definite article, e.g.: *to the* (Jones 1956).

4.3.2 Aspirated plosives /p, t, k/

Aspirated plosives are one group of stop consonants which are defined by certain features in terms of manner of production. As O'Connor explains, "the breath is completely stopped at some point in the mouth, by the lips or tongue-tip or tongue-back, and then released with slight explosion" (O'Connor 1980, 39).

According to Roach the characteristics are as follow:

- Two articulators take place in a way they are pressed against each other so that no air is allowed to escape from the vocal tract, we call this a 'stricture'
- Having created the stricture in our vocal tract we now release the air from the vocal tract
- Due to the pressure behind the stricture while pronouncing the plosive and releasing the air, we can hear a noise called 'plosion'
- Some plosives are voiceless, such as /p/, /t/, /k/ and some are voiced, like /b/, /d/, /g/, therefore, in some parts of the plosive articulation we may notice a voicing (Roach 2000)

Roach calls these three phases a '*closing phase*', '*compression phase*' and '*post-release phase*'. He describes the closing phase as silent for /p/, /t/, /k/ and the compression phase as voiceless. "The last, post-released phase is significant in a way the air escapes through the vocal folds which is called 'aspiration' " (Roach 2000, 34).

As mentioned above, English has six plosives /p/, /t/, /k/, /b/, /d/, /g/ and all of them have a different place of articulation. Since there are cases in which the plosives are not fully pronounced but rather replaced by an alternative phoneme, I shall also mention the glottal stop /ʔ/ as a glottal plosive of less importance, taking place only in certain contexts (Roach 2000).

Aspiration as a manner of pronunciation of different phonemes is not usual in the Czech phonetic system. This led to the fact that those phonemes which bear and require the aspiration have also become a possible difficulty in pronunciation of English among some Czech speakers.

4.3.2.1 /p, t, k/ mispronounced by Czech speakers

Since /p, t, k/ are aspirated and thus differ from the Czech consonants, it is inevitable that the Czech speakers will encounter slight difficulties with producing the aspiration.

Pronunciation mistakes of the aspirated plosives are common in their initial positions, such as in *pin*, *park*, *peer* /pɪn, pɑ:k, piə/. In case of the mispronunciation of the aspirated /p^h/ for /p/ without an aspiration, the chances are that the English listener may understand /b/ at the beginning of the word, thus *bin*, *bark* and *beer* /bɪn, bɑ:k, biə/ might be acceptable (Gimson 1989).

The same applies to the consonant /t/. When in the initial position, the Czech speaker should pay attention to the mispronunciation of *try* /traɪ/ as *dry* /draɪ/ or *tune* /tju:n/ as *dune* /dju:n/.

Finally, /k/ can be misheard as /g/ when pronounced without aspiration, such as in *crate* /kreit/ and *great* /greɪt/ or in *cold* /kəʊld/ and *gold* /gəʊld/.

To conclude, as Gimson claims, the danger is particularly great for speakers of Roman and Slavic languages, where the distinction between the fortis and lenis plosives lies solely on the involvement of voice (Gimson 1989).

4.3.3 Bilabial approximant /w/

Bilabial approximant /w/ can be both voiced and voiceless depending on the place it occupies in a word. While at the beginning of the words *wet* or *wonder* it is voiced, in words where /w/ is followed by *h*, thus in 'wh' words or words like 'answer' or 'sword' it is a silent consonant. As Roach explains, though we classify the bilabial approximant /w/ among the consonants, from the phonetical point of view it has some features of a vowel; however, phonologically it acts as a consonant. "Phonetically /w/ is very similar to the vowel /u:/ and

we can observe this when we prolong the initial sound of *wet*” (Roach 2000, 64). The most common mistake among the foreign learners is to pronounce /w/ as a fricative. The friction is present only in certain contexts, when it is preceded by plosives /p/, /t/ or /k/, such as in words *twin* - /twin/, *quit* - /kwit/, there is no word beginning with *pw* (Roach 2000).

4.3.3.1 /w/ mispronounced by Czech speakers

As O’Connor explains, /w/ causes problems to those speakers who have a sound /v/ in their mother tongue but none like /w/. Under those circumstances they tend to replace /w/ by /v/ as in a word *one* - */vʌn/ instead of /wʌn/ (O’Connor 1980). Since Czech phonetic system does not contain the consonant /w/, this pronunciation difficulty is very frequent among the Czech speakers as well. Pronunciation in terms of /w/ and /v/ is not a one-sided matter but rather occurs as a reciprocal error. Therefore, students pronounce /w/ even when it is necessary, as in a word *visit* - */wɪst/ and vice versa, replace /w/ by /v/ when it actually should be pronounced as /w/.

4.3.4 Velar nasal /ŋ/

According to Gimson (1989) nasal consonant /ŋ/ corresponds to the oral plosive area of /k, g/. “In its production a total closure is made, soft palate is in its lowered position and the air escapes into the nasal cavity which gives the sound the special resonance provided by the naso-pharyngeal cavity” (Gimson 1989, 194). The occurrence of /ŋ/ is usual after the short vowels /ɪ, æ, ʊ, ʌ/ as in *sing* - /sɪŋ/, *tongue* - /tʌŋ/ or *rang* - /ræŋ/, however, rare after /e/, e.g. in *hen* - /hen/ (Gimson 1989). /ŋ/ is usually voiced, though there are exceptions where it may be partially devoiced, especially in case of syllabic /ŋ/ in a word *bacon* - /beɪkən/ (Gimson 1989).

4.3.4.1 /ŋ/ mispronounced by Czech speakers

Since Czech does offer /ŋ/ only as an allophone of /n/ preceding /k, g/ (Palková 1994), Gimson suggests that these speakers should avoid pronouncing /g/ in words in English where /ŋ/ is not followed by plosives, especially when it is followed by vowels such as in *singing* - /sɪŋŋ/ or *reading out* - /ri:diŋ aʊt/ (Gimson 1989).

ANALYSIS

5 INTRODUCTION

The main focus of the practical part is to map the pronunciation difficulties among Czech speakers with respect to particular English phonemes which were suggested by the hypothesis to be the most problematic. A research has been carried out among twenty Czech students of a grammar school with regular English tuition, of the same level and of the same age. Their voice recordings were compared to a voice recording of a native speaker who performed the utterances in standard British English.

5.1 Methodology

The research was divided into four parts.

1. **A list of short utterances** was drawn containing four problematic areas of pronunciation which are suggested in the hypothesis. These are fricatives /θ, ð/, aspirated plosives /p, t, k/, bilabial approximant /w/ and velar nasal /ŋ/. These four areas were further divided into seven groups which correlated with a particular phoneme. Each phoneme was performed in 6 utterances. Therefore, the overall list contained 42 utterances.
2. Since the objective of the thesis is not to observe the Czech speaker's pronunciation in isolation, the research participants were provided with a suggested pronunciation by the native speaker before they were asked to pronounce each utterance and recorded. **A voice recording by a native speaker** was made with the help of the recording studio at the Faculty of Multimedia Communications. The native speaker was kindly asked to perform a standard way of English pronunciation, i.e. with respect to stress, flow and intonation.
3. The actual research took place at the Grammar school of Tomas Garrigue Masaryk in Zlín. Prior to recording, the students were asked to fill in a **questionnaire** which served as a source of background information for the analysis. Since some of the speakers might have had pronunciation tuition of a kind, either by having spent some time abroad or having a regular, intense contact with English speaking relatives or friends, this needed to be taken into account when analyzing the results.
 - a. In the **pre-self-assessment** the participants were also asked to possibly assess their pronunciation skills. This was reached throughout direct questioning in the questionnaire where the students were given a sample sentence which

contained all four consonant groups and in which they were supposed to highlight any possible pronunciation difficulties of their own.

- b. Further, the conditions for effective **recording** were provided, i.e. a room with sufficient acoustics, headphones for a quality listening part and a quiet background. Since the students were called in pairs in order to save the time, the student filling out the questionnaire was given headphones as well to ensure privacy and prevent disturbance while the other one was recorded. The time allocated to each student including the recording and filling in of the questionnaire was approximately 10 minutes. Students being recorded were provided with headphones in order to listen to the native speaker. By listening to the native speaker first, they became familiar with the preferred pronunciation and were able to repeat it. The objective of the research is not to observe the speakers' pronunciation in isolation. This might lead to a possible extra outcome of the voice recording which could mantle the aim of the research, which is to map pronunciation difficulties concerning the four consonant groups. As the voice recording of the native speaker was managed in advanced, it gave the student enough time for repetition after each utterance.
4. Students were asked to finish the last part of the questionnaire which was retrospection on their pre-self-assessment and now served as a **post-self-assessment**. By involving the students into the analysis of their own voice recordings, the conductor of the research was provided with further knowledge which might enhance the analysis of the results. Furthermore, the chances are that the students might become more interested in the pronunciation difficulties they have and in their further elimination.

5.2 Material

All materials used for the research are to be found in the appendices, i.e.: the list of utterances, the questionnaire and the evaluation list. The voice recordings of the native speaker and the Czech speakers are to be found on the enclosed CD, which is attached to the thesis.

6 ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH

The questionnaire used for the purpose of the research was a crucial part of the voice recordings as it served as background information about the students and their English learning experience. The questionnaire contained 16 questions which concerned the general personal data, the attitude towards English, learning strategies, their perception of mixed pronunciation in their English lessons and finally their pre- and post-self-assessment.

6.1 Speakers' background information

Since the analysed sample contains 16 research subjects/participants, the analysis of the questionnaires has been done in a form of a table containing all the questions included in the questionnaire apart from questions number 15 and 16 which are the object of the voice recordings itself. For the purpose of better understanding to the chart data, an explanation precedes. Abbreviations introduced in the explanatory part were formulated by the author.

<i>Explanatory</i>	
ELSP	English Language Study Period (years)
AT	Attitude
Cert.	Language certificate
CL	Current level
SA	Stay Abroad
PD	Predispositions
LS	Learning Strategy
SP	Subject Preferences
MP	Mixed pronunciation ('Czenglish'), teacher/classroom/ both
EV	English Variety
CPM	Class Pronunciation Method
AC	Actual Pronunciation



M	Male
F	Female
Sub	School subject
H	Hobby
B2	According to CEFR – Vantage (FCE)
Par.	Parents
Rel.	English speaking relatives
V	Visual channel
Aud.	Auditory channel
A	CZ/EN/GE, Music, Art Education
B	Maths, Physics, Chemistry
C	Social Science, Law, Philosophy, Psychology
Class	Classroom
BrE	British English
AmE	American English
IND	Individually
	Electronic dictionary + listening
♥	Pronunciation learned by heart
	Ability to read phonetic symbols

Chart 1 Explanatory notes to questionnaire analysis

Speaker	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Gender	M	M	F	M	F	F	F	F
2.Age	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
3.ELSP	9	9	7	12	10	12	10	9








4.AT	Sub	H	H	Sub	H	H	H	H
5.Cert.	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
6.CL	B2	B2	B2	B2	B2	B2	B2	B1
7.SA	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES
8.PD	NO	NO	Par	NO	NO	Par	Par	Par
9.LS	V	V	V	Aud.	ALL	V	V	Aud.
10.SP	C	B	B	B	B	C	C	C
11.CPP	NO	NO	Class	Class	Both	Class	Class	Class
12.EV	BrE	BrE	?	?	?	?	?	AmE
13.EPE	Charts	Tape	Charts	Charts	IND	Charts	Teacher	Charts
14.PR								♥

Chart 2 Participants' data analysis, speaker No.1-8

Each speaker's performance in the voice recordings and the data collected via the questionnaire were compared and evaluated. The outcome is as follows.

6.1.1 Speaker No.1 - 8

The first half of the subjects is not monolithic; however, it includes various attitudes and abilities. All the speakers are of the same age, thus 17-years old, and the period of studying English varied from seven to twelve years of experience. However, it was observed that there is no interconnection between the English study period and the speaker's performances. For instance, the speaker No.4 and No.6 have spent the longest time studying English, however, their performances were comparable if not excelled by the less experienced speakers, namely speaker No.5. The explanation of the differences in the pronunciation ability might be found in the part of 'stay abroad'. Speakers No.3, 5 and 8 have stated they had spent some time abroad. It does not apply to speakers No. 3 and 8, however, speaker No. 5 has displayed a respectable ability to pronounce most of the sounds correctly.

We can find all types of learners among the speakers, since all visual, auditory and kinesthetic channels have been marked at some point.

As for the subject preferences, we have encountered four cases of analytical thinking represented by a letter B, moreover, speaker No. 5 who counts for the most experienced has also stated it.

Apart from two, all of the speakers assume that mixed pronunciation, known as ‘Czenglish’ is present in their English lessons.

Only three speakers have named their variety of English, namely speaker No.1 and 2 marking the British English variety, and speaker No. 8 marking the American English variety. Having compared the voice recordings of the speakers with the native speaker, no aspects of British English were observed at speaker No. 1 nor 2. Speaker No.8 manifested a single similarity with American English, specifically in the rolling r.

It was also observed that there is no relation between the learning type and the way the speakers acquire the actual pronunciation. For instance, speaker No. 1, 3, 6 and 7 chose a visual channel as their preferred learning strategy, however, it does not correspond with the way they acquire the actual pronunciation, in their cases all of them rely on the electronic dictionaries.

As for the pronunciation mistakes in the research, the speakers struggled mainly in the following areas:

- frequent replacement of /θ/ with /f/
- frequent replacement of /d/ for /ð/
- speakers omitted the aspiration at /p, t, k/
- excessive /g/ in words like *morning*, *evening*, *longing* and *young* */mɔ:nɪŋg, i:vɪŋg, lɔŋŋg, jʌŋg/

Speaker	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1.Gender	F	M	M	F	F	F	F	F
2.Age	17	16	16	17	17	16	16	17
3.ELSP	8	7	8	14	9	9	9	8
4.AT	Sub	H	Sub	H	H	H	H	H
5.Cert.	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
6.CL	B2	B2	B2	B2	B2	B2	B1	B2
7.SA	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
8.PD	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	No	Rel.









9.LS	Aud.	Aud.	ALL	Aud.	ALL	Aud.	Aud.	V
10.SP	B	B	C	C	A	A	A	B
11.CPP	Class	NO	Class	Class	Both	Both	Both	Both
12.EV	AmE	?	BrE	?	?	Czech	?	BrE
13.EPE	Chart s	IND	Charts	Chart s	IND	Tape	Tape	Charts
14.PR								

Chart 3 Participants' data analysis, speaker No.9-16

6.1.2 Speaker No.9-16

This half of the participants proved to be the more experienced one, especially due to remarkable abilities of the last four speakers.

The English study period varied more significantly than in the first half of the speakers, ranging from 8 to 14 years. The evaluation has again shown that there is no interconnection between the length of learning English and the pronunciation ability. For instance, the speaker No. 12 has been studying English for 14 years which is twice as long as speaker No.10, however, speaker No.10 has shown greater ability to pronounce almost all the sounds accurately.

It was also observed in the part 'stay abroad' that the speakers have no further experience with the English native environment apart from speaker No.16. On the contrary, the performances of some of them, namely speaker No.10 and 15, were considered to be almost native-like.

The attitude of the speakers towards English language, however, may correspond with their pronunciation ability they performed as most of them marked English as their hobby.

Apart from speaker No.16 who stated that she has some English-speaking relatives, the rest of the speakers was not aware of any predispositions. Speaker No.16 proved to be a skilled English speaker as her voice recording did not contain any severe pronunciation mistakes; however, if I compare the abilities of speaker No.10, 15 and 16, the pronunciation ability seemed to be native-like and almost impeccable in speaker No.15.

As for the learning strategies, the one that prevails is the auditory channel followed by the kinesthetic channel, i.e. where the speakers use all of their senses.

The relation was discovered between the subject preference and the pronunciation ability, as speaker No.15 scored almost 100% in production of all the sounds and marked

the languages and art to be her subject preference. Speaker No.10 who also scored high, preferred technical subjects, which may be interpreted that he possesses analytical thinking.

As far as the mixed pronunciation, thus ‘Czenglish’ is concerned, this half of students was stricter and marked both classmates and a teacher to be prone to the deviation from the correct, or preferred pronunciation.

Varieties of English have been represented similarly as in the first half. British English was chosen twice, by speaker No.11 and speaker No.16 and American English was chosen by speaker No.9. As far as the preceding three cases are concerned, British English variety is applicable to the speaker No. 16 who correctly avoided pronouncing rolling r and rather replaced it by schwa /ə/ as in *parts* /pɑ:ts/, *either* /aɪðə/ or *paper* /peɪpə/. Speaker No.9 manifested, as well as speaker No.8, a single similarity with American English, specifically in the rolling r. In addition, the speaker lacked aspiration on /t/ in *better* /betər/ and *matter* /mætər/. English variety of Speaker No.11 could be evaluated as American English variety rather than British English variety due to a significant rolling r. Finally, the interconnection between the preference of the learning strategy and the acquisition of the actual pronunciation proved to be irrelevant. A match was found only in two cases, namely speaker No.14, who preferred auditory consequently chose electronic dictionary as the way of acquiring the actual pronunciation, and speaker No.16 preferred visual channel and marked the reading of the phonetic symbol as her way of acquiring the actual pronunciation.

The most frequent mistakes which I encountered in the speakers were as follows:

- replacement of /θ/ for /f/ was present, however, it was considerably less than in the first half
- replacement of /ð/ for /d/
- excessive /g/ in *morning*, *hungry*, *sang*, *song* and *evening* */mɔ:nɪŋg, sæŋg, sɒŋg, i:vɪŋŋg/

6.2 Analysis of the voice recordings

In the analysis I attempted to map the pronunciation difficulties of the seven consonants /θ, ð, p, t, k, w and ŋ/ which were proposed by the hypothesis to be the most problematic ones among the Czech speakers.

The assessment of the speakers’ performances was done in a form of a case analysis. For each consonant six utterances were created. Each utterance contained one to four words – cases, which represented the target sound. Consequently, the cases were selected

and transferred to the evaluation list. Each sound was then analyzed individually in each speaker. Since the evaluation list showed clarity and specificity, seven graphs were created in order to provide the reader with a tangible outcome.

Prior to and after the voice recordings the speakers were asked to do their self-assessment.

6.2.1 Pre-self-assessment

In this part the speakers were asked to mark any sound which they considered to be a possible pronunciation difficulty. They were given the following sentence which contains all four problematic areas:

The think tank expressed a strong dislike with the whole concept of production, even though, the proposal seemed to be extremely innovative and effective.

Speakers have marked the sounds as follows:

Though, tank, whole, think, production, proposal, innovative, effective, expressed.

Speakers have marked both consonants and vowels. Since the purpose of the research is to map the pronunciation difficulties within the consonant groups, we will focus solely on them. The comparison with the actual pronunciation problems recorded will be provided in the post-self-assessment part.

6.2.2 Mistakes in production of /θ/

The speakers have encountered some difficulties when pronouncing the sound /θ/. The most frequented mispronunciation was /f/, however, the speakers scored nearly the same percentage in accurate delivery of /θ/. It was observed that in the combination with the approximant /r/ the manner of the production improved, this might have been caused by the fact that the rolling /r/, which prevailed among the speakers, kept the tongue in a rolled position, thus the tongue was in the vicinity of the articulators involved in the correct manner of production of the sound /θ/ and the usual labio-dental manner of production of /f/ was avoided.

Apart from subject No.15 each speaker pronounced /f/ at least in one target sound. More than half of the speakers mispronounced /θ/ as /f/ in breath, three, worth and think */bref, fri:, wɜ:θ, fɪŋk/.

Further, the speakers pronounced /t/ without aspiration and for its place of articulation they chose the same, thus protruded tongue touching the edge of the front upper teeth, as in /θ/, such as in *thousand* */taʊzɪnd/. It was also observed that 4 speakers pronounced /t/ in *Thursday* */tɜ:zdeɪ/, therefore, it follows that the students might not be familiar with the accurate pronunciation of the sound /θ/ nor with the fact that the initial sound in the word *thousand* and *Thursday* is actually /θ/ rather than /ð/ or /t/. Since all of these consonants have the same place of articulation, the chances are that the student will be prone to replace /θ/ with /t/ due to the adopted L1 phonetic system

Speakers have also mispronounced /θ/ as /th/ in *Thursday* */thɜ:zdeɪ/ where /t/ did not bear the aspiration and the production of the sound /θ/ copied the actual spelling of the word.

On the contrary, /t^h/, thus aspirated /t/, was noticed in *thousand* */t^haʊzɪnd/, however, it was observed only in one particular case.

Next, *birthday* was not pronounced accurately by more than half of the speakers. Apart from other deviations it was mostly mispronounced as */bɜ:zdeɪ/. Since such a difficulty might be encountered in an isolation as well, the assimilation in *It's my birthday on Thursday* */ɪts maɪ 'bɜ:zdeɪ ɒn 'θɜ:zdeɪ / is rather arbitrary

Finally, /θ/ in *fourth* was entirely omitted */fɔ:/, marked as Ø. Such a deviation changes the meaning and may lead to possible misunderstandings.

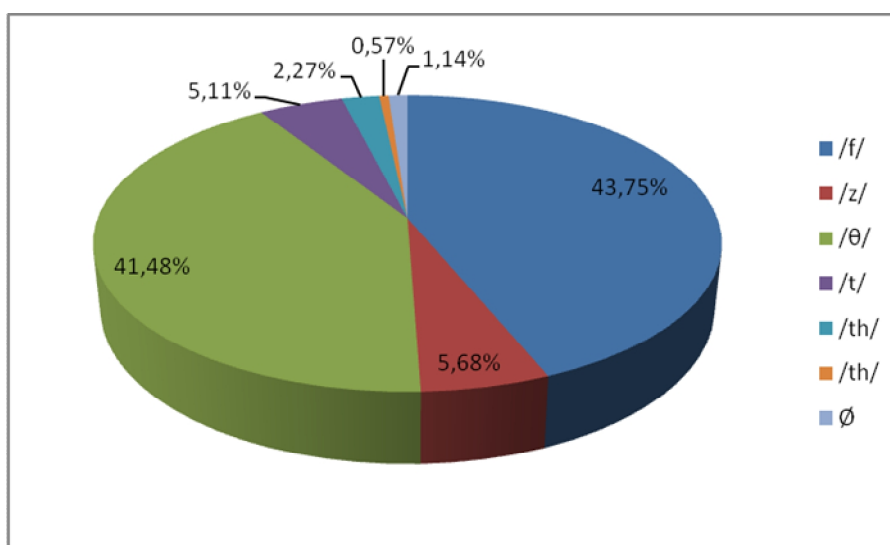


Figure 1 Graph of errors in production of /θ/

6.2.3 Mistakes in production of /ð/

As for the production of /ð/, the speakers have encountered some difficulties. It can be seen from the graph that the speakers pronounced /ð/ properly in only 25% of the cases. The rest represents possible deviations.

The most common mispronunciation was /d/ in *together, leather, that, than, the, these* and *this* */tə'gedə, ledə, dæt, dæn, di:, di:z, dɪs/. Further, it was observed that the speakers deliver a low quality /d/, marked as /d-/, in which the common production of /d/, teeth approaching and the tip of the tongue touching the alveolar ridge, is replaced by a reversed production of /θ/ in which the tongue is protruded, however, the sound produced is frictionless.

Next, the most common deviation was a low quality /ð/, marked as /ð̃/, in which the tongue occupied the appropriate place in the oral cavity (the inside of the front upper teeth), however, the nature of the sound /ð/, thus its friction was not fulfilled. Such a mispronunciation was observed in *than, with, those* and *the* */ð̃æ̃n, wɪð̃, ð̃əʊz, ð̃i:/.

In other cases /ð/ was also replaced by /f/ and /θ/ in smooth */smu:θ, smu:f, / and by /f/ in clothes /kləʊfs/, however, only one speaker encountered such difficulty.

By contrast, /ð/ was completely omitted in *clothes*, marked as Ø, in addition, its final voiced alveolar fricative /z/ was replaced by its voiceless counterpart /s/ */kləʊs|.

Finally, /ð/ was replaced by /t/ in *leather, clothes, with, smooth* and either */letə, kləʊtɪz, wɪt, smu:t, aɪtə/. An unusual deviation was marked in *together* in which the speaker mispronounced /ð/ as /v/ */tə'vevə/.

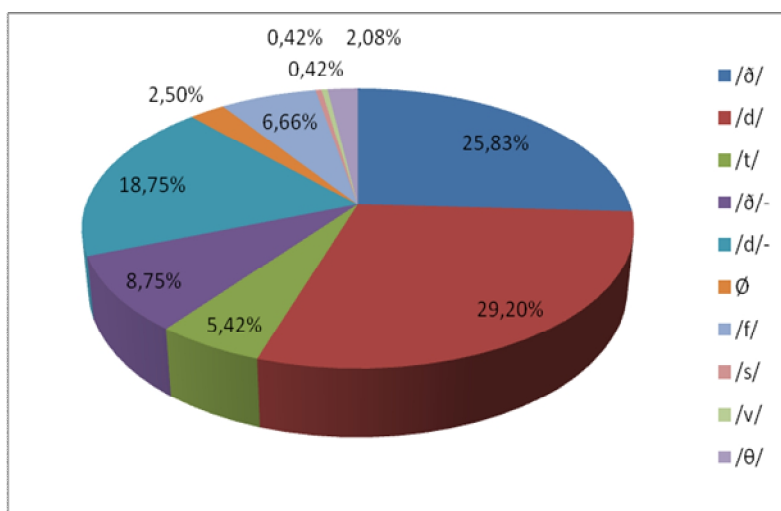


Figure 2 Graph of errors in production of /ð/

6.2.4 Mistakes in production of /p/

Since all the sounds of /p/ were in the initial position, the only feature which was to be focused on was the aspiration of the voiceless plosive /p/. Students performed either no aspiration, marked by /p̄/, or at least an effort which was marked by /p/. The manner of the pronunciation was with a good intention, although, performed weakly. However, speaker No.10 and speaker No.15 demonstrated a remarkable ability to pronounce a full quality aspirated /p/. On the contrary, all the subjects, apart from speakers mentioned above, had encountered difficulties with an aspiration when pronouncing *please*, *part*, *page*, *people*, *paste* and *plagiarism* */p̄li:z, p̄ɑ:t, p̄eɪdʒ, p̄i:p̄l, p̄eɪst, p̄leɪdʒɪərɪzəm/. The proportion of the correct and incorrect delivery can be seen in the graph.

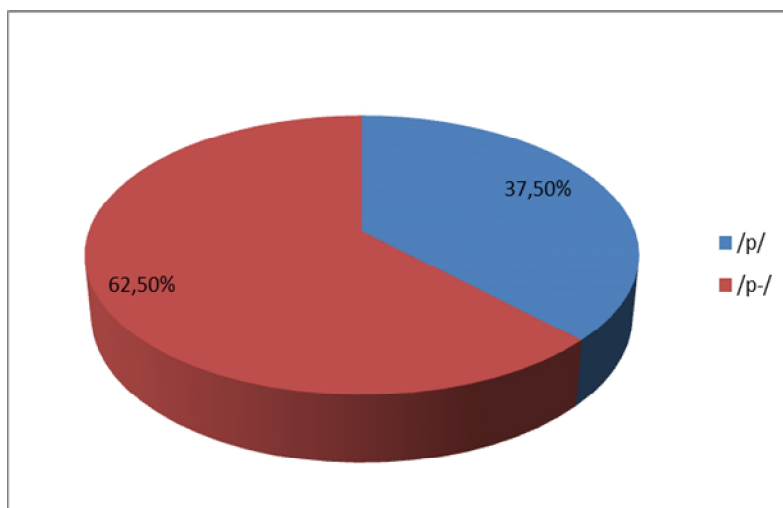


Figure 3 Graph of errors in production of /p/

6.2.5 Mistakes in production of /t/

The speakers tend to omit the respective feature of the plosives which is an aspiration. This problem has been encountered with the sound /t/ as well. /t/ without aspiration was marked as /t̄/, whereas aspirated /t/ was marked as /t/.

Students tend to replace it by a Czech /t/ without the aspiration as in *takes*, *time*, *talked*, *toilet*, *twelve*, *Tuesday* and *to* */t̄eɪks, t̄aɪm, t̄ɔ:kt, t̄ɔɪlt, t̄welv, t̄ju:zdi, t̄u:./.

Further, /t/ is replaced by Czech /t̄/ as in *Tuesday* */t̄u:zdi/. The difference between the manner of production of the initial sound /t/ in *Tuesday* as it is introduced by IPA and the Czech version of the pronunciation carrying /t̄/ */t̄u:zdi/ is that should you divide /t̄/ into two sounds, two sounds appear /t/ (without aspiration) and /j/, however, while the accurate pronunciation of *Tuesday* carries an aspiration on the initial /t/, the Czech version of

pronunciation does not. The speakers should realize its similarity to the English /tʃ/ rather than Czech /tʃ/.

Finally, speakers mispronounced /t/ as /d/ in a medial position in *matter* /'mætə/ */'mædə/.

It was also observed that the alliteration of the sound /t/ stimulated an accurate performance of aspiration as in *to top it all* or *it is a quarter to twelve*.

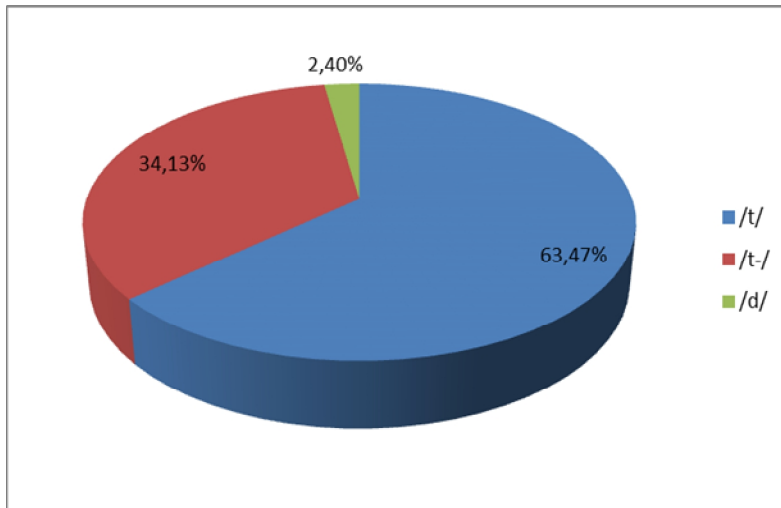


Figure 4 Graph of errors in production of /t/

6.2.6 Mistakes in production of /k/

Similarly to the performances of the aspirated plosives above, the speakers had slight difficulties with the aspirated /k/ as well. A lack of aspiration was marked as /k̤/.

It was also observed that the sound /k/ lacked the aspiration when followed by a consonant, such as in *crossing* or *clean* */k̤rɒsɪŋ, k̤li:n/, whereas when the vowel followed, the aspiration was performed more accurately. The speakers also had to make an effort to pronounce the sound /k/ with an aspiration, especially in *Carol* /'k̤hærəl/ and *caring* /'k̤hæɪɪŋ/. On the contrary, when the sound /k/ preceded an approximant /r/, the manner of production was concentrated on the sound /r/ and, therefore, the aspiration was omitted.

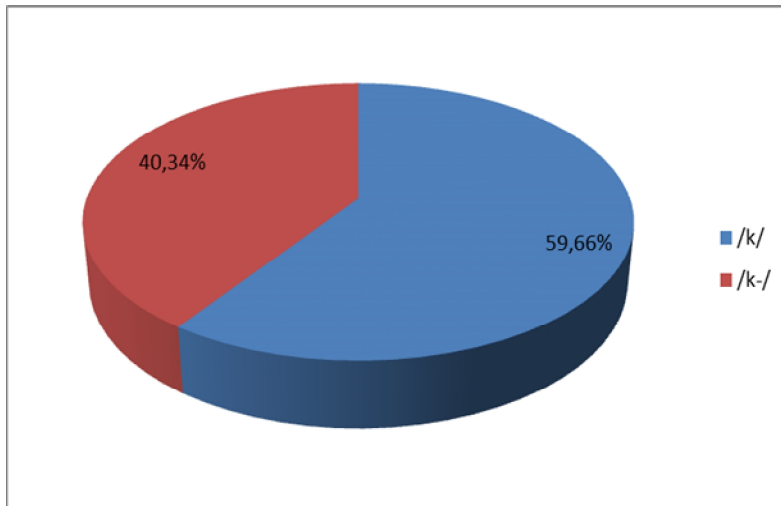


Figure 5 Graph of errors in production of /k/

6.2.7 Mistakes in production of /w/

The speakers mainly encountered the problem in the manner of production. /w/ requires the lips rounded and slightly parted without an actual contact, however, the speakers failed to round the lips. Such a deviation was marked as /w̃/ and mostly occurred in *twice* or *forward* */tw̃aɪs, fɔ:w̃əd/. The reason for the mispronunciation might be that /w/ occupies the medial position and the speakers are distracted by the neighboring sounds, such as /t/ in *twice* or /r/ in *forward*.

Further, /w/ mispronounced as /v/ was also observed in *twice*, *week*, *wifi*, *wherever*, *will*, *always* and *William* */tvais, vi:k, vai, fai, veə'revə, vil, ɔ:lveɪz, vɪlɪəm/.

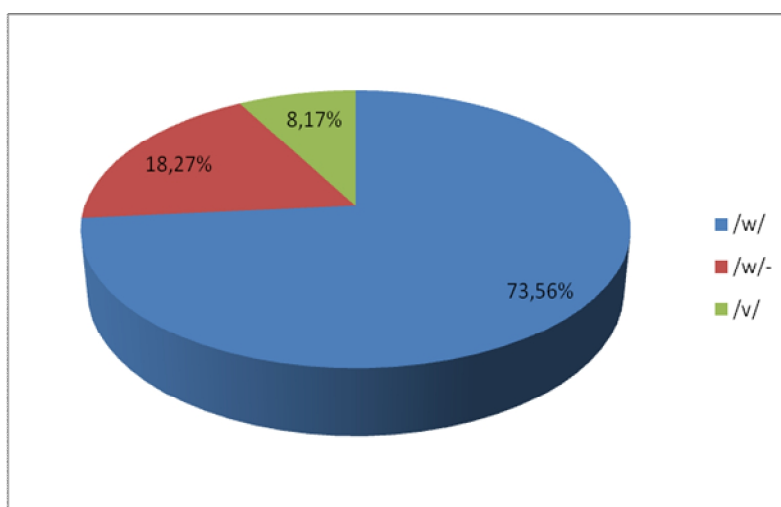


Figure 6 Graph of errors in production of /w/

6.2.8 Mistakes in production of /ŋ/

Since the Czech language contains /ŋ/ only as an allophone of /n/ preceding /k, g/, the speakers made a mistake in pronouncing /g/ in words like *morning*, *wrong*, *doing*, *song*, *young* */mɔ:nɪŋg, rɔŋg, du:ɪŋg, sɔŋg, jʌŋg/.

Next, they also pronounced /ng/ in words such as *hungry*, *evening*, *ring*, *doing* */hʌŋgri, i:vɪŋg, rɪŋg, du:ɪŋg/.

A substitution of /ŋ/ with /ng/ was also found in the final positions in *longing* */lɔŋɪŋg/. In addition, /ŋ/ was also replaced by /n/ in the medial position in *longing* */lɔŋɪŋg/ and in the final position in *young* and *doing* */jʌŋ, du:m/.

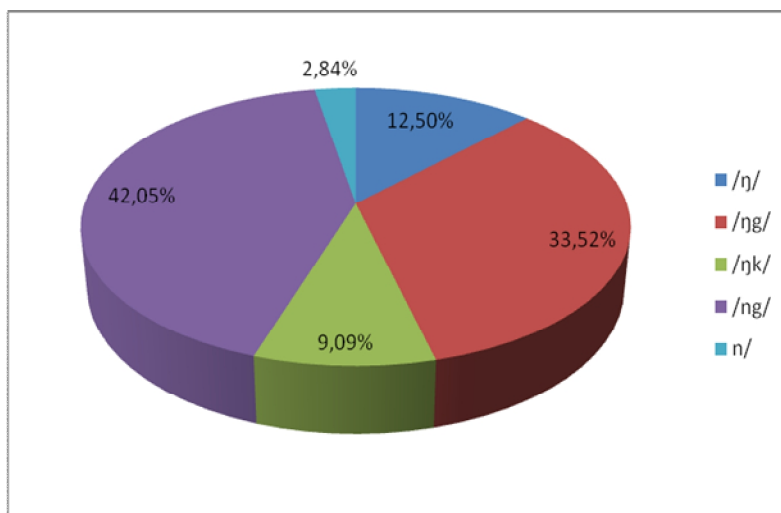


Figure 7 Graph of errors in production of /ŋ/

6.2.9 Post-self-assessment

After the voice recordings, the speakers were asked to do their post-self-assessment by marking any sounds which they found difficult or which may have caused hesitation. The speakers were to choose among the words which were included in the utterances. The words were chosen randomly, however, with respect to the problematic areas, i.e. the seven consonants. The speakers marked the following areas:

Breath, leather, perhaps, caring, matter, worldwide, wrong.

Given the frequency, the speakers marked *breath*, *perhaps*, *caring*, *matter*, *worldwide* and *wrong* to be the most problematic.

As for *breath*, the speakers have correctly marked the final consonant /θ/ to be the most problematic. The results of the research showed that the most frequent replacement of /θ/ was /f/. This mispronunciation counted for 43, 75% of all the deviations.

The fricative /ð/ was also marked correctly according to the research results as the speakers often mispronounced /ð/ as /d/. This mispronunciation counted for 29, 20% of all the deviations. Furthermore, some of them also mispronounced /ð/ as /t/ in words like *leather* */letə/ or *clothes* */kləʊtʃ/. However, this mispronunciation counted only for 5, 42% of all the deviations.

Aspirated plosives were commonly mispronounced due to the lack of aspiration. It was observed that the speakers made an extra effort to produce the sound, however, often without a successful sound production. It follows that the speakers pay just a little attention to the nature of the English plosives. Lack of aspiration in /p/ counted for 62, 5%, in /t/ for 34, 13% off all the deviations. /t/ was also replaced by /d/ in words like *about* and *matter* */ə'baʊd, mædə /. However, the latter phenomenon may be attributed to the American pronunciation among the speakers. Lack of aspiration of /k/ counted for 40, 34%.

Bilabial approximant /w/ was mispronounced as /v/ in a few cases, for instance in *week* or *wifi* */vi:k, vaɪ, faɪ/. Altogether, this mispronunciation counted for 8, 17% of all the deviations. On the contrary, *worldwide* as mentioned in the post-self-assessment was an object of extra effort, and its production was mainly successful. The correct pronunciation of /w/ counted for 73, 56% among all the deviations.

Finally, the velar nasal /ŋ/ was an object of common mispronunciation typical for Slavic languages. The Speakers have correctly marked the final consonant cluster as the biggest difficulty. The most common pronunciation mistake was an excessive /g/ in words like *morning*, *evening* or *doing* */mɔ:nɪŋ, i:vɪŋŋ, du:ɪŋg/. This mispronunciation counted for 42, 05% of all the deviations.

7 CAUSES OF THE PRONUNCIATION DIFFICULTIES

7.1 Foreign Accent Interference

The most common obstacle in acquiring the target accent in the second language acquisition is the foreign accent. Foreign accent is understood as a difference between the pronunciation of a language by a native speaker and a non-native speaker (Fledge 1981). As Fledge claims, there is a significant difference between the first and second language acquisition process mainly in the fact that the language learners in the second acquisition process tend to base the phonetic learning on the similarities of the sounds in two languages (their native and target one). This does not occur in the first language acquisition process as the learner relies solely on the single language-specific acoustic model (Fledge 1981).

The core of the foreign accent interference is insufficient pronunciation of some segmental sounds. Brenna, Ryan, and Dawson in Fledge (1981) introduce a recent study which indicates that “the frequency with which the segmental substitutions were noted in short excerpts of speech produced by non-native speakers highly correlated with native-speaker judgments of accentedness” (Fledge 1981, 445). However, “the ultimate judgment of an accentedness cannot be based solely on some segmental sounds but listeners are prone to base the judgment of a foreign accent on a combination of some segmental, subsegmental and suprasegmental differences which distinguish the speech of native speaker from that of a non-native speaker” (Fledge 1981, 445).

7.1.1 Critical Period Hypothesis

It is generally believed that the younger we are the easier the acquisition of the second language is. Since it has been observed that children’s ability to acquire the language easily as well as the target accent itself is significantly higher than the adults’, the need for a foundation of the *critical period hypothesis* has arisen (Fledge 1981).

Critical Period Hypothesis, abbreviated CPH, according to Fledge suggests that adults cannot acquire the second language without the foreign accent because the nervous system has undergone some permanent reorganization. In other words, the post-pubescent language learners continuously deal with the foreign accent due to the neurophysiological maturation and establishment of cerebral lateralization for language functions (Fledge 1981). This may also support our choice for the sample of students used in the research

project since most of them are still to be found in the pubescent period of language acquisition promising possible improvements. Provided, that their awareness of the correct pronunciation will be raised and appropriate strategies will be chosen and applied thorough pronunciation lessons.

7.2 Teacher's pronunciation ability

Since the teacher is the student's model of correct or preferred pronunciation, it is essential that the teacher is educated in the disciplines of phonetics and phonology in order to provide the students with a high standard language competence (Ondráček 2011). As we mentioned in the historical background of the English language acquisition in the former Czechoslovakia, the teachers of English did not have enough opportunities to acquire appropriate pronunciation in their pubescent period (Critical Period) and therefore, lacked the ability to provide their students with a high standard of spoken English competence. The negative impact of inaccurate pronunciation doubles if we take into consideration that most of what is taught in the classroom is delivered orally by the teacher and therefore, his or her pronunciation is exposed. It follows that the essential language education for the teachers of English as well as for students is ensured throughout sufficient awareness via:

- university opportunities both in the Czech Republic and abroad within the target linguistic fields
- accredited language exams, their use and continuity
- possible additional education in forms of workshops and seminars (e.g.: Oxford University Press workshops, etc.)

Teachers skilled in the field will have a positive effect on their students since it is a proof of their personal interest in what they do and it also contributes to students' greater involvement.

7.3 Music aptitude absence

Recently, the parallels between the language acquisition and music have been paid a great attention which resulted in several theories about how the ability to hear with a music ear can affect the L2 acquisition. As Mora claims in her article on the language acquisition and melody singing, in order to memorize better, singing may serve as an effective tool. "Music namely acts as a cue to evoke the information we are trying to retrieve" (Mora 2000, 150). She also adds that an audio channel, even though, it might not be the one we

prefer, cannot be ignored. “We can close our eyes in order to avoid the visual input but we cannot ‘close our ears’ ” (Mora 2000, 146). Therefore, even if we do not want to listen, we can still hear and the auditory input is always present. Consequently, we can find some beneficial parallels between the music and language. Mora elaborates on it by stating some features music and language have in common. Firstly, language and music are both informative, thus convey a message, however, the precision is respective to the language rather than to music. Another common feature which can be of much use during the L2 acquisition is pitch, volume, prominence, stress, tone, rhythm and pauses (Mora 2000).

Mora also describes a very common model of pronunciation tuition during the classes. The teacher uses the hyperbolic melodic contour only for introducing a new structure or when having the students repeat, Mora calls such an approach a linguistic model. Later, when the students are required to use such a tool in a pair work, they instinctively avoid exaggerating as they have interpreted it as a pedagogical tool (Mora 2000). The fact is that its sufficient implementation into the students’ activities would have an effective impact on their progress in spoken English.

7.4 The Four Modalities

During the language acquisition process it should be taken into account that there are four different types of learners according to the degree of the development of each perceptive channel. Each learner uses their own language learning strategies. Svoboda (2006) claims, quoting Oxford (1990):”Learning strategies are steps taken by students to enhance their own learning. Strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence” (Svoboda and Hrehovčik 2006, 215).

Svoboda also claims that when the strategies are correctly identified, the learner might develop many other practical abilities, such as thinking or problem-solving skills.

Consequently, the benefits are:

- “appropriate learning strategy results in improved proficiency
- certain learning strategies are linked to particular language skills or tasks
- well tailored learning strategies work well together and can lead to a huge impact on each of them” (Svoboda and Hrehovčik 2006, 216)

Ideally, the system setting in the classroom should be based on different styles and types of learners in order to suit all the students and, therefore, help them to make a constant progress. According to Svoboda the teachers should be at least able to:

- “identify students’ learning strategies through various means, such as surveys or interviews
- help the students identify the most suitable learning strategy to their learning style
- help the students to create a well-organized strategy” (Svoboda and Hrehovčik 2006, 220)

7.4.1 Auditory channel (A)

Students who have well developed auditory channel prefer to learn through listening exercises in which they acquire the information in a form of an auditory input. Students with a developed auditory channel prefer to learn by listening and verbalizing. They are also good listeners and tend to speak slowly. Svoboda suggests that students who base their learning on their auditory channel use tapes, videos, storytelling, memorization or drills. They can also work in pairs or in small groups (Svoboda and Hrehovčik 2006).

7.4.2 Visual channel (V)

Students with a well developed visual channel prefer visually acquired information. These students will also count for those appreciating the visuals hanging on the walls as they can rely on them when retrieving the information. Students with the visual channel prefer to learn by visualizing and seeing. They also tend to speak faster. Svoboda adds that such learners prefer wall displays, posters, realia, flash cards, graphic organizers, etc. (Svoboda and Hrehovčik 2006).

7.4.3 Kinesthetic channel (K)

Student who use their kinesthetic channel while learning prefer to use physical activities, competitions, board games or role plays. Generally they will benefit from activities in which they can move around rather than sit (Svoboda and Hrehovčik 2006, 220). Through this channel students engage all their senses and also hands-on experience.

7.4.4 Tactile channel (T)

Students with a developed tactile channel prefer card games, demonstrations and also role plays. This channel is of much use when writing down notes while listening to a talk or when filling in a diagram while reading (Svoboda and Hrehovčik 2006).

7.5 Avoidance of imitation

Most of the students struggle with leaving their comfort zones and using effective tools for the improvement of their spoken English. Instead, they often feel hesitant about exaggerating in the lessons as they consider the way the teacher speaks a pedagogical tool. In fact, this is the crucial part from which the students might benefit most.

Since the students who are already past the pubescent years find it harder to acquire a different way of speaking besides their mother tongue, there is an alternative way of raising the level of spoken English through a tool called imitation. What possible benefits might the course of imitation bring is to be found in the chapter of compensating strategies.

8 COMPENSATING STRATEGIES

This part focuses on the possible compensating strategies which might help to eliminate the pronunciation difficulties mapped in the analysis of the voice recordings. The following suggestions are to be found compiled in a form of a booklet in the appendices.

8.1 ‘Overdo’ mode

Naturally, the aim is to gain a long-term improvement and I personally assume that in order to do that we have to leave our comfort zone. To elaborate on it, I suppose that the way we speak in a different language is greatly influenced by the duration and the manner of speaking in the target language, in other words. However, in order to meet a certain standard we have to exceed it first, therefore, I suggest that the students are kept in a constant “overdo” mode.

An ‘overdo’ mode can be described as a way of pronouncing in which we respect the manner of the production of a certain consonant, however, the dynamics of the articulators’ movements is much greater and some of the pronunciation features of some consonants may be mantled. The typical example comes with the consonant /θ/. As Gimson claims, with some speakers the tongue may be protruded between the teeth, however, the real manner of production lies in the tongue slightly touching the edge and the inner surface of the upper front teeth and also the edge of the lower front teeth so that the air escaping between the surface of the tongue and the teeth causes friction (Gimson 1989). In order to make the students pronounce the sound /θ/ we force them to protrude the tongue and as such, leave their comfort zone. Of course, practice makes perfect, and therefore, the students need to base their practice on repetition, feel the movement and get used to it. Within a considerable time, it may range from weeks to months; the student will tend to settle the articulators in such a position which will prevent them from pronouncing the deviation counterparts, such as /f/ or /s/ instead /θ/. The course of the real manner of production is then within a reach.

This strategy surely does not apply only to the sound /θ/ but also to other consonants figuring in the research. Its further usage within a particular sound will be shown in the printable materials provided in the appendices.

8.2 Adjustment to the types of learners

Since the learners can be divided into several groups according to their learning strategies, it is crucial for the teacher to be able to identify these strategies within his or her class and based on that, implement such techniques that will be of use for each type.

Most of the techniques used in the lessons cover all the areas which should be included when acquiring a second language. These are warm ups, revisions, tests in a both written and oral way, grammar exercises, listening exercises and possibly some games. On the whole, we should be able to identify ourselves with at least some of the techniques and benefit from them. However, a great deal of attention should be paid to the fact that the acquisition of the correct pronunciation requires more than what the regular English lessons offer.

From my own experience, English lessons in primary and secondary schools are usually focused on grammar activities and vocabulary drills, while pronunciation and listening exercises are given just a little portion of time. As far as language exams are concerned, the speaking part is also allocated the smallest amount of time, though if we take into consideration the practical usage, we spend most of the time speaking the foreign language. Therefore, it is crucial that the information gained in the lesson is as practical as possible and the students may benefit from it straight away.

In other words, learning strategies do not affect only the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary but also the pronunciation. Therefore, I suggest that:

- the learning strategies are profoundly mapped within the class
- appropriate division of the activities is applied concerning the time, continuity and phase
- activities are delivered either individually, therefore, one particular pronunciation difficulty is given a considerable time, or the activities alter so that the system of 'circle training' is applied

'Circle training' might concern the learning type itself or can be applied collectively; therefore each student goes through various tasks consecutively. The following booklet has been compiled so that the 'circle training' is kept, therefore, each learning type may choose the best learning strategy for them.

As for the types of learners, we can differentiate among 4 types as already mentioned above. However, if we take into account the senses we use during language acquisition, we

can hardly do well enough without the other senses, such as our sight and hearing. Therefore, the first two channels, i.e. visual channel and auditory channel, will be given much of the attention in the following booklet. Since we also profit greatly from our hands-on experience, the kinesthetic channel has been included as well. As for the tactile channel, I suggest that equivalent activities are included traditionally in English lessons because we usually use visuals in a form of flashcards which we can touch or even greater opportunity offered by the interactive boards which allow us to move, see and touch at the same time. For this reason, the tactile channel has not been included in the booklet as an overall hands-on experience is provided through the regular visual, auditory and kinesthetic channel.

8.3 Teacher as the pronunciation model

The communication between the teacher and the student lies mainly on the spoken, i.e. oral level. It follows that the teacher should serve as a model of correct pronunciation, especially at the beginning level where a proper foundation of all the aspects of the second language is crucial.

In case the teacher is not able to provide the students with a representative pronunciation competence, he or she should use appropriate teaching tools targeting pronunciation, such as tapes, videos, music and lyrics or phonetic transcriptions for every new, complicated word.

As for non-native teachers, it has been called into question whether they can provide the students with appropriate pronunciation. However, since both of them share the same L1 phonetic system, it may be an advantage and the L1 phonetic system may serve as a strong supportive pillar for the pronunciation acquisition given the right guidance. The booklet which has been compiled for the purpose of pronunciation teaching may serve as an example of non-native approach based on the knowledge of the L1 acquisition.

8.4 Imitation

As I quoted Fledge above there is a certain CPH – Critical Period Hypothesis, which suggests that with one's maturation, it automatically becomes more difficult for the adult individual to acquire the second language pronunciation without interference of their mother tongue accent, as the brain has undergone certain neurological changes. It seems hopeless for the adults to acquire the target pronunciation of a second language; however, just as we

are able to change or adjust our mother tongue accent according to the place where we possibly are and live through conscious or unconscious imitation of the others, we can also change our pronunciation in the second language by imitating those who have the target pronunciation. This does not necessarily mean that we have to move to an English-speaking country.

Though, imitation may seem to be something rather artificial as we cannot acquire the target pronunciation naturally, in fact it comes back to the child's language acquisition which was perfectly natural. The idea of interrelation between the L1 acquisition and the L2 acquisition should be seen as an advantage and should correspond with teaching methods. Everything which was of much use for the child to imitate the language of others will now serve us as an inspiration.

The essential aspects of imitation:

- copying the sounds we hear and relating them to our know L1 phonetic system
- 'overdo' mode on during any pronunciation acquisition; in order to find the equilibrium we have to exceed the standard first
- our senses – sight, hearing and move are always involved so that the acquisition is as natural as possible
- no theory but practice – each sound, word should be demonstrated on our familiar sound, move or picture
- 'copying' is no shame in here, we should also pick an appropriate target (English-speaking friends, singers,...) critical point of view can be of much help, therefore, work on your pronunciation in pairs or in groups
- 'game is gain' – each pronunciation practice is relaxed, language is an interesting and amusing tool of humans

Some of the ideas proposed have been used in the booklet to set the desired environment. Suggestions introduced in this part serve as a foundation and can be elaborated on.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the thesis was to map the pronunciation difficulties among the Czech speakers of English, analyze their causes and propose compensating strategies for their elimination.

The hypothesis proposed that the most problematic pronunciation area includes seven consonants which are dental fricatives /θ, ð/, aspirated plosives /p, t, k/, bilabial approximant /w/ and velar nasal /ŋ/. A research was carried out to prove the hypothesis.

In the theoretical part, the general terms concerning the pronunciation of English were given as well as the English and Czech phonetic system was described. Furthermore, a theoretical background of the target consonant groups was provided followed by possible mispronunciations made by Czech speakers.

In the practical part, a research was conducted in a form of voice recordings and questionnaires followed by an analysis of the pronunciation errors. It has been proved in the research that the proposed seven consonants indeed caused pronunciation difficulties among the Czech speakers mainly due to the fact that they cannot be found in the Czech phonetic system. Furthermore, it was also observed that the speakers are not familiar with the theoretical background of the production of a particular consonant.

Along with the voice recordings, questionnaires were handed out and the data collected were taken into consideration in the analysis process. The data also served as core knowledge for a creation of the enclosed booklet. Since the questionnaire also included questions targeted at students' subject preferences as well as their learning strategies, this was implemented into the booklet and as such formed a direct feedback.

It can also be concluded that the length of students' English acquisition did not have a direct impact on the speakers' level of English, namely their pronunciation. A contact with the English native environment, however, proved to be a strong foundation for correct English pronunciation. The questionnaire also revealed that the speakers' perception of their classmates' and teacher's pronunciation is rather negative and they marked it as mixed (Czenglish). According to the data collected from the questionnaire, the techniques used for pronunciation practice seemed to be ordinarily arranged and did not show any specific methods. Furthermore, since the techniques might not have been targeted on any particular learning strategies or the means of students' acquisition of the actual pronunciation, it was

the purpose of the thesis to propose such compensating strategies, which will take into account the learning strategies and their implementation in teaching.

It is important to stress that pronunciation mistakes uncovered by the research might not be applicable to every Czech speaker; however, it is likely that as far as the segmental features are concerned, those will probably cause the biggest difficulty. Naturally, segmental features are not the only aspect observed in terms of English pronunciation acquisition but are complementary to the more comprehensive suprasegmental features.

The author of the thesis firmly believes that the outcome of the research enhanced by the student-centered booklet will be of some help to the subjects of the study as well as to all those who are interested in English pronunciation acquisition.

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Graph of errors in production of /θ/.....	36
Figure 2 Graph of errors in production of /ð/	37
Figure 3 Graph of errors in production of /p/	38
Figure 4 Graph of errors in production of /t/	39
Figure 5 Graph of errors in production of /k/	40
Figure 6 Graph of errors in production of /w/.....	40
Figure 7 Graph of errors in production of /ŋ/	41

LIST OF CHARTS

Chart 1 Explanatory notes to questionnaire analysis	30
Chart 2 Participants' data analysis, speaker No.1-8	31
Chart 3 Participants' data analysis, speaker No.9-16	33

APPENDICES

- P I List of utterances used in voice recordings
- P II Example of Questionnaire
- P III Evaluation list of voice recordings
- P IV Loosely inserted Student-centered pronunciation course: Booklet for intermediate students

APPENDIX P I: LIST OF UTTERANCES USED IN VOICE RECORDINGS

- 1a) TAKE A DEEP BREATH.
- 1b) IS IT WORTH IT?
- 1c) IT IS MY BIRTHDAY ON THURSDAY.
- 1d) THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING.
- 1e) I TAKE A BATH AND BRUSH MY TEETH.
- 1f) THE FOURTH OF FEBRUARY TWO THOUSAND AND THREE.

- 2a) THIS IS BETTER THAN THAT.
- 2b) I LIKE WEARING LEATHER CLOTHES.
- 2c) I WOULD RATHER SEE MY MOTHER THAN MY BROTHER.
- 2d) THESE PARTS GO TOGETHER WITH THOSE.
- 2e) THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE NEVER DID RUN SMOOTH.
- 2f) EITHER YOU PASS OR FAIL.

- 3a) PASS THE PAPER TO YOUR PARTNER, PLEASE.
- 3b) OPEN THE BOOK ON PAGE NUMBER 9.
- 3c) PENNY TOOK PART IN THE PLAY.
- 3d) PERHAPS YOU DIDN'T PULL ENOUGH.
- 3e) POOR PEOPLE MIGHT BE HAPPIER THAN THE RICH ONES.
- 3f) COPY AND PASTE GOES HAND IN HAND WITH PLAGIARISM.

- 4a) I THINK YOU LOOK COOL WITH YOUR CURLY HAIR.
- 4b) PLEASE, BE CAREFUL WHEN CROSSING THE STREET.
- 4c) CAROL IS SUCH A CARING PERSON.
- 4d) COMPARE AND CONTRAST THE PICTURES.
- 4e) CAN YOU CLEAN YOUR ROOM?
- 4f) TAKE CARE.

- 5a) IT TAKES TIME TO RECOVER.

- 5b) IT IS QUARTER TO TWELVE.
5c) I TALKED TO HER ON TUESDAY.
5d) AND TO TOP IT ALL, HE CAME LATE.
5e) TELL ME THE TRUTH ABOUT THE MATTER.
5f) CAN I GO TO THE TOILET?
- 6a) I EXERCISE TWICE A WEEK.
6b) WIFI IS USED WORLDWIDE.
6c) WHEREVER I GO I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU.
6d) TAKE ONE STEP FOWARD.
6e) PRINCE WILLIAM AND THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND
6f) SHE WAS AWARDED THE BEST ACTRESS.
- 7a) WHEN I WOKE UP IN THE MORNING I WAS HUNGRY.
7b) WE SANG THE SONG YESTERDAY EVENING.
7c) I THINK YOU ARE WRONG AGAIN.
7d) I AM LONGING FOR A DIAMOND RING.
7e) I WANT TO BE FOREVER YOUNG.
7f) WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING?

APPENDIX P II: EXAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear students,

It is inevitable for our young generation to speak English. Although the Czech educational system supports English learning sufficiently, I believe, that little attention is paid the pronunciation. In my Bachelor's thesis, of which this questionnaire is a crucial part, I suggest that acquiring correct pronunciation is a highly important part of language acquisition. For the purpose of my thesis, I attempt to map the possible pronunciation difficulties and suggest remedy.

You will be asked to do voice recordings in which each of you will pronounce several short utterances. This questionnaire serves as background information complementing your voice recordings.

I hereby confirm that the material will be used solely for the purpose of my thesis and your participation in my research is anonymous.

Thank you for your time

Martina Ambrozová, student at Tomas Bata University in Zlín

1) Gender: (please circle)

- Female
- Male

2) How old are you?

3) How long have you been studying English?

4) Generally, what is your attitude towards English?

- a) I am interested in English but only as a school subject.
- b) It is my hobby (movies, music lyrics, etc).
- c) I only study English because I realize it is a must.
- d) I don't like studying English. (Please, specify why.)

- a. It is useless.
b. It is too difficult for me.
c. Other: _____
- 5) Are a certificate holder?
a) PET
b) FCE
c) CAE
d) CPE
e) other/please, specify
f) I do not have any certificates in English
- 6) What is your current level of English according to CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) estimated by your school's curriculum?
(Your class level, student's book you use)
a) A1- Elementary
b) A2- Pre-Intermediate
c) B1- Intermediate
d) B2- FCE
e) C1- CAE
f) C2- CPE
- 7) Have you spent some time in an English speaking country? If yes, please specify the amount of time/ the place of stay and purpose.
- 8) Would you say you have some predispositions for English?
a) I have English speaking relatives.
b) I am bilingual.
c) My parents have a good command of English.
d) Other, please, specify: _____
e) I am not aware of any predispositions.
-
- 9) Which of these learning strategies fit your needs best, please circle:
- a) You prefer to learn by visualizing and seeing. You also tend to speak faster.
b) You prefer to learn by listening and verbalizing. You are also a good listener and speak slowly.

- c) You prefer to learn by engaging all your senses. You learn through trial and error and prefer hands-on approaches (practical).

10) Which of these groups of subjects do you prefer most, please circle?

- a) Czech/English/German, Music, Art Education
b) Maths, Physics, Chemistry
c) Social Science, Law, Philosophy, Psychology
-

11) Do you think that “Czenglish pronunciation” prevails in your English lessons (teacher, classmates, both – please underline).

Comment:

12) What is your perception of your variety of English?

- a) I think I have British English.
b) I think I have American English.
c) I think I have typical Czech English.
d) I cannot tell/Not sure.

13) Do you think you devote sufficient time to the pronunciation in your English lessons?

- a) Yes, we practice pronunciation regularly through various exercises and listening activities. (Please, specify further, one or more answers)
a. We repeat after our teacher.
b. We listen to the tape and repeat after it.
c. We write the pronunciation down in phonetic symbols.
b) We only follow those charts in the Student’s book if there is some tricky pronunciation, otherwise, no further attention is paid to the pronunciation.
c) It is solely on the individual to improve their pronunciation. We mainly focus on the grammar and vocabulary only.

14) How do you match the pronunciation with the particular word?

- a) I can read the phonetic symbols given in the brackets in the dictionary.
b) I look the word up in the electronic dictionary and listen to it.

- c) I do not search for the pronunciation, the difference in writing and pronouncing the English words is difficult for me. So I:
- pronounce it as it is written.
 - have to learn the pronunciation of each word by heart. (Phonetic rules do not help)

- 15) Please, read this sentence and underline those sounds which you think might cause you pronunciation difficulties.

The think tank expressed a strong dislike with the whole concept of production, even though, the proposal seemed to be extremely innovative and effective.

- 16) Please, read these words through and underline those sounds which you think made you hesitant when pronouncing the words, e.g. Thursday.

- Breath
- Leather
- Perhaps
- Caring
- Matter
- Worldwide
- Wrong

Thank you for your time

APPENDIX P III: EXAMPLE OF EVALUATION LIST

Dental fricative /θ/

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
breath	/f/	/f/	/f/	/f/	/θ/	/f/	/f/	/f/	/f/	/f/	/θ/	/f/	/θ/	/θ/	/θ/	/θ/
worth	/f/	/f/	/θ/	/f/	/θ/	/f/	/f/	/θ/	/θ/	/f/	/θ/	/f/	/θ/	/θ/	/θ/	/θ/
birthday	/f/	/f/	/z/	/z/	/z/	/z/	/z/	/z/	/z/	/z/	/θ/	/z/	/θ/	/z/	/θ/	/θ/
thursday	/f/	/f/	/f/	/th/	/θ/	/th/	/f/	/th/	/θ/e	/f/	/θ/	/f/	/θ/	/θ/	/θ/	/th/
think	/f/	/f/	/f/	/f/	/θ/	/f/	/f/	/f/	/θ/	/θ/	/θ/	/f/	/θ/	/θ/	/θ/	/θ/
anything	/f/	/f/	/f/	/f/	/θ/	/θ/	/f/	/f/	/θ/	/θ/	/θ/	/θ/	/θ/	/θ/	/θ/	/θ/
bath	/f/	/f/	/θ/	/f/	/θ/	/θ/	/f/	/f/	/θ/	/f/	/f/	/θ/	/θ/	/θ/s	/θ/	/θ/
teeth	/f/	/f/	/θ/	/f/	/θ/	/θ/	/f/	/f/	/θ/	/f/	/f/	/θ/	/θ/	/θ/s	/θ/	/θ/
fourth	/f/	/t/	/f/	/θ/	/f/	/θ/	/f/	/t/	/f/	/f/	/f/	/f/	/θ/	0	/θ/	0
thousand	/f/	/t/	/t/	/f/	/t ^h /	/t/	/t/	/t/	/t/	/f/	/f/	/t/	/f/	/θ/e	/θ/	/θ/
three	/f/	/f/	/f/	/f/	/f/	/f/	/f/	/f/	/θ/	/f/	/f/	/f/	/θ/	/θ/e	/θ/	/θ/

**APPENDIX P IV: LOOSELY INSERTED STUDENT-CENTERED
PRONUNCIATION COURSE: BOOKLET FOR INTERMEDIATE
STUDENTS**

