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Pronunciation of Irish English: Materials for Seminar in English Phonetics

(Bakalářská práce)

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to create comprehensive study material that will be used in the innovated Seminar in English phonetics "Výslovnostní varianty angličtiny" (AF10), taught at the Department of English and American studies at Palacký University. The topic of the suggested study material is Irish English accent. The introductory part of the paper includes a brief historical and political overview together with a note on possible future development of the accent. Then, the distinctive features of Irish English accent are selected for later usage in the handout and each of them is discussed in detail. In the handout, the vowel and consonant features inventories appear demonstrated in several listening exercises that are commented in the final part of the thesis. The last chapter, moreover, includes the commentary of the creation of the handout, selection of the sound recordings and the suggested further reading.

Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce si klade za cíl vytvořit ucelený studijní materiál, který bude sloužit pro výuku v inovovaném fonetickém semináři "Výslovnostní varianty angličtiny" (AF10) vyučovaném na Katedře anglistiky a amerikanistiky Univerzity Palackého. Tématem navrženého studijního materiálu je irská angličtina. Úvodní část této práce zahrnuje krátký historický a politický přehled doplněný o poznámku k možnému budoucímu vývoji irského akcentu. V následující části jsou vybrány charakteristické rysy výslovnosti akcentu pro pozdější použití v „handoutu" a každý z nich je dále podrobněji komentován. Ve studijním materiálu jsou tyto výslovnostní rysy irské angličtiny demonstrovány na několika poslechových cvičeních, jejichž tvorba je komentována v poslední kapitole. V té se dále nachází komentář tvorby „handoutu", výběru nahrávek i doporučené literatury.

Content

1   Introduction

The aim of this work is to create study material for students of the innovative Seminar in English Phonetics – Výslovnostní varianty angličtiny (AF10), which is offered by the Department of English and American Studies at Palacký University. The topic of the handout will be Irish English, an accent which, according to John Christopher Wells, is "…the ordinary vernacular language for most of the 4¼ million inhabitants of the Island" (Wells 1982, 417), and which was originally not part of the seminar. Thus, it is necessary to create study material in order to enable the teaching of this topic. Existing handouts used for other topics will be used as a model. Fundamentally the study material will be comprised of two parts: the handout and the recordings. At the beginning, there will be a basic theoretical overview to introduce the Irish English Accent. Then, its most distinctive features will be listed to in the context of the vocalic and consonantal inventories. Finally, the study material will provide exercises for the students to practice what they have learned about the accent and identify its characteristic features in actual speech samples. The Irish English Accent will be compared to Received Pronunciation, which usually serves as the reference accent for describing varieties of English. Students are expected to be familiar with the sound system of Received Pronunciation, its phonemic inventory and phonological rules.

Chapter 2 provides a brief theoretical overview of the origins, history, possible progress of the accent, and discusses the status of English in Ireland in the past as well as today. In this chapter, I will mostly rely on the book by Raymond Hickey, *Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms* (2007), as an authoritative source, since it provides a widely accepted account of the historical development and present-day situation of Irish English. The geographical and linguistic divisions between the north and the south of the island will be mentioned but not discussed in detail since the linguistic diversity of English spoken in Ireland is not to be covered in the present work. This work will focus on only southern Irish English, namely within the Repubic of Ireland. The division between the north and south of the island roughly corresponds to the political division, as Raymond Hickey, in his article "Possible phonological parallels between Irish and Irish English", states: "The political division of Ireland into the Republic of Ireland and (the State of) Northern Ireland has not only a political basis but a linguistic one as well" (Hickey 1986, 1). Here, I would like to point out that what I am going to refer to as the Irish English accent in the present paper, will be in most

cases the southern Irish English accent, as this is the topic of the study material. Chapter 2 will also serve as the source for the theoretical overview of Irish English in the introductory part of the handout. The aim of Chapter 3 is to describe an inventory of the most prototypical vocalic and consonantal features of the southern Irish English accent while comparing it with the phonological system of Received Pronunciation, and then discuss each of the given features more in detail. The features will be taken mostly from *Accents of English: The British Isles* (1982) by John Christopher Wells, *English Accents and Dialects: An Introduction to Social and Regional Varieties of English in the British Isles* (2005) by Peter Trudgill and the description of the sound system of IEA included in *Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms* (2007) by Hickey. The basic division of the linguistic varieties spoken in the southern part of the island corresponds to the one made by Hickey, which goes as follows:

> The south of the country has a long-standing distinction between forms of English spoken on the east coast (the oldest in the country) and those found to be south and west, which show greater evidence of the shift from Irish to English which largely took place in the last 300 years or so. (Hickey 2007, 1)

My task will be to choose those features that are prototypical, widespread and common for most areas and thus can be considered reliable traces of IEA in the Republic of Ireland. I am also going to comment on the reasons that led me to select these particular features. In the handout they will appear in contrast to the phonological features of RP. Furthermore, listening exercises based on recordings drawn from current and up-to-date online sources will be included to deepen the students' knowledge of the accent, and also to improve the capacity to trace given features in the sound recordings and to transcribe them in IPA. In the final part of the work I will comment on the structure of the handout, the sound recordings used and the exercises. I will also explain which specific phenomena is discussed in each of the tasks and will make notes on possible further reading. Problems that emerged during the process of creation, if any, are going to be mentioned as well.

The aim of this thesis is to provide comprehensive study material that will serve the students in the Phonetic Seminar, material meant to cover the most important and distinctive features and facts of the Irish English accent.

2   English in Ireland

The English spoken today in Ireland is the outcome of very long development dating back to the twelfth century, when English first reached Ireland. To simplify, we can say that there have been three main linguistic forces that shaped the present-day language situation in Ireland. These are: English as introduced from England (chiefly, the English spoken in the western part of England); the Scottish Gaelic spoken mainly in the northern part of England; and last but not least Irish Gaelic, the indigenous language in Ireland, which nowadays exerts the status of the official language in the Republic of Ireland (Wells 1982, 417).

2.1   Brief historical overview

The first appearance of English in Ireland goes back to the twelfth century. However, its development was in no way continuous, and as Hickey states: "This is both to the settlement of the island by the English and to the political conditions in England itself" (Hickey 2007, 31). To put some evidence to the claim, there were periods when English spoken in Ireland was "an endangered species" and very close to extinct in its spoken form. For instance, as Wells comments in *Accents of English: the British Isles*: "…by 1600 English was almost extinct in Ireland, even in the Pale surrounding Dublin (which had been seized by a Norman early in 1170 and colonized by settlers from Bristol). Only written documents survive to attest the old Anglo-Irish dialects of Fingal (north of Dublin) and Forth (south of Wexford)" (Wells 1982, 417-418). In general, English after the invasion held a rather weak position in Ireland, being spoken mainly on the east coast where it gained somehow stronger position and was widespread not only in the towns but also in some rural areas.

It should be mentioned that for at least two centuries after the invasion in 1169, Anglo-Norman was the language of the ruling class, thus exerting a considerable linguistic influence both in England and Ireland. This fact is very well recognized in the everyday loanwords from Anglo-Norman appearing in the indigenous language of the Irish. Yet, Irish Gaelic maintained its strong position mainly in the rural areas and did not succumbed entirely to either English nor Anglo-Norman. As Raymond Hickey mentions in *Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms*: "The east coast variety of English, which developed out of an amalgam of varieties in the thirteenth century, came under increasing pressure from Irish. By 1500 one can safely say that Anglo-

Norman and English in rural Ireland had largely succumbed to Irish" (Hickey 2007, 52).

It follows that the main source of the features of today's IEA is the English of the 'planters' installed as colonists in Ireland in the seventeenth century (Wells 1983, 318) and the process of the transfer of language lasting at least three centuries, from 1600 to 1900. Nevertheless, the English, which by the second half of the nineteenth century had finally gained a significant position over the indigenous Irish Gaelic and was spoken by the majority of the Irish population, was relatively distinct in pronunciation and grammar from the standard English spoken in England (Hickey 2007, 21). The tendency to conservativeness is one of the most prominent features of IEA and examples of its sociolinguistic consequences are to be found in the problematic relation between Irish and British English, which has been present practically since the implementation of the language by those who conquered Ireland.

2.2   *The status of English in Ireland*

The variety of English spoken in Ireland has always been rather distinct from the more standard English spoken in the south-east of England, both in pronunciation and grammar. The Irish English accent, as is the case with many other varieties that evolved in the English colonies over the centuries as the English imposed their language in newly conquered territories, is quite distinct from the varieties spoken in Britain. However, it seems that in Ireland, the problematic relation to the language imposed by the conquerors, which is to be found all over the world, is reinforced and stands out as one of the most prominent sociolinguistic features of IEA.

The relatively brief history of English spoken throughout Ireland could be one of the reasons, as mentioned above, since it was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that English gained its dominant position in Ireland, and the Irish find it difficult even now to adapt their Gaelic cultural history to the language of the former colonizers. The standard British accent is closely associated with the British establishment, and even though there are speakers in the south and in Dublin whose pronunciation is somewhat closer to RP, these are considered linguistically as "traitors" (Hickey 2007, 20). Hickey mentions this phenomenon together with the term coined to designate such individuals: "Those who show accents similar to RP are middle-class urban individuals. Particularly in Dublin, there are cases of people with

such accents who have leanings towards and connections with England who would be generally classified as 'West Brit' (a rather derogatory term in the Irish context)" (Hickey 2007, 21). Hence, emulating a more RP accent is considered quite pretentious.

Another issue to consider, when dealing with the official status of English in Ireland, is the fact that the Irish themselves lack awareness of the standard southern Irish English accent or a supraregional modality of English in the Republic of Ireland. It is not surprising then that there is no official name for IEA (as compared to Cockney, Scouse, Jordie and others). This may be seen as a consequence of the rather dismissive attitude of the British that has been present during centuries. Even nowadays IEA is often seen as an accent not to be taken seriously, confined to the vernacular usage (Hickey 2007, 23). Another instance of the low level of linguistic self-awareness is the quite striking fact that none of the Irish universities have a chair for the English language, not to mention the English language in Ireland, and even though there have been several attempts during the past few decades, these were more of personal interest and as neither of those scholars (Alan Bliss, P. L. Henry) had PhD students, there is no continuation on academic level in the study of IEA (Hickey 2007, 24).

The answer as to why the Irish do not hold the features of IEA and the language itself in higher regard may be difficult to find. However, there are several widely accepted opinions that are often mentioned as possible reasons for the Irish unease towards the English language. The first could be the process of supraregionalisation that took place at the end of the nineteenth century, which brought with it a huge amount of linguistic prejudice against those features of IEA which were considered vernacular (Hickey 2007, 23). The second reason is related to a more general problem bound up in the post-colonial tendency of citizens to consider anything homegrown as inferior (Hickey 2007, 23). Last but not least, there is also the attitude that still lingers, in which by approving of British English, one is being disloyal to the Irish. This is probably the consequence of the abandonment of Irish Gaelic and shift to English in the recent past. Hickey even talks about the unconscious trauma inflicted upon speakers of Irish Gaelic (Hickey 2007, 24).

Moreover, the variety of English spoken in Ireland did not undergo any kind of discussion about codification about whether there is a "standard Irish English". In Ireland, the orthographical and grammatical standard used when writing is still British English. Nevertheless, in what concerns the pronunciation, emulation of a RP-like

accent is regarded as un-Irish, snobbish or even ridiculous. Here, Dublin English is aspired to as the prestigious form of pronunciation. This is not surprising since the variety spoken in the economic centre of a nation usually ends up becoming the norm for the whole country. Indeed the economic boom set in Dublin during the 1990s caused a massive expansion of this variety of accent and is becoming the widely accepted norm amongst the speakers in the Republic of Ireland. In this respect, Hughes states: "It is worth noting that in the Republic of Ireland the highest prestige form of English and the linguistic model to which many Irish people aspire, is not a British variety, but is that of Dublin" (Hughes 2005, 114).

2.3 Present and possible future developments

Any discussion about the present-day state of IEA must include Dublin English as the main force shaping its development during the last three decades. The economic boom in Dublin that took place during the 1980s and 1990s meant huge economic growth in the metropolis, which went hand in hand with relative prosperity, increased international connections, population expansion and foreign immigration. These demographic and economic changes created further consequences in the pronunciation itself. In his study "Irish English, Research and Developments", Hickey mentions the present-day Dublin Vowel Shift that includes the raising and rounding of low back vowels (/ɒ/→/ɔ/, /ɒː/→/ɔː/, /ɔː/→/oː/), the retraction of the /ai/ diphthong (/aɪ/→/ɑɪ/) and the raising of the /ɒɪ/ diphthong (/ɒɪ/→/ɔɪ/→/oɪ/) (Hickey 2007, 26). Thanks to the special position of Dublin English among the varieties of English in the Republic of Ireland, these changes are gradually dissociating throughout the country and are picked up by the speakers seeking a non-vernacular form of Irish English. A similar process can be noted in the retroflex [ɻ] used predominantly in Dublin which is now spreading out of the capital and is used by young speakers in different parts of the country (Hickey 2007, 27). This may be seen as a more general process of supraregionalisation, in which the most common variety spoken in the capital becomes the norm of the whole country. In the Irish context, however, the process has not yet reached a finish. Thus, it is very probable that in the scope of the forthcoming decades some of the twentieth century features of the Irish English accent that have been thus far considered prototypical will be replaced by rapidly spreading new Dublin pronunciation (Hickey 2007, 29).

However, there are other consequences for the Irish English accent that the future may reveal. During the economic boom of the 1990s, Dublin saw a massive immigration into Ireland, and nowadays there is a great number of people whose native language is different from English. Among the foreigners, eastern Europeans are quite numerous, a population led by Poles, Latvians and Russians (especially since 2004 when many of the eastern European countries joined the European Union). Hickey, in *Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms,* mentions that the Poles are the most numerous immigrants, with something between 100,000 and 150,000 currently living in the country (Hickey 2007, 29), further pointing out that: "For a relatively small country this is a significant proportion of the population" (Hickey 2007, 29). Hence, it is highly probable that the variety of English spoken by large groups of immigrants such as Poles (who actually outnumbered the speakers of Irish) will find a position among the varieties of Irish English and will interact with them (Hickey 2007, 29).

2.4   Delimiting southern Irish English Accent

The present work does not aim to provide an in-depth description of the accents and varieties of Irish English spoken throughout both countries on the island. Contrarily, I am trying to arrive at a set of prototypical features of southern Irish English for use by the seminar course in English phonetics. Nonetheless, Northern Ireland aside, southern Irish English is by no means a single or homogenous variety. It varies both geographically and socially, thus, a note on the further division of the variety should be made at this point.

It has been pointed out in the Introduction that the boundaries of southern Irish English roughly coincide with the political boundaries between the two countries, although some zones of transition in the frontier area where the northern and southern features mix may be found (see Hickey 2004, 72). Furthermore, the south is divided into the east and west coastal areas. The east coast includes the area north of Dublin and extends down to the south-east area of the island, roughly around the town Waterford. "The east of the country stretches from the town of Drogheda somewhat north of Dublin down to Waterford in the south-east…" (Hickey 2004, 72). This is the area where English gained a somewhat stronger position, even during the time when in other parts of Ireland the Irish language was more common. The historical phonetic features of the east coast, as described by Hickey, involve, for example, front onset [æ]

or [ɛ] of /aʊ/, alveolar stops instead of dental fricatives (now socially stigmaticized), or glottalization of lenited /t/ (Hickey 2004, 73).

The south and the west coast form a large area that stretches from Coast Cork all the way up to Coast Mayo. Notably, it is the western part of the island where the Irish language has survived longest. As Hickey points out: "As a rule of thumb, one can say that Irish receded from east to west. Furthermore, in the western and southern half of the country there is no survival of English from first period with the possible exception of very small pockets in major cities…" (Hickey 2004, 73). The most salient features commonly associated with this area are the PIN-PEN merger (too be discussed later, see section 3.3) in the south, and the use of dental stops for dental fricatives in the west. As far as the latter is concerned, one possible explanation may be the contact with native Irish during the acquisition of English, which holds true for the majority of the features in this area (Hickey 2004, 74). This area is also thought to be the region of major language contact between Irish and English.

Additionally, one could consider the third, large region that extends between the two coasts. Hickey refers to the area as 'The Midlands' and describes it generally as "…the north-central part of Ireland" (Hickey 2004, 74). Given its proximity to the frontier, this variety (chiefly in the northern counties) of Irish English shares some of its features with Northern Irish English, such as the use of a retroflex [ɻ] (now spreading above all among the young speakers in the south, see section 3.2.3). However, probably the most distinctive feature of the Midlands is the use of /k/ for /tj/ in words like fortune (Hickey 2004, 74).

Map 1: Linguistic map of Ireland (Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms, 2007)
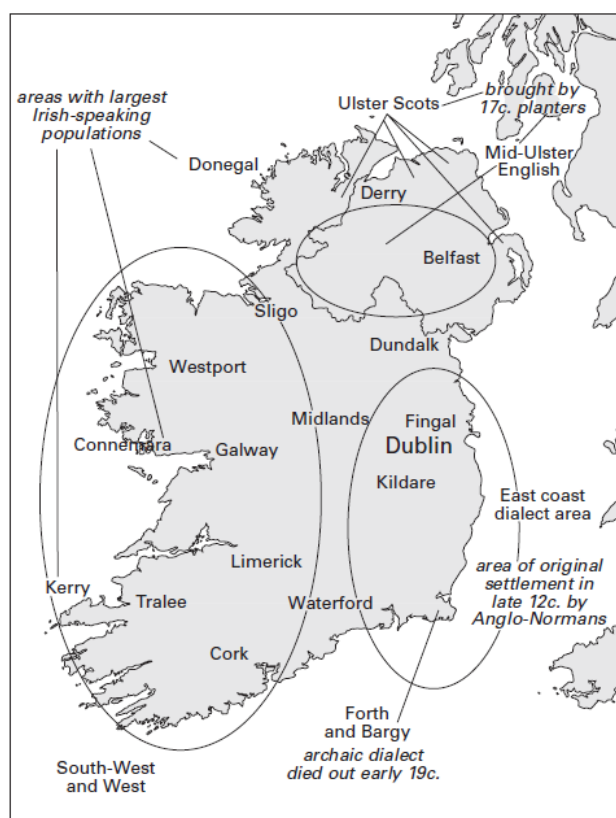
3   Sound system of Irish English

In this chapter, I discuss pronunciation of vowels and consonants typical for IEA. I have consulted a variety of sources to arrive at the most salient features that can be regarded as prototypical for the major part of the Republic. I must state that there are rural regions that can differ to a greater or lesser extent from what here is presented as prototypical. This rather generalized set will be subsequently used in the handout for the use of the seminar. In order to elaborate as accurate and updated set of features as possible, I have consulted above all the indispensible book by John Christopher Wells *Accents of English: The British Isles*, the section about the phonology of the supraregional Irish accent in Raymond Hickey's *Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms*, selected chapters from Peter Trudgill's *Language in the British Isles* and number of articles and studies on the topic by Raymond Hickey since the description by Wells, originally considered as the primary, dates back to the year 1982, and due to the development of Irish accent in the past three decades the accuracy and the "updatedness" of some of the features mentioned by Wells may be put to question.

The description of vowels here is based on the system of lexical sets as introduced by John C. Wells in 1980s in his three-volume work *Accents of English* (see *Table 1*). Since then, it has been adopted by many authors and nowadays its usefulness is widely acknowledged amongst linguists all over the world. It provides a systematic treatment of the incidence of each given vowel in each given English variety. For the description of Irish accent, nevertheless, it had to be extended since for example the PRICE vowel may have different realization before voiced or voiceless consonant, the final vowel in HAPPY may be tense and some of the vowels must have been treated separately (NORTH vs. FORCE) since in Irish accent they are distinct while in RP they are the same.

Table 1:

Lexical Sets

(RP)

Lexical set	Keyword	Lexical set	Keyword
ɪ	KIT	ɔ	THOUGHT
ɛ	DRESS	əʊ	GOAT
æ	TRAP	u	GOOSE
ɒ	LOT	aɪ	PRICE
ʌ	STRUT	ɔɪ	CHOICE
ʊ	FOOT	aʊ	MOUTH
ɑ	BATH	ɪə	NEAR
ɒ	CLOTH	ɛə	SQUARE
ɜ	NURSE	ɑ	START
i	FLEECE	ɔ	NORTH
eɪ	FACE	ɔ	FORCE
ɑ	PALM	ʊə	CURE

3.1 Vowels

Concerning vowels, the IEA differs in many respects from the mainstream accents of British English. Many authors ascribe this to the conservative character of the region. Bliss argues that Irish speakers learning English during the seventeenth century interpreted and reproduced the sounds in terms of their own phonemic system, a common phenomenon during second language acquisition, and that this pronunciation has been handed down with some minor changes to the present day (Bliss 1984, 135). Similarly, Wells states that its: "… vowel system corresponds very closely to the range of phonetic qualities associated with the vowel system of Irish…"(Wells 1982, 419). Finally, Hickey points out its conservatism by claiming that its vowel system bears a great resemblance to the one of Early Modern English (Hickey 2007, 316).

3.1.1   Vowels before /r/

IEA is a rhotic accent, hence, /r/ is pronounced wherever it is indicated orthographically. This has as a consequence the absence of the centering diphthongs /ɪə, eə, ʊə/ typical for RP and non-rhotic accents. In one aspect, nevertheless, IEA differs from many other rhothic accents. Here, the retention of the historic /r/ had further consequences, since IEA preserves almost the complete range of vowel oppositions in the position before /r/ (Wells 1982, 420; Hickey 1989, 45). Wells also provides a list of vowels that occur in the environment following /r/. This list involves /iː, ɪ, eː, ɛ, aː, æ, ɒ, ɔː, oː, ʌ, uː, ʊ, aɪ, aʊ, ɔɪ, ə/, with a note on /ʊ/ since there are almost no words containing /ʊ/ before /r/, Wells, however, considers it an accidental gap rather than a neutralization (Wells 1982, 420).

A large number of vocalic contrasts before /r/ is a conservative feature which, according to Hickey: "… have long ceased to exist in Received Pronunciation and other non-rhotic varieties of English" (Hickey 1989, 45). Thus, many of the words that are homophonous in RP are minimal pairs in IEA, such as *earn* and *urn* (in Irish English accent pronounced as [ɛɹn] and [ʊɹn] respectively, in RP both neutralized to [ɜːn]).

Although there are a few neutralizations, especially in Dublin where, for example, the NURSE-SQUARE merger caused a neutralization, the resulting phoneme being /ʌr/, the large range of vowel oppositions before /r/ is a common feature for many Irish English speakers and thus can be considered as prototypical.

3.1.2 NORTH-FORCE distinction

Another wide-spread opposition in the environment of following /r/ is the one between the lexical sets NORTH and FORCE, in RP both neutralized to /ɔr/. For the description of the sound system of Irish English, these two lexical sets have to be treated separately since the vowel qualities differ. Meanwhile Wells transcribe the vowels as /ɔːr/ and /oːr/ respectively (Wells 1982, 421), Hickey in his description provides a rather different quality in the NORTH set - /ɒːr/ (Hickey 2007, 316). The presence of the vowel distinction, however, is indubitable. Hence, for many Irishmen words such as *horse* and *hoarse* or *morning* and *mourning* are minimal pairs pronounced with /ɔːr/~/ɒːr/ and /oːr/ respectively.

The problem, nevertheless, may be to distinguish which of the two lexical sets a given word belongs to. In this respect, Wells and Hickey differ. Wells states that the NORTH words are those with spelling *war, quar, aur* and word-final *or*; those spelled with *o* followed by a vowel and *r* (*board*), or *o* followed by *r* and a vowel (*more)* generally belong to the FORCE set (Wells 1982, 234). Hickey, on the other hand, points out that for those speakers who have this distinction, it is lexically determined and that the majority of the FORCE words derive from French loanwords in Middle English (Hickey 2007, 316).

3.1.3 LOT-CLOTH-THOUGHT vowels

Similarly, the vowel quality and the incidence in the three lexical sets differ in IEA. Bliss, Wells and Hughes describe the vowels in LOT and THOUGHT lexical sets as being unrounded and open and transcribe them as [ɑ, ɑː] (Bliss 1984, 136; Wells 1982, 419; Hughes 2005, 115). In RP, the actual realization are their rounded counterparts [ɒ, ɔ(ː)] respectively. The CLOTH words may pose a problem, since in RP they are leveled with the words from the LOT lexical set. In IEA, nevertheless, the situation is more complicated, as the actual occurrence ranges between both vowel qualities. Wells documents the fuzziness enumerating words that vary freely between /ɒ/ and /ɔː/ (such as *cross, lost,* etc.), words having /ɔː/, e.g. *rob*, and a context-sensitive alteration between /ɔː/ and /ɒ/ in pairs such as *bog* and *boggy* (Wells 1982, 424). Hickey in his description states that the CLOTH words are neutralized with the THOUGHT words: "CLOTH words have the same realization as the THOUGHT words, i.e. a long low

back vowel, which is quite open in mainstream varieties, but raised in new forms of Dublin English" (Hickey 2007, 328).

Hence, it seems that the situation is not entirely clear and is still open to question. The opposition /æ-aː/, discussed in the section that follows, poses a similar problem. In the handout, I will make a note on the unrounded character of the vowels in LOT and THOUGHT.

3.1.4   The opposition /æ-aː/

Before I actually comment on the opposition between the two vowels, a note must be made about the realization of the long vowel /a/, in RP retracted to /ɑ/. The three authors that touch upon the topic state that mainstream IEA has a non-standard low central vowel [aː] for lexical sets BATH, PALM and START (Wells 1982, 419,424; Bliss 1984, 136; Hickey 1986, 144). In the case of the vowel in START, Hickey points out that there is some retraction in the mainstream, present-day varieties, and the realization may be [ɑ] (Hickey 2007, 329). In the remaining two lexical sets, however, the non-retracted form is undoubtedly the most frequent, as Hickey makes it clear in his article "What's cool in Irish English": "A retraction to [ɑː] would be seen as an adoption of an English accent and has always been regarded as unacceptable for the native Irish, indeed speakers with this retraction, are ridiculed as having a 'grand [grɑːnd] accent'" (Hickey 2003, 370).

As far as the /æ-aː/ opposition is concerned, the majority of authors agree that the situation is rather complex. According to Wells, the lexical incidence of these vowels corresponds generally to RP and other standard accents. There is a tendency, nonetheless, to lengthen and contract the TRAP vowel before certain voiced consonants (Wells 1982, 423; Hickey 2007, 317) which seems to endanger the opposition. The pronunciation of *man*, thus, can range from [mæːn] to [maːn] and words *aunt* and *ant* are both pronounced as [æːnt] (Wells 1982, 424). This mutual interplay of qualities and length seems to be the main cause of the weak opposition of the two vowels in IEA. The situation is far from clear, and Wells himself states: "…it has not been described adequately yet" (Wells 1982, 424).

Moreover, both authors mention that conservative speakers often have [æ] for [ɛ] in *many*, and *any* is often homophonous with *Annie* (Wells 1982, 423; Hughes

2005, 116; Hickey 2007, 317). This usage is considered an Irishism since it is prototypical of IEA, a note on this will be included in the handout.

3.1.5   STRUT vowel

In what concerns the short vowel /ʌ/ in the STRUT lexical set, IEA differs considerably from RP and majority of the mainstream accents. Moreover, the authors themselves differ in their transcriptions, the only firm and common point of their combined descriptions being the fact that the vowel is centralized and more rounded than it is in RP [ʌ]. Hence, Wells transcribes the typical Irish English pronunciation as a mid-centralized back somewhat rounded vowel [ɵ–] or [ɔ̈] but states that the unrounded back and central qualities [ɤ, ə] are also to be found, as well as the identical pronunciation as in RP [ʌ] (regarded as being rather posh) (Wells 1982, 422). Bliss transcribes the vowel simply as [ɔ] (Bliss 1984, 135), and finally Hickey describes it as further back that it in RP, a retracted and slightly rounded vowel, i.e. [ʌ̈] (the diaeresis indicates that the vowel is centralized) and points out that its realization is very similar to the vowel found in Irish Gaelic, e.g. fliuch [fˠlʲʌ̈x] 'wet' (Hickey 2007, 317,328). He then goes on to state that the actual realization differs from variety to variety, and that it is the degree of lip rounding that has lead some scholars to transcribe it as [ɔ̈] (Hickey 2007, 317).

It is also worth noting that with the exception of local Dublin English, where the opposition is neutralized as /ʊ/ (Wells 1982, 422; Hughes 2005, 115), the majority of the varieties within Ireland (both south and north) have different vowels for the FOOT and STRUT lexical sets, a feature commonly known as the FOOT-STRUT split. Wells, however, points out that although most Irish accents have the opposition between /ʌ/ and /ʊ/, the lexical incidence differs in some cases from the one in more standard accents. In Co. Mayo, for example, there are minimal pairs for /ʌ/ and /ʊ/ such as *pup* vs. *sup* ([pʰʌp] and [sʊp]), which in RP perfectly rhyme (Wells 1982, 422). Moreover, some of the words of the FOOT lexical set may have a historical realization /u/ (Wells 1982, 423). In the handout I will only include a note about the centralization and rounding of /ʌ/, since the latter two features are incidental and do not hold true for most accents.

3.1.6   Long Mid Diphthonging

As has been mentioned above, one of the most prominent features of IEA is its conservative character. One of the examples supporting this claim is that the Long Mid Diphthonging, which caused words in Modern English belonging to the lexical sets FACE and GOAT to be pronounced with diphthongs /eɪ/ and /əʊ/ respectively, has passed most IEA by (Wells 1982, 425).

The diphthongs /eɪ/ and /əʊ/ for the words like FACE and GOAT are currently the mainstream pronunciation for RP and other standard accents of English. However, this was not always the case; as late as the eighteenth century, the vowels in these lexical sets were monophthongs /eː/ and /oː/. In RP, they were diphthongized later by the process called the Long Mid Diphthonging. The process, however, did not take place in the evolution of IEA. Hence, the latter still preserves the monophthongs characteristic of English before the eighteenth century.

Authors usually transcribe the vowels as /eː/ and /oː/ (Wells 1982, 425; Bliss 1984, 136; Hughes 2005, 115; Hickey 2007, 328). Nevertheless, the capital city, Dublin (where the pronunciation shows leanings towards the RP pronunciation), differs precisely in that it has diphthongs in these words ([e̞ɪ~ɛɪ] for FACE and [oʊ~ɔʊ] for GOAT) (Wells 1982, 425), and probably thanks to the dominant position the variety spoken in Dublin, has dominated the last three decades in the country, evidenced by the fact that in GOAT the diphthongized variant is becoming the mainstream realization in the Republic of Ireland.

Thus, in the description of the vocalic system of Irish English, Hickey contradicts what Wells claimed some 30 years ago, meanwhile stating that in the case of the FACE lexical set, the monophthong [eː] is the most frequent realization in the Republic (with a possibility of lowering in some vernacular varieties [ɛː]), in the case of GOAT, today a long monophthong is found only in the traditional and rural varieties, the mainstream pronunciation being [goʊt] (Hickey 2007, 328-329).

3.1.7   MOUTH vowel

The vowel in the MOUTH lexical set, as Wells mentions, exhibits a great range of phonetic realizations (Wells 1982, 427) and this is also supported by the fact that the three authors I consulted transcribed the vowel differently. While Wells claims that the

most common realization is [ʌʊ] (Wells 1982, 427), Bliss transcribes the vowel as [əʊ] (Bliss 1984, 136) and finally, in the most recent description of the sound system of Irish English accent, Hickey states that the common pronunciation is with a low starting point [aʊ] (Hickey 2007, 329). The situation becomes even more complicated when the recent phonetic changes in IEA are taken into account since the pronunciation in Dublin differs from the rest of the region, and over the past three decades it has been spreading over the country predominantly among younger speakers. If we are to comment on the latter, it ranges from the most frequent realization with a front starting point [æʊ] through [aʊ] to educated [ɑʊ] (Wells 1982, 427; Hickey 2007, 329) and colloquially it can be even pronounced with [ɛ] (Hickey 2007, 329).

The most plausible explanation of this discrepancy concerning the MOUTH vowel seems to be the process in which the most common pronunciation up till the 1980s [ʌʊ] has been under the influence of the two most frequent pronunciations of the capital, [æʊ] and [aʊ], and now the mainstream pronunciation ranges from [ʌʊ] to [aʊ]. But, as Hickey points out, the traditional pronunciation in the Dublin and other eastern dialects, [æʊ], is spreading very quickly, mainly among young female speakers (Hickey 2007, 329). In the handout, I will include the two most common pronunciations with a note on possible future developments.

3.1.8   PRICE vowel

One of the Anglo-American stereotypes about IEA is that the Irish say 'noice toime' instead of *nice time* (Wells 1982, 425; Hughes 2005, 115) and Hickey clearly supports this fact by saying that: "This pronunciation seems to have become part of the stereotype of an Irish accent and authors such as Kipling used the oi spelling to indicate this, as in *woild Oirland*" (Hickey 2003, 366). This documents the pronunciation typical for the Irish middle class in the late eighteenth century, which was most probably [əɪ] and this conservative pronunciation is to be found even nowadays in some rural or lower class speakers (Wells 1982, 426; Hickey 2003, 365). The most common pronunciation of the PRICE lexical set in IEA in the present day is [aɪ] (Wells 1982, 426; Hickey 2007, 329). The PRICE vowel, however, is another vowel that in the recent past has shown a tendency to development. Particularly, Hickey talks about the Dublin Vowel Shift that involves, among others, the retraction

of the diphthong [aɪ] to [ɑɪ] in the environment before voiced segments (the introduction of the PRIDE lexical set), especially before /l/ and /r/ (Hickey 2003, 366). Hence, words like *style* are pronounced as [stɑɪl] and this vowel change is being picked up by young speakers in other parts of the country. "This retracted starting point is is particularly noticeable before /r/ so that the name of the country is realized as [ɑɪɹlənd] rather than [aɪɹlənd]" (Hickey 2004, 82). It is a question if this will become the norm or the traditional pronunciation [aɪ] will be preserved.

The PRICE vowel is also associated with the PRICE-CHOICE opposition that is not well-established in some provincial varieties of IEA. The reason may be the fact that at the time of the adoption of English in the seventeenth century the Irish used the PRICE vowel for the CHOICE words probably because of the gap caused by the absence of the /ɔɪ/ diphthong in Irish Gaelic (Bliss 1984, 135). This usage is, nonetheless, recessive and the opposition is maintained in the majority of IEA varieties as in other standard accents (Wells 1982, 426). The most typical realization of /ɔɪ/ is [ɔɪ~ɒɪ] (Wells 1982, 426; Hickey 2007, 317). In the handout, I will mention the present pronunciation together with a note on possible future development.

3.1.9   Vowel reduction

In what concerns the vowel reduction in unstressed syllables, IEA differs once again from RP and many other standard accents. This is due to the fact that in IEA, the KIT and schwa merger took place, meaning that /ə/ is neutralized with unstressed /ɪ/ and that there is only one reduction vowel /ə/ (Wells 1982, 427). It follows that words like *abbot* and *rabbit* are both pronounced with final [-æbət] and rhyme perfectly (compared to RP 'rabbit' [ˈɹæbɪt]). There are many other instances of the reduction; the suffix *–ing* is commonly pronounced [-ən], the first syllable in words *peculiar* and *specific* has [ə] (as opposed to RP [ɪ]), the unstressed *–ed* as in *naked* is pronounced [ˈneːkəd] and in popular speech the final syllable in some nouns and adjectives like *windows* and *yellow* is reduced to schwa as well (Wells 1982, 425-426; Hickey 2007, 317).

Additionally, there seems to be another complication concerning the extent of the vowel weakening, since there are words with a reduced vowel in RP which in IEA appear with an unreduced form, for example, *opinion* with initial /oː/ and *accept* possibly with initial /æ/ (Wells 1982, 427). In the handout, I will make a note about the

KIT and schwa merger but all the peculiarities of the process of reduction in IEA will not be addressed at length.

3.1.10 HAPPY-tensing

One of the minor features that applies to the majority of varieties in the Republic is the tensing of the short final vowel in *happy*. The final vowel, typical for IEA, is /i:/ realized as [i~ɪ] (the second open variant is used by RP-influenced speakers) (Wells 1982, 428; Hickey 2007, 317).

Despite the fact that the authors usually put the HAPPY-tensing as one of the salient features of IEA which is not found in more standard accents, I am not going to include this feature in the handout, since the students of the phonetic seminar at Palacký University are taught to transcribe the final vowel in the HAPPY words with /i/.

3.2 Consonants

The major deviation of IEA from RP, concerning the consonants, is without a doubt its system of coronal segments. In the following sections, I will attempt to generalize the rather complex system of the coronal obstruents in IEA, together with comments on the typical realizations of the liquids and other salient features that apply to the consonants in IEA.

3.2.1 Lenition of /t/ and /d/

The phenomenon discussed in the present section is probably the most salient feature of IEA. According to both authors who deal with the topic in more detail, John C. Wells and Raymond Hickey, it is the lenition of /t/ and /d/ that may guide us to recognize someone as a speaker of Irish English. Wells states that: "It is one of the most conspicuous features of IEA, and common at all social levels and perhaps in all parts of the country" (Wells 1982, 429); Hickey at different point in several publications repeats that this is the most prominent feature of the accent stating that it functions as an indicator of IEA (Hickey 2009, 124).

In what concerns this feature, I will, however, refer mostly to Hickey's studies

(namely "Weak segments in Irish English", "Coronal segments in Irish English" and the chapter on the lenition in *Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms*) since he treats the topic more thoroughly and proves some of Wells' comments wrong.

In the first place, I would like to explain the term 'lenition'. It is a more general term for what here could be called 'frication of a stop', this term moreover encompasses the processes such as tapping or glottalization, both commonly found in other accents of English (Hickey 2009, 122). It consists in the weakening of the articulation of a given consonant, often alveolar stops, and the process is quite frequent in the Celtic languages what brings us to the theory that IEA adopted it from Irish (Hickey 2007, 322).

Moving to the description of the process in IEA, the rule for frication of the alveolar stops appear to be that /t/ or /d/ is realized as a fricative whenever it appears in syllable coda after a vowel and immediately before a further vowel or is word-final (Hickey 2009, 126). In these cases, the resulting pronunciation is an apico-alveolar fricative transcribed as [t̞] and [d̞] respectively (I am using Hickey's transcription, see Hickey 2007, 318; Hickey 2009, 125). Hickey describes the articulation of the sound as follows: "It is formed by bringing the apex of the tongue close to the alveolar ridge as if for the articulation for /t/ but stopping just before contact" (Hickey 1984, 234). The typical examples for the lenition in IEA are words such as *bottom* [ˈbɑt̞əm], *but* [bʌt̞] and *wood* [wud̞].

Wells in his description suggests occasional lenition even in the pre-stress position (and some others do so as well, according to Hickey 1984, 234), Hickey, however, argues that this is not the case and states that the frication in IEA is stress sensitive and occurs only before unstressed vowels or word-finally (Hickey 1984, 234). He moreover demonstrates his claim on pairs of morphologically related words which due to the position in syllable, nonetheless, have different /t/ allophone, e.g. *Italy* [ˈɪt̞ɪli] vs. *Italian* [ɪˈtæljən] (Hickey 2007, 319). Another obvious obstacle for the frication is the pre and post-consonantal position (in words such as *lightning* [laɪtnɪŋ] and *bent* [bɛnt]), in this environment the realization is a plain alveolar stop (Hickey 2007, 318). The position after /r/ in words like *cart* seems to be an exception as the fricative realization is found commonly.

From what has been mentioned above, it is clear that for a foreigner or speaker of a different accent, the difference at least between [t̞] and /s/ (and [d̞] and /z/) may seem rather blurry. For the speakers in the Republic, nevertheless, there is no

overlapping and minimal sets such as *put-puss-(push)* are perfectly discernible. Given the particular character of the feature and its importance for the sound system of Irish English, I consider it crucial to state accurately the rules of its incidence for later usage in the handout.

3.2.2 TH-stopping

A further complication to the system of coronal consonants in IEA is the fortition of ambidental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/. The authors agree that the most common realization of these in Irish English Accent are the dental plosives, [t̪] and [d̪] respectively (Wells 1982, 428; Bliss 1984, 138; Hickey 1984, 240; Hughes 2005, 116).

Wells mentions that it is one of the stereotypes of the Irish that they use /t,d/ for /θ, ð/ and vice versa. This is, moreover, reflected in transcriptions such as 'tink' for *think*. He also notes that although affricated pronunciations [t̪θ], [d̪ð] are also encountered, the typical fricative realizations are confined to the use of sophisticates, who make a deliberate effort to sound correct (Wells 1982, 429). Bliss adds that the plosive quality of the dental fricatives is a very characteristic feature of IEA and both of them point out the neutralization of the dental stops in the environment following /r/. Thus, speakers that normally distinguish *tin* from *thin* have [t̪] before /r/ for both consonants (in words like *trick*, *drop*, *drums*, etc.) (Wells 1982, 429,431; Bliss 1984, 138; Hughes 2005, 116).

In regards to this, Hickey shares in the general consensus that it is the most frequent realization of the dental fricatives in IEA, though he does not mention the neutralization, and brings up the possible realization as [θ] found with some speakers word-finally. A possible explanation of this may be the analogy with the plain /t/, which is fricativized when word-final (*pat* [pʰæt̪] vs. *path* [pʰæθ]) (Hickey 2007, 330).

As for the origin of this feature, there are, in general, two acceptable theories. One of them is the fact that the ambidental fricatives are considerably marked, rather rare in languages, and that children usually learn them late. Hence it is not surprising, as Hickey notes, that: "…fortition of these to corresponding stops should have taken place during the unguided second-language acquisition of the language shift…" (Hickey 2007, 318). The second explanation is the contact with the native Irish language, where dental stops are found as well (Hickey 2007, 318).

If a general statement must be made, it is true for the majority of speakers of

Irish English that they distinguish word pairs like *thank* [t̪æŋk] and *tank* [tʰæŋk]. The difference, however, is based on the placement of articulation rather than on the manner (fricative/plosive character). Furthermore, if compared to RP, the realizations in Irish English share the dental articulation but not the fricative quality.

3.2.3   Pronunciation of /r/

Irish English, as has been previously stated in section 3.1.1, is a rhotic accent and this means that the phoneme /r/, unlike RP, is pronounced both when syllable-initial and syllable-final. Another logical consequence of the rhoticity is the absence of the 'linking-r' and 'intrusive-r'. These facts are generally accepted and common for the three authors I have consulted (Wells 1982, 431; Bliss 1984, 139; Hickey 2007, 320). The problem, however, emerges when one attempts to draw a generalization for the pronunciation of /r/, since the authors differ in their descriptions.

There are, basically, two types of /r/ found in Wells. The first pronunciation is more or less the same as in RP, a post-alveolar approximant transcribed as [ɹ], and is found before stressed vowels (e.g. *ring* [ɹɪŋ]). The second pronunciation involves the remaining phonotactic positions, which Wells describes as a retroflex approximant [ɻ], generally found in GA, e.g. *farm* [faːɻm] (Wells 1982, 431-2). The latter type of /r/ usually colors the quality of the preceding vowel. Wells states that there is some variation: "The degree of retroflexion seems to vary regionally, socially and stylistically to some extent…" (Wells 1982, 432).

Hickey, on the other hand, in his description of the types of /r/ in IEA talks about three basic pronunciations. The mainstream pronunciation, according to him, is a velarized alveolar continuant which he transcribes with the normal symbol and a diacritic for velarization [ɹˠ], and finds it also in the postvocalic position, e.g. *core* [kʰoːɹˠ] (Hickey 2007, 320). The second type, a retroflex [ɻ], is found in IEA in the post-vocalic position as well, but in his description it is a genuine innovation and the result of the changes in Dublin English over the past two decades, which is spreading among the young (female) speakers all over the country (Hickey 2007, 321). Hickey assumes that this pronunciation will become with time the dominant realization in the Republic: "With the spread of retroflexion, the next generation will use [ɻ] in mainstream varieties, unless the current trend is reversed" (Hickey 2007, 331). The third pronunciation, according to Hickey, is a uvular [ʁ] found during the

recordings for *A Sound Atlas of Irish English* in north-east Leinster, Connemara and the Dingle Peninsula (Hickey 2007, 321). However, since the aforementioned pronunciation is recessive and is found only in some rural varieties, it is not of interest for the purpose of this work.

In the handout, I will mention primarily the pronunciation as described in Hickey, since his description is based on the recordings made for the sound atlas, and because the retroflex [ɻ] does not appear in the description of IEA consonants presented by Bliss (1984, 136). I will, nonetheless, include a note on the retroflex variant as a current trend, in the context of possible development and as a compromise with Wells' division.

3.2.4   Clear /l/

Concerning the /l/ allophony, the situation seems to be more clear-cut. One of the prominent features of the Irish accent has, traditionally, been the use of clear (alveolar) /l/ in all positions (as opposed to the clear-dark distinction in RP). The authors agree that in words like *feel* or *milk*, the dark [ɫ] is not found (Wells 1982, 431; Bliss 1984, 138; Hughes 2005, 114; Hickey 2007, 321).

However, there is a note in Wells about a possible change, as he notes a postvocalic velarized [ɫ] in young speakers between the ages of 18-20 (Wells 1982, 431) and the process, indeed, seems to be in progress as Hickey, some 25 years later, in his description of IEA states that although the mainstream varieties have an alveolar [l] in both prevocalic and postvocalic environments, the velarized pronunciation has become characteristic for younger non-local speakers (especially females) all over the Republic of Ireland (e.g. *field* [fiːᵊɫd]). Once again, the changes in Dublin English which are spreading to the rest of the country seem to be the cause (Hickey 2007, 321, 331).

In the handout, I will mention the traditional distribution of the clear [l] in all positions, together with a note on velarized variant that is spreading rapidly and may become the normal realization in future.

3.2.5 WHICH/WITCH distinction

Among the conservative features that show a tendency to development there is also the WHICH-WITCH distinction, traditionally considered one of the salient features of the accent. In conservative IEA, the voiceless labiovelar glide [ʍ] occurs whenever there is *wh-* in the orthography. Hence, there are minimal pairs such as *which* [ʍɪtʃ] and *witch* [wɪtʃ] (Wells 1982, 432; Bliss 1984, 138; Hickey 2007, 319). Hickey, in the chapter on labio-velars, argues that the consonant should be analyzed as /h/+/w/ and supports the claim with compelling arguments about the system of consonants in English in general. He mentions that the voiced quality of sonorants and glides, and also the tendency to rising sonority from the edge to the center of syllable. These arguments, according to him, impede the simple opposition voiced-voiceless, as seen in pairs like /s/-/z/ (see Hickey 2007, 319). Any further description of the voiceless glide is not of interest here, as its validity and presence in the present-day Irish accent whatsoever is my second point.

   In his description of current changes in IEA, Hickey points out that one of the minor changes is the [ʍ]-[w] merger that is spreading quickly, and that it is likely that the distinction with not be maintained in future generations. "The merger of [ʍ] and [w] is increasingly frequent with supraregional speakers so that word pairs like which and witch now consist of homophones" (Hickey 2004, 89).

   In the handout I will mention the mainstream distinction, but I will also point out its merging tendency.

3.3   *Some minor features of Irish English Accent*

Some of the features I have encountered are problematic in that although typically associated with some parts of the Republic of Ireland, they are not so widespread, or are recessive, and this impedes their qualification as prototypical. I do want, however, to mention at least some of them in this section, since I assume that they form a part of the sound system of Irish English.

   One of the features that the Irish themselves sometimes use as a joke to ridicule the typical Irish accent is the homophonous pronunciation of word pairs like *steal* and *stale*, both /steːl/ (Wells 1982, 425). This may also apply to word pairs such as *meat*/*mate*, and can be regarded as the residue of Middle English. In more standard

accents the vowels in *see* and *sea* (originally /i:/ and /e:/ respectively) are homophonous, thanks to the process called the **FLEECE merger**, which took place in the seventeenth century and caused the merging of the different vowels /i:/ and /e:/ to the single phoneme /i:/ we encounter today (Wells 1982, 195). The merger was not entirely carried through in some varieties of Irish English accent, and, although recessive in use, it is still firmly associated with some rural accents in Ireland.

Similarly, one characteristically Irish feature, sometimes confined to a jocular and non-literal use, is the **OL-diphthongization**. It can be described as the use of the diphthong /aʊ/ instead of typical /o:/ in the environment of following /l/ (Wells 1982, 427; Hickey 2007, 306). However, Wells describes the following segment as a consonant cluster /-ld/ and this may be because, as both of Wells and Hickey state, the diphthongization occurs particularly in *old* and *bold* (where *old* has also the standard pronunciation with /o:/, but the two variants have a slight change of meaning). Additionally, Hickey states that: "… in vernacular varieties, both north and south, there is a greater range of forms with OL-diphthongization" (Hickey 2007, 306).

Another vocalic feature that may be found mainly in the western (south-western) part of the country is the **PIN-PEN merger**. The phenomenon is common in some English accents, e.g. Southern American English, and consists in merging of /ɪ/ and /ɛ/ before nasals in words like *pin* and *pen*. Usually, the resulting vowel is closer to [ɛ], in IEA the second variant [pɪn] is more common (Wells 1982, 423).

There are two phonological processes that are, at least to some extent, present in the majority of varieties around the Republic. The first of them is the *epenthesis* ('**Schwa Epenthesis**' in Wells). The process, as described by Wells, involves the insertion of [ə] between a plosive (including *th-* [t̪]) and a liquid or a nasal, or between the cluster of a liquid and a nasal, e.g. *Kathleen*, *form*, *film* (Wells 1982, 435). Hickey makes a more general statement: "Epenthesis is a process by which an unstressed short vowel is inserted in a cluster of sonorants to resyllabify the cluster in question such that the sonorants belong to different syllables after epenthesis (/.fɪlm./→/.fɪl.əm./)" (Hickey 2007, 307). Hence, a monosyllabic word in RP during the process becomes disyllabic in IEA. Nevertheless, in regards to the distribution of the epenthesis, the authors differ. Wells states that it is restricted to popular speech while Hickey argues that between /-lm/, the epenthesis is universal and widespread (but states that its range is larger in the vernacular varieties) (Wells 1982, 435; Hickey 2007, 308).

The second process which is rather frequent in the varieties of the Irish English

accent is the ***metathesis***, which is mentioned only by Hickey. The phenomenon appears to have been long present in IEA and today, similarly as in the case of the epenthesis, it is present only to a certain degree in the supraregional Irish English accent. Namely, only the R-vowel-metathesis in unstressed syllables, e.g. modern [ˈmɒdɹən] or secretary [ˈsɛkəɹtɹi] (Hickey 2007, 306, 308). In this case, Hickey points out, the metathesis passes unnoticed by the majority of speakers. More types, again, are found in the vernacular varieties (Hickey 2007, 208).

Another feature I am going to mention is the so called **'Yod Dropping'**. In this regard the authors agree on its existence, however, they contradict each other concerning its distribution. While Wells considers it rather frequent in unstressed syllables, Hickey claims that the yod deletion is normal in stressed syllables, e.g. *new* [nuː], but avoided in unstressed, regarding the yod deletion in unstressed syllables characteristic of vernacular varieties (Wells 1982, 436; Hickey 2007, 307).

Finally, authors sometimes mention one peculiarity concerning the prosody of the Irish English accent since here, the rules governing the ***placement of stress*** seem to be not so firm as in more standard English accents. Forms such as ˈ*municipal* alongside *muni*ˈ*cipal* are found (RP *mu*ˈ*nicipal*) (Wells 1984, 436). Both Wells and Hickey, moreover, point out that in some trisyllabic words with initial stress in RP, the stress can be found on the last syllable in IEA (Wells 1984, 436; Hickey 2007, 325). These forms, however, usually coexist with the forms with a more standard stress pattern. "Non-standard stress patterns are a common feature of Irish English and typically involve the placement of stress on the last syllable of a trisyllabic form, usually a verb: *edu*ˈ*cate, adver*ˈ*tise, rea*ˈ*lise…*" (Hickey 2007, 325).

Although, these features are considered minor and not always do authors agree on their distribution, in the handout I will include a note on those which at least to a certain degree appear in most varieties of IEA. Namely, Schwa epenthesis in /-lm/, yod-dropping and flexible word stress.

4   The Handout (Discussion)

This paper has been written with the intention to create study material – specifically a handout about southern Irish English accent – which will be used later in the Seminar in English Phonetics. In this chapter I am going to comment on the process of its creation, its structure, the recordings, exercises and further reading.

4.1   The 'making of' the handout

During the creation of the handout I kept in mind that it would not only serve the students as a study material and a set of features of IEA, but that in a broader context the recordings and the listening tasks are also of great merit for the development of the students' listening skills in general. Foreign students of English philology, whom the Seminar is primarily intended for, are expected to develop listening skills for their future careers, and it is the listening tasks that many of them find most problematic, since successfully completing an exercise does not necessarily depend on previous preparation. In my opinion, listening to different accents, learning dialectal differences and phonetic processes common in the fluent and ordinary speech not only educate students in English phonetics, but also develop their listening skills and make future communication with native speakers much easier for them.

Before I actually started to work on the handout itself, I consulted several phonetic textbooks looking for methodology and models on how to teach a foreign accent in the most efficient and entertaining way, and how an ideal exercise should look like. However, there is not much literature in this field, and eventually I decided to follow the structure of other already existing handouts, mainly for the two following reasons. Firstly, I suppose that all the handouts in the Seminar should have a more or less similar structure, to make the students' orientation in them easier, as they know what to expect. Secondly, from my own experience in a similar course I knew what kind of exercises and handout structure helped me understand the accent better.

The handout may be divided into six parts. In the first, introductory part I present a short theoretical overview to provide some basic facts about the accent, and to point out that it is only southern Irish English being discussed here.

The second section is dedicated to the vocalic features. This section is comprised of two parts: the listening tasks are followed by the inventory of features. I intentionally did not put the inventory of vowel features first in order to stimulate the

students and make them try to first find the features themselves. From my own past experience I know that this order is much more effective, since the students are not expected to begin by memorizing a tedious list of features without actually understanding it. On the contrary, in the exercises the students hear the feature first and as they discuss it and write it down, they already associate the feature with a certain sound, exercise or word. Hence, the important features that I mention in the descriptions are documented in the exercises first. The number of the exercises corresponds with the number of the recordings, and to make the orientation in the sound files easier, the recordings are called 'SAMPLE' (OPT.) + a number corresponding to the exercise. Additionally, the instructions are formulated clearly to avoid any misunderstanding.

In the remaining parts of the handout, the structure is more or less identical with one exception; here, the consonantal features are discussed. Another possible difference could be the fact that I decided not to present the consonantal features in a table, since more notes were necessary than in the case of the vowels. At the end of the handout I made a list of references which the students may consult if interested in a more detailed description. Several websites are included in case the students want to listen more to IEA.

4.2   The Recordings

Given the character of the seminar, I laid great stress on the quality of the sound recordings. For the sound files to be useful, it was paramount that the features were easily recognizable, thus, some speakers in the recordings that I used have a strong accent. The objection could be raised that the students should be taught to recognize even slight deviations from RP, but I uphold that for the first encounter with an English variety fairly different from RP, a strong accent where the given feature stands out and student recognizes it immediately is more appropriate. Once the student knows the 'exaggerated' realization, it is more probable that they will also recognize less prominent cases later on. This does not mean that the speakers in the recordings are deliberately exaggerating or speaking slowly. Moreover, it was important to use as dialectally varied subjects as possible. It follows that I used speakers from all age categories, different counties in the Republic, speakers with different social positions and speakers with both strong and weaker accents. Another important criterion I

considered while collecting the sound files was the date of the recording. I made sure that all the recordings were as up-to-date as possible for the students to hear the accent as it is spoken in the present day.

The majority of the recordings are taken from the International Dialects of English Archive website, as the webpage offers a great range of sound recordings and provides all the important data for similar usage (age of the subject, place of birth, current residence, occupation, education, race, date of the recording, etc.). Hence, it was easy for me to check all the information I needed. Moreover, I downloaded and converted some of the news reports from the RTE.tv channel on YouTube to audio files, as well as several podcasts directly from the RTE.ie web. Finally, some of the recordings are taken from the 'Irish English Research Center' <www.uni-due.de/IERC/> where the features are documented with samples from *A Sound Atlas of Irish English* (Hickey 2004). For the orthographic transcription see Appendix 2.

4.3   *Note on the spreading Dublin pronunciation*

In order to create an updated study material, I decided to include the so called 'spreading Dublin pronunciation' in cases where a tendency to development is obvious or strong. Hickey, in this respect, talks about the New Pronunciation of southern Irish English which is based on the fashionable pronunciation in Dublin, but is spreading rapidly throughout the Republic (Hickey 2003, 369). It is a set of features that is frequently found in young speakers (usually not older than 30) and, among others, includes the /aɪ/-retraction before voiced consonants, /aʊ/-fronting, /r/-retroflexion, the velarization of a postvocalic /l/ and the WHICH-WITCH merger. In these cases I included the spreading pronunciation in parentheses (also in the cases of the GOAT diphthongization and /a/-retraction before /r/).

Hickey supports this idea by claiming that during collecting material for *A Sound Atlas of Irish English*, these features became widespread and were generally adopted by the younger population over the entire south of Ireland (Hickey 2003, 369). This adoption seems to be related to the dominant position that Dublin English gained during the past two or three decades (see Chapter 2). To demonstrate the current changes mentioned in the inventories, I also used speakers that showed some of those features mentioned above (e.g. /aʊ/-fronting, /r/-retroflexion, GOAT diphthongization

and the WHICH-WITCH merger), as I assume that the students should be aware of the development of pronunciation of a given accent.

4.4   The Exercises

As has already been mentioned above, for the handout to be useful, it was important that the exercises covered all the salient features listed in the inventories and that they were recognized clearly in the recordings. Additionally, it was also essential to include exercises where the used vocabulary does not challenge the knowledge of the students. Hence, I used recordings in which the speakers use common vocabulary and where no problems with understanding are expected. Although every exercise is introduced by a clear instruction, the exercises are not meant for self-study, as the handout is not intended to compensate for the role of an instructor. The instructor is expected to explain the features and to discuss the exercise in a more detailed way.

The first exercise (TASK 1) has two parts. In the first part, students only listen to an extract of a news report (RTE News) about a grandmother from Nobber (Co. Meath) who managed to lock three suspicious strangers into her yard (SAMPLE 1)[1]. Before the listening they are instructed to compare it with RP and to look for salient features of the accent. After the first listening, they should get an overall impression of IEA. There are three speakers in the sample, one of them being a TV presenter, hence the students can see the differences between the speakers and note also some features, such as the lenition of /t/ and /d/, that are so widespread that they appear even in the news in the national television. In the second part, the students have to listen to the recording again but now they have to focus on two vowel features common in most varieties of Irish English, namely the long vowel /eː/ in *gate* and *away* instead of the diphthong /eɪ/ as in more standard accents and the /a/ instead of /æ/ in *family*. I deliberately ask them to transcribe only the vowel since I assume that although the students note a strange realization of the final /t/ in *gate*, they do not know the phonetic symbol for lenition. The date of the publication of the recording is May 24, 2013.

In the second sample (SAMPLE 2)[2], the students hear a retired 70-year-old woman who has spent almost all her life in County Sligo talking about the Irish people and the role of the history in the making of their national identity. The students are

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[1] YouTube. "Grandmother locks three trespassers into her yard."
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEEvMAPgVIk/.
[2] International Dialects of English Archive. "Ireland." http://www.dialectsarchive.com/ireland-14/.

supposed to pay attention to what the subject is talking about, and also to notice three characteristic vowel features of IEA and transcribe the vowels in the underlined words. To make the orientation in the recording easier, I included the orthographical transcription of the phrases were the given words appear. The features which the exercise is focused on are the monophthongization of /əʊ/ to /oː/ in the words *so* and *over*, the merger of KIT and schwa in unstressed syllables in *independence*, and the centralized and rounded pronunciation of /ʌ/ in *countryside* ([ɔ̈], [ä]). However, there are more features that can be noticed in the pronunciation of the speaker, e.g. monophthong /eː/ in *basic,* postvocalic R, lenition and also the weak opposition between /æ/ and /a/, having /a/ in *nationality* and /æ/ in *car*. Because of that I also ask the students if they have noticed any other features. The date of the recording is July 17, 2010.

The third exercise consists of three brief extracts from a discourse of a 60-year-old man from County Clare (SAMPLE 3)[3]. The students are told the words to concentrate on and they should discover another vocalic feature common to the majority of the varieties of IEA. Namely, the unrounded character of /ɒ/ in words *normally, dog, lot, donkey, office* and *comma* (/ɑ/). Secondly, they are asked to compare the quality of the vowel in *thought* with RP. Authors usually describe it as more open and unrounded /ɑː/ as compared to /ɔ/ in RP (Bliss 1984, 136; Wells 1982, 419; Hughes 2205, 115). Optionally, they can be told to decide whether he has a monophthong or has a increasingly frequent diphthong in *goat*. The recording is taken from the International Dialects of English Archive and dates back to January, 2008.

TASK 4 again is comprised of two extracts that together last 27 seconds (SAMPLE 4.1)[4]. The first speaker comes from Dublin, and her pronunciation of the word *house* with /æʊ/ represents the recent development in IEA, the /aʊ/-fronting characteristic for Dublin but spreading throughout the Republic. Most commonly, /ʌʊ/ is found but I deliberately incorporated this type of pronunciation to demonstrate the recent changes in the pronunciation predominantly of young generations. Indeed, the subject comes from Dublin and at the time of the recording (June 2, 2008) she was 20 years old. To help the students in the transcription, I made another sample (SAMPLE

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[3] International Dialects of English Archive. "Ireland." http://www.dialectsarchive.com/ireland-10/.

[4] International Dialects of English Archive. "Ireland." http://www.dialectsarchive.com/ireland-7/. http://www.dialectsarchive.com/ireland-16/.

4.2)[5] by the same speaker with the identical realization of the diphthong in the word *mouth*. Moreover, other features such as mild rhoticity, th-stopping and clear /l/ in all positions are found in the extract. In the second extract, the students hear a young female speaker from Coolloney (Co. Sligo) and are asked to transcribe the word *castle*. They should note the open quality of the vowel /a:/ as opposed to British retracted low back vowel /ɑ/. The date of the recording is July 17, 2010.

The fifth exercise is focused on one of the most prominent features of IEA, the lenition of /t/ and /d/. Thus, it was crucial to use examples where the lenited pronunciation is sufficiently obvious. In the first part of the exercise, students are asked to write down the adjective (*great*) the speaker from County Cork uses to describe the weather (they are not asked to transcribe it in IPA since the symbol for a lenited /t/ is most probably unknown to them). They are, nonetheless, expected to note the absence of the release phase of the consonant and its fricative character. They are also asked to compare the different pronunciations of /t/ and /d/ in the utterance. Since the lenition is only present word-finally or between two vowels the second of which is unstressed, the pronunciation of /d/ in words *today* and *windy* is different. To help them come up with a rule for the lenition, I suggest listening to the first sample where the difference between lenited and normal pronunciation of /t/ and /d/ is easily recognizable. Additionally, the recording (SAMPLE 5)[6] shows other features of IEA, e.g. th-stopping.

The sixth recording (SAMPLE 6)[7] is designed for the students to discover the typical pronunciation of ambidental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/, in IEA realized as dental plosives [t̪] and [d̪]. The man in the sample is a 40-year-old gardener from County Cork with a quite strong Irish accent which means that his pronunciation of the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ in the words *grandfather, father* or in the numerals *3* and *93* as plosives is unmistakable for a typical RP speaker. In the case of the numeral *three*, it can be pointed out to the students, that it almost sounds like *tree*. Indeed, many non-speakers of Irish English find it difficult to distinguish between [t̪ʰ] and [tʰ] in these cases. However, the distinction is maintained and its absence is not accepted: "The distinction between dental and alveolar stops is sociolinguistically significant in Ireland. All speakers can hear this difference and the use of alveolar for dental stops in

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[5] International Dialects of English Archive. "Ireland." http://www.dialectsarchive.com/ireland-7/.
[6] International Dialects of English Archive. "Ireland." http://www.dialectsarchive.com/ireland-15/.
[7] International Dialects of English Archive. "Ireland." http://www.dialectsarchive.com/ireland-9/.

the THIN and THIS lexical sets is highly stigmatized (Hickey 2004, 90). The date of the recording is May 11, 2007.

In the TASK 7, the students listen to a sound sample (SAMPLE 7)[8] and are instructed to concentrate on the liquids in IEA. The subject in the recording is a young male from Monkstown (suburb of Dublin) talking about his weekend, a rugby match and about his day. The students should pay attention to the rhoticity of his speech, they are asked to decide whether IEA is a rhotic accent or not. They should also note that his postvocalic /r/'s are retroflex, one of the features of the rapidly spreading changes in Irish English. One of the possible exercises could be a further comparison of the postvocalic /r/'s with the speaker in SAMPLE 6 since the latter does not have a retroflex [ɻ]. In what concerns the lateral liquid /l/, the students can notice pretty clear [l] in all positions (*well, roles, handle*), a prominent feature of Irish English (although a tendency to velarize it in the postvocalic position is becoming very frequent as of late). Finally, the students are asked if the realization of /r/ affects the preceding vowel in some way. In the sample, they should notice that the vowels are affected by the retroflexion of the /r/ that follows. The retroflexion usually begins already during the pronunciation of the preceding vowel. Among other features, the lenited /t/ is well distinguishable in the pronunciation of the speaker.

Additionally, two sections introduced by "(Optional task)" are included in the handout for the students to listen to samples that demonstrate some minor features of IEA some of which may be hard to discern in fluent speech. Three of them (SAMPLE OPT. 1, SAMPLE OPT. 3.1, SAMPLE OPT. 3.2) are taken from *A Sound Atlas of Irish English* (Hickey 2004). In SAMPLE OPT. 1[9], the students can listen to a conservative Dublin speaker with the NORTH-FORCE distinction (/ɔːr/ vs. /oːr/), in SAMPLE OPT. 3.1[10], the schwa epenthesis between /-lm/ is demonstrated and in SAMPLE OPT. 3.2[11], they hear the speaker pronounce word *which* with a voiceless labio-velar fricative [ʍ]. The last recording in the section is SAMPLE OPT. 2[12] in which president Michael D. Higgins wishes a Happy New Year. The students are asked to pay attention to how the word *new* is pronounced. This exercise is designed to demonstrate 'yod-dropping' in IEA.

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[8] International Dialects of English Archive. "Ireland." http://www.dialectsarchive.com/ireland-11/.

[9] Universität Duisburg-Essen. "Glossary." http://www.uni-due.de/VCDE/VCDE_Glossary.htm/.

[10] Universität Duisburg-Essen. "Glossary." http://www.uni-due.de/VCDE/VCDE_Glossary.htm/.

[11] Universität Duisburg-Essen. "Glossary." http://www.uni-due.de/VCDE/VCDE_Glossary.htm/.

[12] YouTube. "A Christmas Message from President Michael D. Higgins."
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mc_-V9NWd94/.

4.5 Further reading suggestions

Finally, I would like to comment on the books I listed in the final part of the handout, in case students want to read more about Irish English. The first one is *Accents of English: The British Isles* (1982), by J.C. Wells, which I consulted because it provides a thorough description of the accent. However, the history of English in Ireland, as well as political problems or cultural issues are discussed briefly and only superficially in the introductory two pages. Moreover, the validity of some of the statements may be put in question since the book was published more than thirty years ago, and during the last three decades the accent saw the rise of some features that had not been prototypical before. Hence, I discussed *Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms* (2007), by R. Hickey, to get a more recent description. This book is an exhaustive study of Irish English, with a detailed account of the history of English in Ireland, cultural and political aspects and their impact on the accent and finally an in-depth description of the vocalic and consonantal system of Irish English. In this aspect, *A Sound Atlas of Irish English* (2004) by the same author provides similar information, however, its utility lies in the sound recordings that are an integral part and that were made in the recent past. Additionally, Hickey is also connected to the 'Irish English Research Center', where dozens of his articles and studies on the topic are accessible online together with some of the recordings from the sound atlas. Among those publications that I consulted, but that do not treat the topic in all its depth, are *Language in British Isles* (1984), edited by P. Trudgill, where several pages are dedicated to the pronunciation of southern Irish English in "English in the south of Ireland" by A. Bliss; and *English Accents and Dialects* (2005) by Hughes, Trudgill and Watt. In the latter, a description of the pronunciation in Dublin and Galway is found.

For more sound recordings, I suggested the International Dialects of English Archive webpage <http://www.dialectsarchive.com/ireland> (see section 4.2), 'Irish English Research Center' mentioned above and also the RTE.ie webpage <www.rte.ie>, national television and radio broadcaster, which is a valuable source of the spoken Irish English, offering hundreds of news reports and radio podcasts which are easy to download.

5   Summary

The aim of this paper was to create a comprehensive study material on Irish English accent for later usage in the innovated Seminar in English Phonetics "Výslovnostní varianty angličtiny" (AF10). In the first part of the thesis, a brief historical and cultural overview was included. However, it was not essential to the handout to discuss it in a more detailed way, since the Seminar is primarily focused on the pronunciation of the accent. In the following chapter, I included a selection of those vowel and consonant features which can be considered prototypical of Irish English accent, and discussed each of them in detail. To arrive at the most updated and accurate description of the pronunciation of Irish English accent I consulted several books and studies on the topic. The features discussed in the second part of the thesis were subsequently included in the handout, together with a brief theoretical introduction that was mainly based on the information found in the introductory part of this thesis. Later, I created several listening exercises for the students to practice what they have learned and to demonstrate the listed features. The process of the creation of the handout is described in Chapter 4 where all the aspects involved in the creation of the handout are discussed together with a commentary on the exercises and literature used.

6   České shrnutí

Cílem této bakalářské práce je vytvořit ucelený studijní materiál o irské angličtině pro pozdější použití v inovovaném fonetickém semináři Výslovnostní varianty angličtiny (AF10). Úvodní část této práce zahrnuje stručný historický a kulturní přehled týkající se irského akcentu. Vzhledem k charakteru semináře, který je primárně zaměřen na výuku výslovnostních rysů daného akcentu, však nebylo nutné se historií a ostatními kulturními aspekty hlouběji zabývat. Následující kapitola sestává z přehledu těch výslovnostních rysů, které jsou dostatečně rozšířené, aby mohly být považovány za typické pro irskou angličtinu. Každý z těchto rysů je pak dále popsán. Abych docílil co nejaktuálnějšího a nejpřesnějšího popisu výslovnosti irského akcentu, porovnával jsem informace v několika publikacích a studiích na dané téma. Informace jak z druhé, tak z třetí kapitoly byly následně posloužily pro sestavení „handoutu", do kterého jsem v úvodní části zahrnul krátký teoretický přehled o irskému akcentu, dále pak přehled výslovnostních rysů irské angličtiny na základě údajů získaných v této práci a na závěr jsem zmínil doporučenou četbou v případě vlastního zájmu studentů. Handout dále obsahuje několik poslechových cvičení, které jsou navrženy pro demonstraci zmíněných rysů a procvičení schopností studentů zachytit je v mluveném projevu. Tvorba a struktura „handoutu" je tématem poslední kapitoly této práce. Zde v diskuzi komentuji jak proces tvorby „handoutu", tak jeho dílčí části: zvukové nahrávky a jejich výběr, navrženou doporučenou literaturu, strukturu samotného studijního materiálu a komentář jednotlivých poslechových cvičení s navrženou diskuzí.

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8 Appendix

8.1 Appendix 1: The Handout

TOPIC: IRISH ENGLISH (IEA)

1. Background
2. Listening Tasks: Vowels
3. Description of IEA Vowels
4. Listening Tasks: Consonants
5. Description of IEA Consonants
6. Sources

1. Background

Irish English is the vernacular language of four and a half million of inhabitants of the Island. Sometimes it is also called Hiberno-English (Hibernia – Ireland). Although English was first brought to Ireland in the 12th century, it succumbed to Irish and gained its position only in the second half of the 19th century. Now, two main varieties are found in Ireland: one spoken in Northern Ireland and the other in the Republic of Ireland. The two varieties are quite distinct and each encompasses other varieties. This handout focuses only on southern Irish English. Southern Irish English is divided into the western and eastern accents. Additionally, the Midlands in the center might be considered a third linguistic area. The section Sections 2 & 3 describe the most prominent features of IEA – common to most varieties spoken in the Republic. The map (*Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms* 2007) presents the linguistic division of the Island.
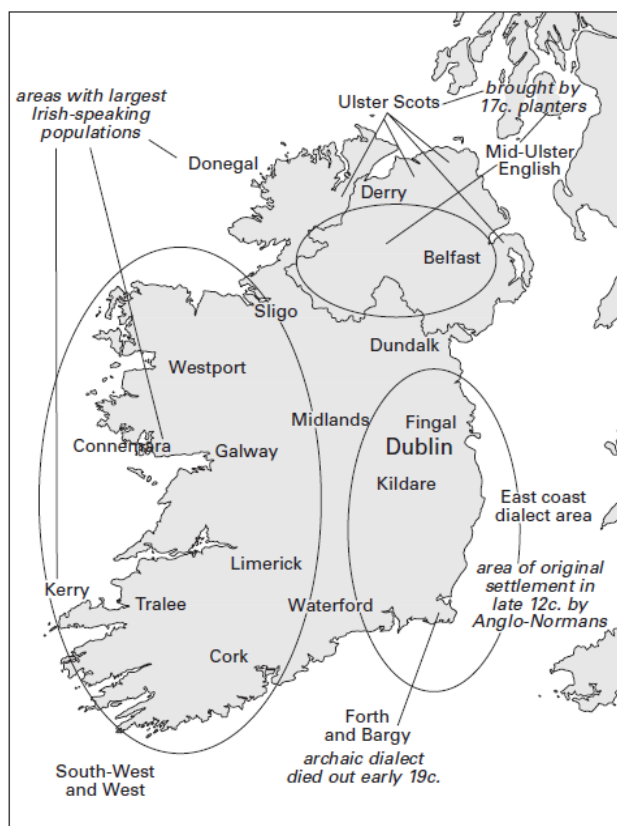
2. Listening tasks: IEA vowels

TASK 1: Listen to the speakers in the news report extract about a grandmother from Co. Meath who locked trespassers in her yard. Compare the accent to RP. Which differences can you notice? Try to describe the Irish accent in English.

1.1: Now listen to the sample again and focus on the vowels in words *away, gate* and *family.* Transcribe them in IPA.

*away, gate*_____ , *family*_____

TASK 2: Listen to SAMPLE 2. What is the speaker from Co. Sligo talking about? Transcribe the underlined words in IPA. Do you notice any other features of IEA?
-…*the Irish people had suffered <u>so</u> much from invasion and being taken <u>over</u> all…* -
_____

-*…to have <u>independence</u>...-* _____
- …*I have the lovely <u>countryside</u>...-* _____

TASK 3: Listen to the speaker from Co. Clare (SAMPLE 3) talking in the following three extracts. How is the vowel in words like *normally, dog, lot, donkey, office, comma* pronounced? Is the vowel in *thought* the same as in RP?

TASK 4: In SAMPLE 4, you will hear two brief extracts. The first speaker from Dublin talks about her family. Focus on how she pronounces the word *house*, transcribe it in IPA (listen to the file 'MOUTH' by the same speaker). The second speaker is from Coolloney (Co. Sligo), find the word *castle* in the recording and transcribe it.

house -_____ , *castle* - _____

(Optional task 1) Listen to the recording SAMPLE OPT.1 from *A Sound Atlas of Irish English* (2004). In the sample you will hear the pronunciation of a conservative Dublin speaker who has the so called NORTH-FORCE distinction.

3. Description of IEA vowels

<u>Spreading Dublin pronunciation</u> – recent pronunciation spreading across the country. It is included in the cases where a tendency to development is obvious or strong.

Lexical set, RP	Irish English (spreading Dublin pronunciation)
BATH /ɑ/	/a:/ BATH, PALM, START (→/ɑ/ START)
TRAP /æ/	/æ/~/a/
LOT, THOUGHT /ɒ/, /ɔ/	unrounded /ɑ/, /ɑ:, ɒ:, ə/
STRUT /ʌ/	centralized, rounded [ɵ̈], [ʌ̈], [ɵ–], /ə/
FACE /eɪ/	/e:/, /ɛ:/
GOAT /əʊ/	/o:/ (→ /oʊ, ɔʊ, əʊ/)
MOUTH /aʊ/	/ʌʊ, aʊ/ (→/æʊ/)
PRICE /aɪ/	/aɪ, əɪ/ (→/ɑɪ/ PRIDE)
reduction /ə/, /ɪ/	/ə/

Note 1: **RHOTICITY**. IEA is a rhotic accent, thus it has **no centering diphthongs**, moreover, IE preserves almost a complete **range of vowel oppositions before /r/**; e.g. *earn* /ɛɹn/ vs. *urn* /ʊrn/ (in RP both /ɜ:n/), *mere* /miːɹ/ vs. *myrrh* /mɹɪ/ (in RP /mɜ:/).

- **NORTH-FORCE distinction.** Many speakers distinguish /ɔ:r/ from /o:r/), e.g. in *morning – mourning*.

Note 2: The opposition /æ-a:/ is weak due to the more complicated interplay of quality and length than is allowed by simple opposition. There is a tendency to retract and lengthen /æ/ before some voiced segments: *man* [mæːn]~[maːn]; *ant-aunt* usually homophonous [æːnt].

Note 3: The **PRICE vowel** is stereotypically the same as in CHOICE ('noice toim' for *nice time*), the mainstream pronunciation now is /aɪ/, but the retraction before voiced segments (especially /l, r/) is found recently – *Ireland* [ɑɹɪlənd], *style* [stɑɪl].

Note 4: **KIT and schwa merger**: unstressed /ɪ/ usually becomes /ə/; *rabbit* [ˈɹæbət], *naked* [ˈneːkəd].

4. Listening tasks: IEA consonants

TASK 5: Listen to SAMPLE 5 and write down the adjective the speaker (Co. Cork) uses to describe the weather. Try to describe the character of the final /t/. Does it have a plosive quality? Are /t/'s and /d/'s in the utterance all pronounced in the same way? Listen once again to the news report extract from the TASK 1 and focus on the final /t/ in *gate, frustrated* and /d/ in *locked.*

– *The weather isn't* _____ .

TASK 6: Listen to SAMPLE 6, the speaker is a middle-aged gardener from Co. Cork with a strong accent. Listen to his account of his earliest memory and try to describe how the dental fricatives are pronounced in Irish English based on what you hear.

TASK 7: Listen to SAMPLE 7, you will hear a young speaker from a suburb of Dublin. Pay attention to the liquids. Is IEA a rhotic dialect? If so, how is the post-vocalic R pronounced? Does it affect the vowels? How is /l/ pronounced in the recording?

(Optional task 2) Listen to SAMPLE OPT. 2 by the president of the Republic of Ireland Michael D. Higgins. How does he pronounce the word *new*?

(Optional task 3) There are two more recordings from *A Sound Atlas of Irish English*. In SAMPLE OPT. 3.1 listen to the schwa epenthesis between /-lm/. In SAMPLE OPT. 3.2 listen how a conservative Dublin speaker pronounces the voiceless labio-velar fricative in *which*.

5. Description of IEA consonants

Note 1: **Lenition of /t/ and /d/** - /t/ or /d/ is realized as apico-alveolar fricative transcribed [t̞], [d̞] whenever it appears in syllable coda after a vowel and immediately before a further vowel or is word-final; e.g. *bottom* [ˈbɑt̞əm], *but* [bʌt̞], *wood* [wud̞]. In pre or post-consonantal position it is pronounced as an alveolar stop, e.g. *bent* [ˈbɛnt].

Note 2: **TH-stopping** – dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ are usually pronounced as dental plosives [t̪] and [d̪] respectively, e.g. *thank* [t̪æŋk]; word-finally they can be fricatives *path* [pʰæθ].

Note 3: **/r/ pronunciation** - /r/ is traditionally pronounced as a velarized alveolar continuant [ɹ] ([ɹˠ]); however, recently a postvocalic retroflex [ɻ] is frequent and it will probably become the mainstream pronunciation in the near future.

Note 4: **pronunciation of /l/** - clear /l/ is commonly found in all positions; young generations may have, nonetheless, postvocalic dark [ɫ].

Note 5: **WHICH/WITCH distinction** – commonly, the voiceless labiovelar glide [ʍ] occurs whenever there is *wh-* in the orthography (*which* [ʍɪtʃ] and *witch* [wɪtʃ]); however, the distinction is gradually disappearing.

Note 6: **Yod-dropping** – palatal glide is dropped in stressed syllables after alveolar sonorants, e.g. *new* [nuː].

Note 7: **Schwa epenthesis** – many speakers insert schwa between clusters of sonorants, usually /-lm/, e.g. /fɪlm/→/fɪl.əm/ (this process leads to resyllabification).

Note 8: **Word stress** seems to be more flexible in IEA than in RP, e.g. ˈ*municipal* alongside *muniˈcipal* (RP *muˈnicipal*); *eduˈcate* (alongside RP ˈ*educate*).

6. Sources

- John Christopher Wells: *Accents of English: The British Isles* (1982) – basic description
- Raymond Hickey: *Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms* (2007) – in-depth description and history
- Peter Trudgill: *Language in the British Isles* (1984)
- Raymond Hickey: *A Sound Atlas of Irish English* (2004) – description, recordings
- Arthur Hughes: *English Accents and Dialects* (2005) – note on varieties in Dublin and Galway

Useful links:

- < http://www.dialectsarchive.com/ireland>
- <http://www.uni-due.de/IERC/> (Irish English Research Center)
- < http://www.rte.ie/> (Ireland's National Television and Radio Broadcaster)

8.2 Orthographical transcriptions

SAMPLE 1:

Speaker 1: So I [not clear] my car really fast and turned around off the gate and got off the car and I locked the gate. And just as I was putting the lock on it, they were at the gate and a man shouted in the car and the driver [not clear] and the gate and shouting abused at me: "Let us go! Let us go!" you know..

TV presenter: Ann told the men she was going to get the keys "releasen" instead she went home and contacted the Gardaí and her family.

Speaker 3: When I arrived, the three man were inside the gate. The gate was locked and eh they looked very frustrated and very angry and wanted to get out. And I just pulled the jeep over in front of the gate, and I only realized then they were expecting mommy to come back with the key, she was gone for the key but that wasn't happening.

TV presenter: Gardaí arrested..

SAMPLE 2:

Oh, when I think Ire- the Irish people had suffered so much from invasion and being taken over all down through the centuries that they fought so hard for, to have independence, and to own the land and their houses, I think it is, it more so than any other nationality in the world the Irish would be the the most property owners, but is it a basic insecurity that has been built in them, or what I do not know. Well, I mean I can live here now because I have a car and I can commute and I can go into town, I can, do you know what I mean, and I have, as my own children would say, I have the best of both worlds. Right? I have the lovely countryside, do you know what I mean…

SAMPLE 3:

  …because normally you would only expect to see it in a dog or a goat…/…times have changed a lot there since; it was very rural with donkeys and carts in those days…/…before long, that itchy goose began to strut around the office like a lunatic, which made an unsanitary mess. The goose's owner, Mary Harrison, kept calling, "Comma, Comma," which Sarah thought was an odd choice for a name…

SAMPLE 4.1:

…and my sister Kiera, she lives at home, and her, and her boyfriend Liam are buying a house together this year. They're saving money at the moment. And my other sister Claude: She's two years older than me. She's in college. And my dad is a taxi driver…/… OK, I used to work in a castle; it was dated back to the eighteenth century. It was part of the Cromwell plantations..

SAMPLE 4.2:

mouth

SAMPLE 5:

…and, uh, the, the weather is, the weather isn't great; the weather isn't great but, uh, it's not raining today, but it's windy. Well, I grew up in Tarbert in a village North Kerry on the Shannon…

SAMPLE 6:

 People are often asked what, I guess what, what their earliest memory is, and, um, my earliest memory … I must have been maybe 3 or 4 at the time, and, uh, it's a memory of my grandfather who was, who must have been about 93 at the time 'cause he … when he was … he died at the age of 96. And I remember when in the area outside his house, at the age of 93 cutting timber with a bow saw, and, uh, I was with my father at the time, and he reached into his pocket, my grandfather, and gave him, gave me 50 pence. And I remember looking at it in my hand, and for some reason I was, I must have been grumpy on the day, but I threw the 50 pence on the ground which caused great consternation 'cause 50 pence at that time was, was — this was early '70s — was a lot of money, and so, um, it's just, it's odd how things just stick in your mind; but that's my … one of my first memories.

SAMPLE 7:

Well, I was very happy at the weekend because we played our old rivals, England, in a rugby game and we won by – what was it – 46 to 56 to 16, a 40-point margin difference, which is the best wince since the 1940s, so that was – that was pretty sweet; it's rare enough we get that. I also work in the funds administration; I work in transfer agency. I've just came home from a very stressful day so that was a lot of fun; didn't get a lunch or anything else like that, but, yeah, I'm young, I can handle it yet.

SAMPLE OPT. 1:

 for… four… for... four… for… four

SAMPLE OPT. 2:

I wish you all a peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

SAMPLE OPT. 3.1:

 The film should start soon.

SAMPLE OPT. 3.2:

 which… witch… which… witch… which… witch

9   Anotace

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Anotace v ČJ: Cílem této bakalářské práce je vytvořit studijní materiál, který bude sloužit pro výuku irské angličtiny ve fonetickém semináři Výslovnostní varianty angličtiny (AF10) na Katedře anglistiky a amerikanistiky Univerzity Palackého. Práce zahrnuje krátkou historii a současnost akcentu, přehled o výslovnosti v Irsku, „handout" se zvukovými nahrávkami pro potřeby výuky a jeho komentář v závěru práce.

Anotace v AJ: The aim of this thesis is to create a study material that will be used in the Seminar in English phonetics "Výslovnosntí varianty angličtiny" (AF10) at the Department of English and American studies at Palacký University. The paper briefly discusses the history and present of the accent, describes salient features of the pronunciation of Irish English accent and contains the study material with sound recordings and its commentary.