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**Bakalářská práce**

**Dorota Bosnyáková**

Comparing common mistakes in English pronunciation made by Czech and  
Polish teenagers.

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**vedoucí práce: Mgr. Jana Kořínková, Ph.D**

Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla veškerou literaturu a ostatní zdroje, které jsem použila.

V Olomouci ..... Podpis.....

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## Abstract

The purpose of the thesis is to compare the common mistakes in English pronunciation made by Czech and Polish teenagers. The thesis theoretical part defines basic phonology, pronunciation teaching methods and common mistakes made by Czech and Polish students. The practical part concentrates on assessment. For this reason, participants were chosen and a short text for analysing was recorded. The analysed data was entered into the table for evaluation. It was established that there are no statistically significant differences in Czech and Polish pronunciation. But analysis also demonstrated that both groups made mistakes in linking and with final voiced consonants and thrive in other areas.

## Content table

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>THEORETICAL PART .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1. Description of speech .....</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1 Main features of pronunciation.....	8
1.2 Pronunciation physiology .....	8
1.3 Phonemic and phonetic transcription .....	9
1.3.1 IPA chart.....	10
<b>2. Teaching pronunciation.....</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1 Why teach pronunciation.....	12
2.2 How to teach pronunciation.....	13
<b>3. English, Czech and Polish phonetic systems .....</b>	<b>14</b>
3.1 Vowels.....	14
3.1.1 English.....	15
3.1.2 Czech .....	15
3.1.3 Polish .....	15
3.2 Consonants .....	16
3.2.1 English.....	16
3.2.2 Czech .....	17
3.2.3 Polish .....	18
<b>4. Common mistakes of Czech EFL learners .....</b>	<b>19</b>
4.1 Mispronunciation of vowel sounds.....	19
4.2 Mispronunciation of consonants sounds.....	21
4.3 Mistakes in linking .....	22
4.4 Mistakes in rhythm and other aspects of connected speech .....	23
<b>5. Common mistakes of Polish EFL learners .....</b>	<b>23</b>
5.1 Mispronunciation of vowel sounds.....	23

5.2 Mispronunciation of consonant sounds .....	24
5.3 Mistakes in linking .....	24
5.4 Mistakes in rhythm and other aspects of connected speech .....	25
<b>PRACTICAL PART .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>6. Preparation .....</b>	<b>26</b>
6.1 Research aids .....	26
6.2 Data collection .....	27
<b>7. Research analyses.....</b>	<b>27</b>
7.1 Research Method .....	28
7.2 Czech students' results .....	28
7.3 Polish students' results .....	30
<b>8. Results comparison .....</b>	<b>32</b>
8.1 English language lesson allowance .....	32
8.3 Compared results summary .....	33
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Bibliography: .....</b>	<b>38</b>
Online Sources.....	38
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>40</b>

## **Introduction**

“Pronunciation’ is one of the most mispronounced words.”

Mokokoma Mokhonoana

Pronunciation is one important skill that must be mastered by the students who studies English. However, there is still insufficient emphasis on pronunciation and more attention is given to grammar and vocabulary when teaching English. Therefore, mistakes in pronunciation occur and if not corrected, they may become fossilized. Another interest is that when learning English as foreign language, the mother tongue plays a significant role in pronunciation and as a result, most countries have common mistakes in English. Taking this into consideration the thesis focuses on common mistakes.

The main aim of the thesis is to determine and compare the most common mistakes in English pronunciation made by Czech and Polish students within the Czech Republic educational system, who live on the geographical borders of Poland and the Czech Republic in the region of Silesia. The idea of comparing Czech and Polish teenagers arose because I used to attend Polish primary and secondary school too.

Therefore, the questions arise: Are the common mistakes made by Czech and Polish identical? Are the learners influenced by local dialect?

The thesis consists of two parts. Theoretical part which serves as basis for practical part, includes summary of English, Czech and Polish phonetic systems, and a description of common mistakes in English made by Czech and Polish learners. And it mentions pronunciation teaching methods.

The practical part focuses on the research. Research is based on a short diagnostic text useful for evaluating English pronunciation. Developed by Speech Accent Archive, GMU. It is called ‘Please call Stella’. Obtaining pupils recordings is essential therefore it is necessary to attend both Czech and Polish primary schools. Meanwhile a detailed table based on the theoretical gathering of common mistakes identified is being created. Following that, the recordings must be analysed, and the results inserted into a table. The aim of practical part is to create comparison charts, that will be discussed.

The personal reason must also be mentioned, as pronunciation is not one of my strong points, I wanted to improve and learn more about teaching methods.

## **THEORETICAL PART**

### **1. Description of speech**

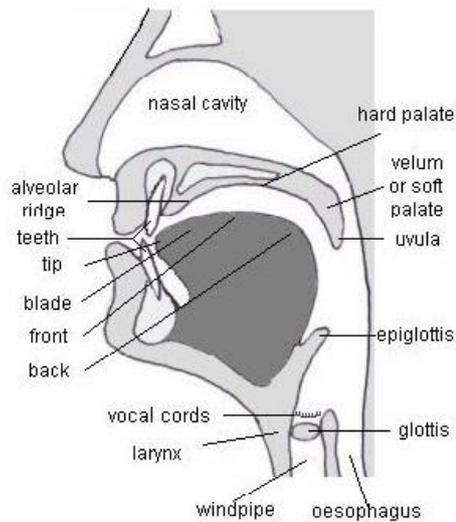
#### **1.1 Main features of pronunciation**

According to Kelly (2000), The key aspects of pronunciation include phonemes and suprasegmental features. Phonemes are further divided into consonants and vowels. Vowels are distinguished into monophthongs and diphthongs. Phonemes can be described as different sounds within a language. Suprasegmental features are parts of speech, for example sentence and word stress, intonation, rhythm, timbre (Kelly, 2000). Definition is copied from Cambridge online dictionary: “**Phoneme** - one of the smallest units of speech that make one word different from another word: The difference between "pin" and "pan" depends on the vowel, i.e., the different phonemes /ɪ/ and /æ/. “(Cambridge dictionary online,2022). “**Sound** - something that you hear. It is energy that travels in waves through air, water, or other substances, and can be heard.“ (Collins online dictionary, 2022).

#### **1.2 Pronunciation physiology**

Kelly (2000) states that each language has its own particular sounds, therefore the speech organs are accustomed to it. The sounds are developed in childhood and the vocal organs are still adaptable and manage to learn sounds of different languages. Unfortunately, the ability is lost in infant years and then in adulthood it is more difficult for speech organs to learn new ways of producing the sound (Kelly, 2000).

Cruttenden (1994) presents, that sound comes from larynx (voice box) which consists of vocal folds (vocal cord) and glottis. Vocal cords are two soft tissue elastic flaps which can open and close. The Glottis is the opening between the two vocal folds; the glottis opens during breathing and closes during swallowing and sound production. Open vocal cords produce unvoiced sounds, when closed together, air makes them vibrate and the voiced sound is produced. Lips, tongue, nose, alveolar ridge, and hard and soft palate are also used for speaking (Cruttenden, 1994).



Extracted from Andrew Moore (2001). Shunleish.

Figure 1 Diagram of important speech organs

### 1.3 Phonemic and phonetic transcription

Melen (2010) states that a sentence that is built in the English language using grammar and words, can be expressed in two ways orally (speech) or in written form. Naturally, the spoken form is used more widely than written.

Nevertheless, there is less information regarding the spoken form of the language than there is about the written form. The transcript appears to be complex, abstract, and difficult to grasp (Melen, 2010).

Definition is taken from Collins online dictionary:

**“Transcription** - a representation in writing of the actual pronunciation of a speech sound, word, or piece of continuous text, using not a conventional orthography but a symbol or set of symbols specially designated as standing for corresponding phonetic values “(Collins dictionary, online, 2022).

Melen (2010) points out that International Phonetic Alphabet (revised 1993, updated 1996) is worldwide used for British English nowadays. In the past there were many kinds of transcription. Included a well-known Jones transcription and later Gimson’s transcription (Melen, 2010).

### 1.3.1 IPA chart

Definition is copied from Britannica: “**International phonetic alphabet** is a 19th-century alphabet that was created to accurately reflect language pronunciation. The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) was created with the goal of providing a unique symbol for each distinct sound in a language—that is, every sound, or phoneme, which distinguishes one word from another“ (Britannica, online, 2022).

Melen (2010) points out that IPA possesses 3 levels of complexity. First and the easiest is transcription phonemic, second and third appear to be phonetic transcription where the third one is only for academic purposes (Melen, 2010).

THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (revised to 2018)

© 2018 IPA

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC)											
	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k ɡ	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			ʀ					ʀ		
Tap or Flap		ⱱ		ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Symbols to the right in a cell are voiced, to the left are voiceless. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

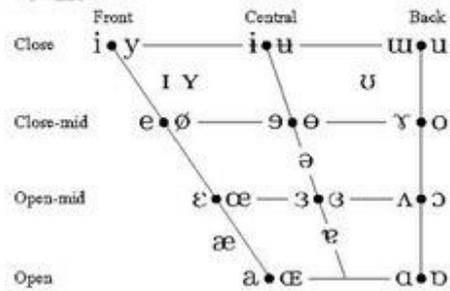
CONSONANTS (NON-PULMONIC)

Clicks	Voiced implosives	Ejectives
◌ ɸ Bilabial	ɓ Bilabial	ʼ Example:
Dental	ɗ Dental/alveolar	p' Bilabial
! (Foot)alveolar	f Palatal	t' Dental/alveolar
‡ Palatoalveolar	ɠ Velar	k' Velar
Alveolar lateral	ɠ Uvular	s' Alveolar fricative

OTHER SYMBOLS

- ʌ Voiceless labial-velar fricative
- ʷ Voiced labial-velar approximant
- ɥ Voiced labial-palatal approximant
- ħ Voiceless epiglottal fricative
- ʕ Voiced epiglottal fricative
- ʡ Epiglottal plosive
- ʎ Alveolo-palatal fricatives
- ɭ Voiced alveolar lateral flap
- ʎ Simultaneous ʃ and x
- Affricate and double articulations can be represented by two symbols joined by a tie bar if necessary.

VOWELS



Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

SUPRASEGMENTALS

- ˈ Primary stress
- ˌ Secondary stress
- ː Long
- ˑ Half-long
- ◌̥ Extra-short
- | Minor (foot) group
- || Major (intonation) group
- Syllable break
- ◌̥ Linking (absence of a break)

TONES AND WORD ACCENTS

- | LEVEL             | CONTOUR            |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| ě or ǃ Extra high | ě or ǃ Rising      |
| é ǂ High          | ê ǃ Falling        |
| ē ǁ Mid           | ē ǃ High rising    |
| è ǁ Low           | è ǃ Low rising     |
| ě ǂ Extra low     | ě ǃ Rising-falling |
| ↓ Downstep        | ↗ Global rise      |
| ↑ Upstep          | ↘ Global fall      |

DIACRITICS Some diacritics may be placed above a symbol with a descender, e.g. ŋ̥

◌̥ Voiceless	◌̤ Breathy voiced	◌̦ Dental	◌̧ Apical
◌̦ Voiced	◌̧ Creaky voiced	◌̨ Laminar	◌̩ Laminar
◌̨ Aspirated	◌̩ Linguolabial	◌̪ Labialized	◌̫ Nasalized
◌̪ More rounded	◌̫ Palatalized	◌̬ Velarized	◌̭ Lateral release
◌̫ Less rounded	◌̬ Velarized or pharyngealized	◌̮ No audible release	
◌̬ Advanced	◌̭ Raised		
◌̭ Retracted	◌̮ Lowered		
◌̮ Centralized	◌̯ Advanced Tongue Root		
◌̯ Mid-centralized	◌̰ Retracted Tongue Root		
◌̰ Syllabic			
◌̱ Non-syllabic			
◌̲ Rhoticity			

Typeset in Doulos SIL (modern), IPA Roman - spad (symbols)

Figure 2 International Phonetic Alphabet

## **2. Teaching pronunciation**

### **2.1 Why teach pronunciation**

As Kenworthy writes “The more words a listener is able to identify accurately when said by a particular speaker, the more intelligible that speaker is” (Kenworthy, 1987, p.13), as she then continues to explain that words are made of phonemes and foreign speakers frequently change and mispronounce phonemes. Therefore, their speech is less understandable (Kenworthy, 1987).

Kelly (2000) advises that teaching the correct pronunciation is particularly vital, and it should play a significant role in education. It can be frustrating for students when they are misunderstood. This may result in making the student reluctant to speak English, as they will be afraid to risk failure. For example: If you would like to order soup in the restaurant, but pronounce it as soap, then the waiter will be confused at the request. So correct pronunciation is important, and it should be instilled in students from an early age (Kelly, 2000).

Many students can excel in written English but spoken English will be used the most. It should be checked that they are fully understood and enjoy it. Many students find oral examination in front of the class extremely stressful, mostly because they are not sure regarding pronunciation (Kelly, 2000).

According to Kelly (2000) only focusing on sounds and ignoring suprasegmental features such as sentence and word stress, tone (pitch), intonation, perceived time, and junction patterns will not result in a complete improvement in pronunciation (Kelly, 2000). Because there are significant differences between the English and Czech aspects of connected speech. It must be learned otherwise it can result in failure.

Kelly (2000) states that English likes to play with stress, volume, and tone etc, by changing one of the features. It is possible to change the meaning of a sentence. If this is a command, request, or even a favour. This is also described as function of an utterance. The meaning depends on the stress in the sentence. for example. Why don't you come to my Party? – if the word 'PARTY' is stressed, it sounds like an invitation; nevertheless, if the word 'WHY' is stressed, it appears that you are dissatisfied and want to know why the person is not attending. As a result, we must be very mindful as to which parts of the statement are stressed (Kelly, 2000).

Teaching pronunciation is exceedingly difficult. The main reason for teaching pronunciation is that all students will be eager to participate in any conversation, and native speakers will understand them (Kelly, 2000).

Teaching pronunciation is frequently overlooked, and some teachers avoid it because they lack confidence. Another issue could be that there is not enough advice or training to reassure them (Kelly, 2000).

## **2.2 How to teach pronunciation**

There are so many ways of teaching gold standard English pronunciation. One of the best ways is to share lessons with a native speaker who speaks Received Pronunciation English. There are also other methods to improve or practise pronunciation (Yoshida, 2016).

Kelly (2000) found out that one of the strategic ways is called drilling. Drilling is defined as saying repeatedly given words or phrases after the teacher. At the beginning you start as a chorus. The teacher says the word and whole class repeats. The indicated benefit of whole class choral is that students gain confidence. After some time, the class could be divided into more manageable groups and finally one to one, where the teacher can focus on individual pronunciation (Kelly,2000).

It is essential that the teacher speaks well, otherwise they will not produce the best sound. If the teacher is not confident, they can use different audio recording and get the students to repeat and understand (Kelly).

Kelly (2000) describes that drilling can be done in a variety of ways, including chaining (back, front) or open pair drilling (teacher asks questions with the same base to students) or substitution drilling (repeating the phrase the teacher says). Drilling also helps with teaching word stress, sentence stress or intonation. Teachers attempt to beat out the rhythm with various tools. It could be fingers clicking, clapping, or tapping on the table. Chants are the extremely popular tool for drilling. Chants are created for so many grammar or pronunciation topics (Kelly, 2000). Carolyn Graham is well known for publishing chants books; she even wrote one book how to create your own chants.

Yoshida (2016) suggests that another technique is shadowing and mirroring, in which students attempt to replicate the audio or video as closely as possible. Practicing accurate pronunciation with a variety of listening activities is also beneficial (Yoshida, 2016).

Yoshida (2016) is of the same opinion as Celce-Murcia et al. (2010), who introduced few steps how to teach pronunciation using communicative framework.

The steps are Description and Analysis - Illustrations of how the feature is formed and when it appears in spoken conversation, both oral and written, for example: demonstrations (to show how), explanations, videos, pictures, gestures and movements)

Listening Discrimination - practice listening with feedback on learners' ability to discern the feature correctly (examples: same or different, 'odd man out' listening, matching audio with pictures, text, minimal pair listening work, dictation)

Controlled Practice - verbal reading of minimal-pair phrases, short dialogues, and so on, with specific attention devoted to the emphasised element to develop learner awareness (repetition choral or individual)

Guided practice - organized communication tasks, such as information-gap activities or cued dialogues, which allow the learner to keep an eye out for a certain aspect (more leisure than controlled practice)

Communicative Practice - less organized, fluency-building activities (e.g., role-playing, problem-solving) that challenge the learner to pay attention to both the form and substance of their utterances (Yoshida 2016, Celce-Murcia 2010)

Yoshida (2016) points out when teaching pronunciation, it is important to keep in mind that the specific teaching methods should be tailored to the learners' age. As children will need a radically different approach from adult learners (Yoshida, 2016).

### **3. English, Czech and Polish phonetic systems**

#### **3.1 Vowels**

Roach (2009) explains vowels in the following way: "Vowels are sounds in which there is no obstruction to the flow of air as it passes from the larynx to the lips." (Roach,2009 p.10).

It is well described by Kelly (2000) that vowels are made when the sound comes from the vibration of the vocal cords, but the vocal tract is open above the glottis. All this happens in larynx and then is moved anterior, where is modified by the tongue, lips and mouth. Tongue position is a useful tool for recognising different vowel sound (Kelly, 2000).

### 3.1.1 English

Skaličková (1982) states, that English language has twenty vowels, divided into monophthongs (7 short, 5 long) and diphthongs (8). Short vowels are /ɪ/-pit, /e/-pet, /æ/-pat, /ʌ/-cut, /ʊ/-put, /ɒ/-dog, /ə/-about. Long vowels are /i:/-week, /ɑ:/-hard, /ɔ:/-fork, /ɜ:/-heard, /u:/ - boot. Diphthongs are /eɪ/-place, /oʊ/-home, /aʊ/-mouse, /ɪə/-clear, /eə/-care, /ɔɪ/-boy, /aɪ/-find, /ʊə/-tour (Skaličková, 1982). Roach (2009) also deals with triphthongs. Triphthongs are formed by five closing diphthongs + schwa /ə/. There is five of them: /aɪə/ - higher, /ɔɪə/ - lawyer, /eɪə/ - layer, /aʊə/ - tower, /əʊə/ - mower (Roach, 2009).

Classification of vowels by Roach (2009) is by qualitative and quantitative aspects. Qualitative aspects form three distinct groups. First is vertical position of the tongue. There are also three positions to be clear 'Close,' 'Mid' and 'Open' which attribute the length between the tongue and superior aspect of the mouth.

Then horizontal position describes what part of tongue is used (anterior, central or posterior). For example: /æ/ (hat) is an open front vowel is created when the beginning of the tongue is the highest part, but the tongue itself is low in the mouth. Last aspect is lip rounding (rounded or unrounded). Quantitative aspect (relative) splits vowels into long and short. Two vowels in the same syllable are called diphthongs (centring, closing) and combinations of three vowels in the same syllable are labelled triphthongs (Roach, 2009).

### 3.1.2 Czech

Czech language has got 10 monophthongs (5 long, 5 short) and 1 Czech diphthongs and 2 borrowed. Short vowels are /a, e, i, o, u/, long vowels: /á, é, í, ó, ú/. Czech diphthong is /ou/ - louka and borrowed are: /au/ - auto, /eu/ - klaun (Skaličková, 1982).

Balkó (2020) states in her book, that the vowels are split according to the movements of the tongue in the mouth, into horizontal (front /í, i, é, e/, middle/a, á/, back/o, ó, u, ú/) and vertical (high/í, i, ú, u/, medium/é, e, ó, o/, low/á, a/). This is the basic grading, the vowels can be divided into other groups, but in the Czech language all vowels are voiced and created in mouth (oral), so the grading is not used (Balkó, 2020 online).

### 3.1.3 Polish

Strutyński describes that Polish language has eight vowels. Six of them /a, e, i, y, o, u/ are produced in mouth so they are oral and two / ɛ, ɛ̃ / are nasal. Same as in the Czech language,

the Polish vowels are divided by the movement of the tongue: Horizontal (front /i, e, ɛ/, middle /y/ and back /u, o, a, ɔ/). Vertical (high /i, y, u/, medium /e, ɛ, o, ɔ/. Also, all Polish vowels are voiced. Another subdivision of vowels could be by the arrangement of the lips into flat /i, y, e, ɛ/ rounded /u, o, ɔ/ and neutral /a/ (Strutyński, 2002).

## 3.2 Consonants

They arise when air is coming from the mouth and nose with some disturbance of vocal articulator movements. Consonants are noises. (Roach, 2009).

### 3.2.1 English

The English phonetic system contains 24 consonants. They can be classified according to various criteria. Kelly (2000) and Roach (2009) present that consonant classification is divided by **manner of articulation** and **place of articulation**, also in terms of **voicing** (voiced, unvoiced) (Kelly, 2000, Roach, 2009).

According to Gimson (1967), the degree of breath and muscular effort involved in the articulation distinguishes fortis and lenis pairs. Furthermore, lenis consonants are sometimes referred to as lax and fortis consonants are referred to as tense due to the difference in tenseness (Gimson, 1967).

**Place of articulation** is divided according to where the interference will happen. There are bilabial (both lips are put together to make the sound, /p, b, m, w/), labiodental (lower lip and upper teeth must be used /f, v /), dental (the tongue tip articulates with the upper teeth or between teeth, /θ, ð/), alveolar (the blade of the tongue is applied near to the alveolar ridge, /t, d, s, z, n, l/), palato-alveolar (the blade of the tongue touches the alveolar ridge, just behind it, /ʃ, tʃ, dʒ and ʒ/), palatal (the front of the tongue touches closely the palate, /j/), velar (the back part of tongue articulates against the soft palate or velum, /k, g, ŋ, w/) and glottal (audible friction is made by using the space between the vocal folds, /h/) ( Kelly, 2000, Roach, 2009).

Second category is **manner of articulation**, the consonants are divided by where a sound is produced. The categories are plosive (they originate by the temporary obstruction which prevents the flow of air. Releasing the stoppage will abruptly release the overpressure and create a typical noise, /p, b, t, d, k, g/) affricate (They are produced from the initial short occlusion, which is then released and smoothly followed by narrowing, /tʃ, dʒ/), fricative (is formed by a close approach of two vocal organs, which creates a gap (constriction) and strong noise. When articulating fricative, the exact position of the articulators is necessary, and even a small deviation is heard very well, /f, v, s, z, h, θ, ð, ʃ, ʒ/) nasal (they arise by creating a closure in

the oral cavity and by releasing the airway through the nasal cavity by lowering the soft palate, /m, n, ŋ/), lateral (the blade of the tongue partly closes against the alveolar ridge, air escape from the sides of the tongue, /l/) and approximant (vocal organs come closer to each other, somewhere between the fricatives and vowels, /r, j, w/) (Roach, 2009).

### 3.2.2 Czech

The number of Czech consonants varies according to different sources, making it difficult to pinpoint an exact number. For example, ‘Internetová jazyková příručka from Ústav pro jazyk český, Akademie věd České republiky states 31 consonants, but Skaličková and Balkó mention 27.

Information is gathered from ‘Fonetika a fonologie’ by Balko (2020) and from online source ‘Internetová jazyková příručka’(2022). Czech consonants can also be divided by manner and the place of articulation as in English (Balkó, 2020).

The other distinction is between voiced and unvoiced consonants which most of them come in pairs. There are few unpaired consonants. This classification is immensely popular in the Czech language.

#### Paired Consonants

Voiced c.	b	v	d	Ď	z	ž	g	H
Unvoiced c.	p	f	t	ť	s	š	k	Ch

#### Unpaired Consonants - sonorous

Voiced c.	m	n	Ň	j	l	R
Unvoiced c.	c	č				

Most of Czech consonants are oral only three /m, n, ň/ are nasal. Consonants /r, l and m/ in some words acts as vowels and form a syllable with other consonants, then they are called syllable-forming consonants such as in a word ‘krk’, ‘vlk’ or ‘sedm’ (Internetová jazyková příručka, 2022).

Balkó (2020) divides consonants into seven groups by place of articulation and only three basic groups by the manner.

**Place of articulation:** bilabial /m, p, b/, labiodentals /v, f, labiodental m/, front (anterior) alveolars /voiced – n, t, d, c, dz, s, z, r, l, ř and unvoiced. ř/, posterior alveolars /č, dž, š, ž/, hard palatal /ň, ʦ, ʤ, j/, velars /k, g, ch/, glottal (larynx) /h/ (Balkó, 2020).

**Manner of articulation:** occlusives - can be further divided into *explosive* /p, b, t, d, ʦ, ʤ, k, g/ and *nasal* /m, labiodental m, n, ŋ and velars n/, constrictives are split into *fricatives* (classic) /f, v, s, z, š, ž, ch, and voiced ch, h/ then *oscillating consonant* (vibrant) /r, ř, unvoiced ř/ then *side consonant* (lateral) /l/ and last *sliding consonant* (half – vowel or approximants) /j/, semi-occlusive- affricates /c, č, dz, dž/ (Balkó (2020), Internetová jazyková příručka, 2022)

### 3.2.3 Polish

According to Strutyński (2002), Polish language consists of 44 consonants. Here are all Polish consonants: b, b', c, c', ć, cz, d, d', dz, dź, dż, f, f', g, g', ch, ch', j, k, k', l, l', ł, m, m', n, n', ó, p, p', r, r', s, s', ś, sz, t, t', w, w', z, z', ź, ż. It is interesting that Polish also counts as consonants, the one which can be softened by the sound /i/, therefore they have so many of them. On the other hand, the sound /h/ and /ch/ or polish /ż/ = czech/ž/ and polish /rz/ = czech/ř/ in polish are counted just as one phoneme (Strutyński, 2002)

Using information from Ostaszewska (2002), Polish consonants take into account the following criteria: manner of articulation, the main place of articulation, the system of vocal ligaments voiced - b, d, g, w, z, ź, ż, l, ł, r, m, n, j, dz, dź, dż, and unvoiced -p, t, k, f, s, ś, sz, c, ć, cz, ch, (Ostaszewska, 2002).

Sorting the Polish consonants by **manner of articulation** is done by Strutyński (2002). They can be divided into compact explosive(plosive) /p, p', b, b', t, t', /d/, /d', /k/, /k'/, /g/, /g'/ , fricatives /f, f', w, w', s, s', ś, z, z', ź, ż, ch, ch' = h'/, affricatives / c, c', cz, dz, dź, dż/, sonorous consonants – *nasal* / m, m', n, n'/, *oral* /l, (li) l', ł/ and *trembling* /r, r'. (Strutyński, 2002).

Ostaszewska (2000) suggests following groups of **Place of articulation:** bilabial - /p/, /b/, /p'/, /b'/, /m/, /m'/, /m̥/, /m̥'/ (unvoiced), labio-dental - /f/, /v/, /f'/, /v'/, dental - /t, d, t', d', c, ʒ, c', ʒ', s, z, s', z', n, n', ŋ / alveolar - / č, č', š, š', ž, ž', r, r', l, l', ʎ, ʎ', ʣ, ʣ', /, prepalatal /ś, ź, ć, ó/ etc and post palatal /'k, 'g/, velar /k, g, /. (Ostaszewska, 2000)

## 4. Common mistakes of Czech EFL learners

### 4.1 Mispronunciation of vowel sounds

As Melen (2010) states The Czech language has only ten vowels in total compared to the English twelve, therefore they will be significant difference found in their pronunciation.

#### Vowel length

In terms of the length of English vowels, Czech EFL learners do not take account of the impact of following consonants when pronouncing words of such structure. Long and short vowels are in both languages. Even though the two systems appear to be identical or equivalent, their lengths differ. Vowels in words like bit and bid, for example, are perceived by Czech EFL learners as short vowels of the same length, whereas words like beat and bead are realized as long vowels of the same length. (Melen, 2010). Skaličková (1982) points out that there are three different lengths of vowels in English (as opposed to two in Czech), with the shortest being in bit, the medium length being in bid and beat, and the longest being in bead. To resolve this concern, she proposes saying the vowels fast before fortis consonants and slowly before lenis consonants. Learners can practice this by switching between words with the same vowel but different lengths, for example, slowly in lenis 'send' - fast in fortis 'sent'. (Skaličková, 1982).

#### Timbre – no distinction in certain vowels

Skaličková (1982) and Melen (2010) explain why Czech speakers do not differentiate between different timbres of elements in the following vowel pairs, /ɪ/ - /i:/, /e/ - /æ/, /ʌ/ - /ɑ:/, /ʊ/ - /u:/. As a result, they mispronounce words like hid -heat, bed – bat, dug – dark, should – shoot, where the distinction between the vowels is their timbre, i.e., quality, not length, i.e., quantity (Skaličková, 1982, Melen, 2010).

Ashton and Shepherd (2012) advise that differences in timbre (different vowel quality) are unimportant in Czech, whereas in English it signifies the contrast between individual vowels within a vowel pair. This might result in incorrect interpretation of targeted words, such as celery /'seləri/ instead of salary /'sæləri /. Again, by switching between two words and monitoring the changes in lip position of each vowel in a mirror, students can become aware of their own mispronunciation. There is no timbre distinction in certain vowel pairs (Ashton & Shepherd, 2012).

#### No vowel reduction in unstressed syllable

According to Melen (2010) there seems to be a tendency not to adhere vowel reduction in unstressed syllables, where English contains indefinite vowel /ə/ = schwa (or unstressed /ɪ/). Mostly Czech students substitute it with the vowel /e/ (at the beginning) or /ʌ/ (at the end). This results in improper word stress placement, such as /'poteitəʊ/ instead of /pə'teɪtəʊ/, /'setlmənt/ instead of /'setlmənt/, /'etend/ instead of /ə'tend/. Czech language does not appear to have a mixed vowel as a primary functional element; therefore, they are not sensitive enough for the tone. The vowels are then formed by learners depending on their spelling in the written word, which is prevalent in their mother tongue (Melen, 2010).

#### Substitution of /ɜ:/by /eə/ and vice versa

Also, Czech speakers replace a long-mixed vowel /ɜ:/ for a diphthong /eə/ which can lead to changes in meanings: wears instead of worse, spare instead of spur or cared instead of curd (Skaličková, 1982).

#### Diphthongs

Melen (2010) points out that diphthongs /aɪ, eɪ, oɪ/ are very often mispronounced by Czech learners as /aj, ej, oj/, even though the second element of diphthong should be only slightly indicated. (Melen, 2010). Skaličková (1982) adds on that the first vowel of a diphthong should always be stronger. And then continues those Czech learners do not take into account the changing length of the first vowel of diphthongs caused by the presence of the following consonants: /əʊ/ in robe must be longer than in rope or road. This can again, change the meaning of words. Finally, the diphthong /aʊ/ is incorrectly pronounced as the Czech /ou/. Again, they must become aware of the characteristics of each diphthong, beginning by thinking of them as two distinct sounds and practicing pronouncing them until they can smoothly move from one to the other (Skaličková, 1982).

#### Substitution of some English phonemes by Czech phonemes

The phonemes concerned are /e/, /æ/, /ə/, /ɜ:/ and /eə/ and are replaced by the Czech /e/, /é/ or /ér/. Skaličková (1982) explains that it produces changes in meaning because each of the six sounds is a separate functional element that should not be interchanged. She presents the following examples of how the substitution can lead to misunderstanding: /bed/ postel, /bæd/ špatný, /beə/ nahý, /bət/ but (weak form) and /bɜ:d/ pták.

Furthermore, the words there /ðeə/, they're /ðeə/ and their /ðeə/ are not pronounced in the same way, as they should be. Instead, the Czech /eɪ/ or /ejr/ in their and they're and the Czech /ér/ in

there is used. A comparable example may be found in words like fruit /fru:t/, and suit /su:t/, where the Czech /ou/ or rather /uj/ is pronounced. Czech speakers must understand that there is no such diphthong as /ou/ in English (or in Czech), and hence it should not be pronounced in any English words (Skaličková, 1982).

## 4.2 Mispronunciation of consonants sounds

### Incorrect final-position consonant pronunciation

Skaličková (1982) explains that lenis consonants in final position are mispronounced either with more intensity, as if there was an /ə/ sound added: sad /sæd/ becomes sadder /sædə/, or lenis consonants are replaced by fortis consonants and then instead of / bʌz/ - bʌzot it pronounce /bʌs/ - autobus. This is especially important when pronouncing the final /z/ sound at the end of plural noun forms, for example: ice /aɪs/ instead of eyes /aɪz/ (Skaličková, 1982).

### /ð/ and /θ/ phonemes

According to Melen (2010) and Skaličková (1982), Czech students often substitute phoneme /ð/ with /dz/ or /d/ and /θ/ as /f/ or /s/, because it corresponds better to their native Czech tones. Skaličková (1982) and Roach (2009) explain that the correct articulation is when the tip of the tongue touches the inside of the lower front teeth and the blade touching the inside of the upper teeth (Skaličková, 1982, Roach, 2009). Examples of incorrect pronunciation of the phoneme /ð/ where the meaning of the word can be changed: then (pak) - den (nora), they (oni) – day (den).

### Alternation of /v/ and /w/ phonemes

Another error identified is that Czech learner confuses or alternates /v/ and /w/ because these consonants in Czech cannot change the meaning of a word. On the other hand, in English their incorrect use can change the meaning of the word. For example: vine (réva) – wine(víno), veal (telecí) – wheel (kolo), vile (bezcnný) – while (zatímco).

### Assimilation of paired consonants

Melen (2010) writes, that incorrect assimilation of paired consonants is performed, because in English only unpaired consonants adapt and the paired consonants maintain their distinctive

character. Comparing to Czech language where this is opposite. He presents the following example: Czech learners pronounce backbone as /'bægbəʊn/, which implicates a different meaning: "pytlová kost". Assimilation in front of /w/ is often incorrect: this one / ðɪs wʌn/ as /ðɪz wʌn/ or even / dɪz vʌn/ (Melen, 2000).

#### Phoneme /r/

Millin (2011) mentions that although the /r/ sound should only be pronounced at the beginning of words, Czech people are more prone to pronounce it in the middle or at the end (Millin,2011).

#### Aspiration of /p, t, k/

According to Roach (2009), Czech EFL learners have a tendency to pronounce words with /p, t, k/ sounds without aspiration, which might result in the sound appearing like its lenis /b, d, g/ to a native speaker as in tart - dart Aspiration of / p, t, k / (Roach, 2009).

Skaličková (1982) describes another common mistake that is aspiration with /ch/ sound and pronouncing words like part, tart, and cart as "pchát, tchát, kchát". She claims it is due to inaccurate teacher and textbook instructions. She continues to say that because aspiration differs depending on the aspirated consonant, it is impossible to say that the /ch/ sound applies to all of them (Skaličková, 1982).

#### Phoneme /ŋ/

Skaličková (1982) describes that phoneme /ŋ/ in the final position of the words or before vowel is pronounced incorrectly as /n/ or /ŋk /, for example instead pronouncing sing /sɪŋ/(zpívat), it tends to be said /sɪn/ (hřích) or /sɪŋk/ (klesat) or except of rang /ræŋ/ (zvonil ) it's articulated /ræn/ (běžel) or /ræŋk/ (Skaličková, 1982).

### **4.3 Mistakes in linking**

Melen (2010) and Skaličková (1982) point out that, linking is a fluent transition from one word to another when the first word ends with consonant and the following word begin with vowel. Czech learners make mistakes in English linking because the Czech language does not possess the fluent transition from word to word in sentences (Melen, 2010, Skaličková, 1982).

Linking in English language can be plain linking (spoons of - /spu:nzɒv/ or and a /ændə /), or intrusive with /j/ or /w/. For example: maybe a /'meɪbi: jə / and you ache /juweɪk/ (Melen, 2010, Skaličková, 1982).

#### **4.4 Mistakes in rhythm and other aspects of connected speech**

Melen (2010) states that rhythm in English is one of the key features in spoken language. English is identified as a stress time language, which means that stressed syllables follow in pattern independently, if there are any unstressed syllable between them. On the other hand, Czech language is a syllable timed language. The total number of syllables determines the duration of a speech (Melen, 2010).

As Skaličková (1982) writes the principle of intonation in English and Czech is the same, after reaching its highest position on the first stressed syllable, the tone declines until it reaches the last stressed syllable, where it divides into three intonation possibilities: a sharp fall (statement), a sharp rise (question) and slight rise (pause) (Skaličková, 1982).

Another problem appears when Czech students do not keep a long enough interval between the lowest and highest syllable. Then the speech tends to be monotonous (Skaličková, 1982 and Melen, 2010).

### **5. Common mistakes of Polish EFL learners**

#### **5.1 Mispronunciation of vowel sounds**

Polish English language learners appear to face similar problems as Czech learners, mainly because Polish belongs to west Slavic language of the Lekhitic subgroup, closely related to Czech, Slovak (Britannica, online, 2022).

Sobkowiak (online, 2022) states that the differences between English and Polish vowels are not limited to the position of the tongue at the time of articulation. Some English vowels (mainly /a:, i:, u:, o:/) are longer and use more tense than others.

Hence, for example, the difference between two English close and back vowels (polish /u/ is close to the peripheral English /u:/), which is difficult to control by Polish people. Another difference is that unstressed vowels in Polish do not undergo such strong reductions as in English (Sobkowiak, 2022).

#### Phonemes /æ/ and /e/

Bałutowa (1992) points out that Polish /e/ is exactly between English /e/ and /æ/ hence English /e/(when, said, then, help) is heard often like Polish /i/ and english /æ/ (back, man, land, family, happy) is pronounced like Polish /a/.

#### Phonemes /ɒ/ and /ɔ:/

Also, Polish sound /o/ is only one and is again in the middle, compare to English where there are two /o/ one is more open /ɒ/ (long, off, because, want), and the other closed /ɔ:/ (all, your, more, water) (Bałutowa, 1992).

#### Phoneme /ə/

Another inherent difficulty for Polish learners is the English ‘schwa’, Polish language does not possess any vowels which are made in centre of the mouth, so it is extremely difficult to pronounce it properly (Sobkowiak, 2022 online).

### **5.2 Mispronunciation of consonant sounds**

#### Phoneme /θ, ð/

Sobkowiak (2022) is convinced that the most difficult issues are with phonemes that do not exist in native language, which are /θ, ð/.

#### Phoneme /r/

Pronunciation in Polish of phoneme /r/ is different than in English /r/. Polish speakers must remember to tilt the tip of the tongue upwards when pronouncing English /r/ (Sobkowiak, 2022 online).

#### Phoneme /h/

According to Bałutowa (1992) Polish learners commit mistakes in English /h/, they cannot pronounce it and replace it with Polish /ch/ because of that native speaker has an impression of a foreign accent (Bałutowa, 1992).

### **5.3 Mistakes in linking**

According to Bronisława Bałutowa (1992), who authored a book ‘Wymowa angielska dla wszystkich’, the Polish learners have a very similar problem to Czech ones. They also pronounce each word in a sentence separately, as she writes: ‘like in music ‘staccato’ (Bałutowa,1992).

According to YouTube channel ‘English is fun’ linking can lead to the problem of Polish learners not understanding English native speakers and hearing different words in their speech. There is a video - Poprawna wymowa - łączenie międzywyrazowe on YouTube, where the linking problem is well explained (English is fun, YouTube, 2017).

#### **5.4 Mistakes in rhythm and other aspects of connected speech**

This opinion is shared by Bałutowa who claims that the rhythm of the English language is very important. Yet Polish people have difficulty understanding English rhythm because Polish is not a rhythmical language like English. Part of the rhythm is word and sentence stress, which causes quite a problem, because it is applied differently. Generally, in Polish the word stress is applied on the penultimate syllable, but in English varies and the rule is not strictly provided.

Word stress is particularly important, because if the stress is used incorrectly, then the given word is mispronounced and difficult to be understood. Also sentence stress is important and if not applied, then the rhythm is defective. Even though the word stress is perfect, but if the sentence stress is not used effectively, still the rhythm falling. Therefore, it is suggested to teach word and sentence stress together (Bałutowa, 1992).

## **PRACTICAL PART**

The theoretical part provided a base of foundation of knowledge for the creation of the practical part. The aim is to compare the common mistakes in English pronunciation made by Czech and Polish learners. In practical part questions will be answered and results shown. The questions are: Are the common mistakes made by Czech and Polish identical? Are the learners influenced by local dialect?

The method chosen for the research is mixed-method research design, that is the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Raw data will be collected in recordings. The recording is a recorded text 'Please call Stella' by the pupils. The data will then be thoroughly examined in order to identify common errors (qualitative method), a table will be created from the common mistakes, and learners' results will be compared (quantitative method).

The research sample consisted of a sample of ten students from a Czech school and ten students from a Polish school, to be specific it is Základní škola Jablunkov, Lesní 190, p.o. and ZŠ H. Sienkiewiczze s polským jazykem vyučovacím Jablunkov, p.o. The age range was 14 to 15 years old (year 9).

The venue chosen was a classroom of average size. In both schools a language laboratory was chosen. Students were sat between 20cms and 30cm from the digital recording device. No background noise nor interruption occurred during the recordings. The digital capture device utilised was an iPad V1.0 (IOS version 4).

## **6. Preparation**

Research will take place near the Polish and Czech borders, in a region called Silesia, in the town of Jablunkov. Students are attending year nine, which is the last year of Secondary school (2. Stupeň). English has been studied for at least 7 academic years. As a result, reading the text should be simple because it contains mostly basic words.

### **6.1 Research aids**

The practical phase began with the selection of an appropriate text for error analysis. First there was an idea of producing sentences with the common mistakes. Then a suitable short text, 'Please call Stella', was discovered. This abstract is especially written to check the pronunciation errors, the passage was copied from Speech Accent Archive. George Mason University (Weinberger).

Text:

*'Please call Stella. Ask her to bring these things with her from the store: Six spoons of fresh snow peas, five thick slabs of blue cheese, and maybe a snack for her brother Bob. We also need a small plastic snake and a big toy frog for the kids. She can scoop these things into three red bags, and we will go meet her Wednesday at the train station.'* (Speech Accent Archive, 2022)

Using information from theoretical chapters 4 and 5, a table of common mistakes from the text 'Please call Stella' was designed. Most of the errors are mispronounced vowels or consonants, but there are also aspects of connected speech – linking (plain and intrusive j) included.

## **6.2 Data collection**

The next passage was particularly important, the chosen local schools were contacted and the anonymised recordings from students were collected.

All levels of English students were chosen by a teacher of English. Twenty students from year nine from each school were selected to take part in the research, for the purposes of study. However only a core of ten students' recordings from each school were analysed.

The methodology of recording was simple. Each student was digitally recorded individually. They were made comfortable in the room with either me or a teaching assistant present. Before the actual recording, there was time given to get familiar with the selected text. They did not need to identify themselves, therefore anonymity was always preserved. They only had to identify what school they presently attended.

IPad and iPhone were used for the work as the identified media and hardware. Both schools followed the same procedure, and a similar environment was provided to ensure the results were as objective as possible.

## **7. Research analyses**

According to the theoretical parts, the most common mistakes in English (British) pronunciation made by Czech and Polish students are very similar. So, there is a question, if living on the borders of The Czech Republic and Poland brings different mistakes. To add more in this region there is a dialect (hybrid language) composed of Czech, Polish, Slovak and

German language with changed endings. So, it may have influenced the research too (Po našymu, 2022).

## 7.1 Research Method

The preparation for creating the results table could begin after collecting data from both schools. The recordings were played numerous times. Firstly, they were played at normal pace and speed, then they were played the half speed so all the phonemes could be heard properly.

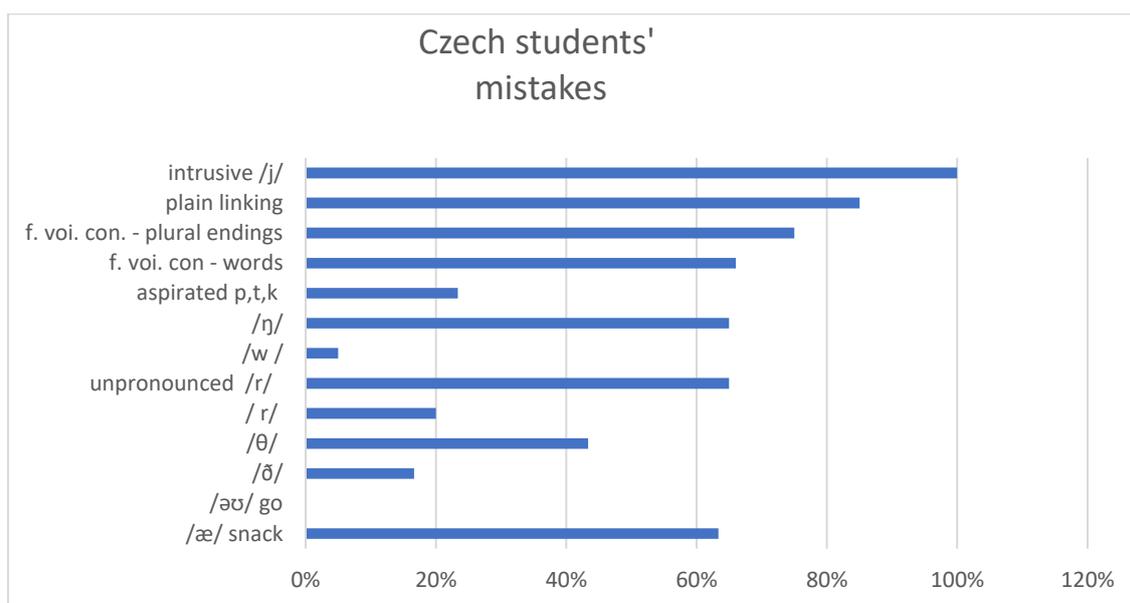
Recordings were played repeatedly until everything was clear. The table was finished once the results were satisfactory. Mistakes were indicated by the number one and the rest by zero. The unalterable version was transcribed into an excel spreadsheet on computer. The data was then saved, and the edit facility locked.

It was decided to delete the weak forms of chapter as assessing it correctly could pose a challenge. In the table, it can be seen how many students made mistakes and what percentages it was.

## 7.2 Czech students' results

As previously stated, the emphasis was on ten students from each school. The chart below summarizes the most common English pronunciation errors made by Czech teenagers. The full table can be found in appendix.

Figure 3: Graph displaying the results of Czech teenagers



As it appears in above figure, Czech students reached 100% failure with intrusive linking (j – ‘we also’), where everyone was wrong. Other problems were plain linking with 85% failure,

then there was a big problem with final voiced consonants, where the plural endings (kids, slabs) accounted for 75% of the total and the word endings accounted for 66%. (frog, cheese), followed by a unpronounced /r/ (store) and /ŋ/ (bring) with 65% and vowel sound /æ/ (snack, slabs) with 63%.

On the other hand, students did not have problem with diphthongs /əʊ/ (go) as there was 100% success and consonants /w/ (Wednesday) with only 5% failure. Surprisingly phonemes /ð/ and /θ/ , which do not have an adequate sound in Czech language, were quite well pronounced. Phoneme /ð/ like in ‘these’ was 83% successful and /θ/ like in ‘thick’ slightly less successful, but still 57% successful. The final phoneme was /r/ (frog), which had a failure rate of only 20%.

Table 1: Detailed table with phoneme /æ/

Vowels													
/æ/													
slabs	/slæbz/	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	7	70
snack	/snæk/	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	5	50
bags	/bægz/	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	7	70

Out of ten tested students only one, was able to pronounce the phoneme /æ/ in all cases correctly, three students committed mistakes in all words and six made mistake at least in one of the given words. They were incorrect in 63% of the cases.

Table 2: Detailed table with phonemes /ð/ and /θ/

consonants													
/ð/													
these	/ði:z/	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	5	50
the	/ðə/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
brother	/'brʌðə/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
/θ/													
things	/θɪŋz/	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	4	40
thick	/θɪk/	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	30
three	/θri:/	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	6	60

Phoneme /ð/ was tested within three words in the text, but only in one word – ‘these’ were made mistakes by half of the students, the rest words were managed without an error.

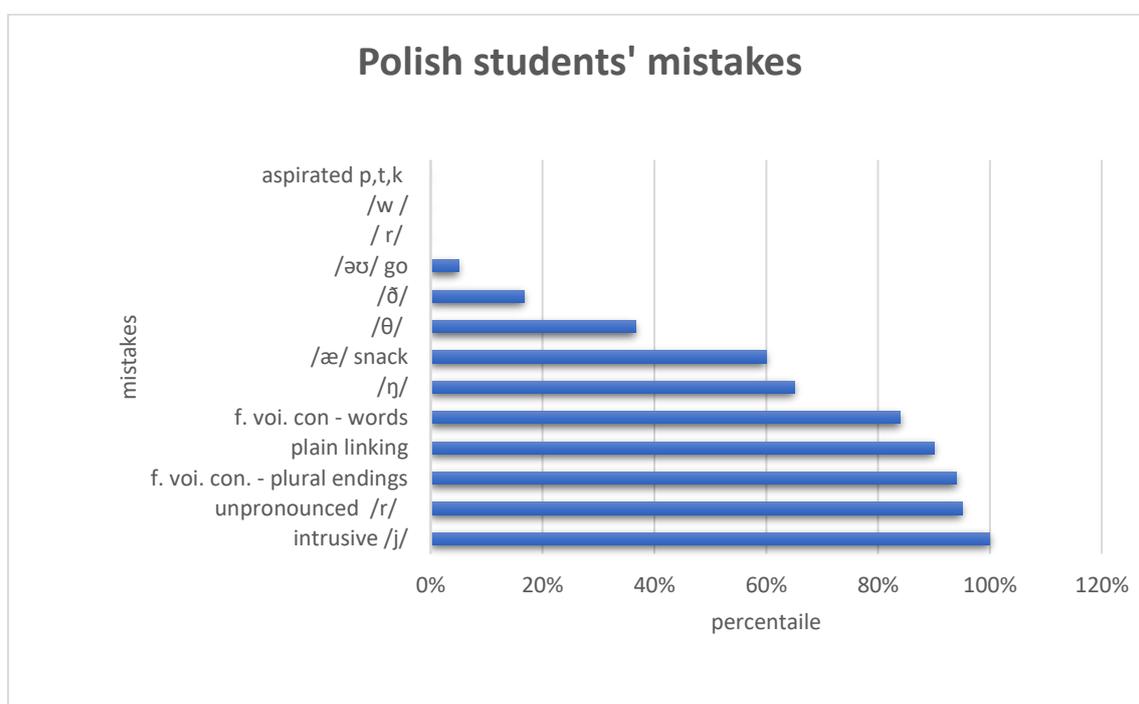
Phoneme /θ/ also occurred in the recordings three times but some students committed some mistakes, in a few of them except one learner who pronounced well. The biggest issue was with word ‘three’ were six out of ten students made mistake. On the contrary ‘thick’ was pronounced well by seven out of ten students.

### 7.3 Polish students’ results

Here are the results of Polish pupils. See the chart below.

This is a concise table of the results, the full detailed one can be found same as of Czech learners in appendix. I followed the same procedure I picked some of the common mistakes to discuss it below as they had quite interesting results.

Figure 4: Graph displaying the results of Polish teenagers



None of the students pronounced intrusive /j/ - ‘we also’ correctly, therefore they were 100% unsuccessful. Plain linking (‘maybe a’ was only a bit better with 90% failure. Other problem was unpronounced /r/ (store), 95% decline, followed by final voiced consonants where the plural ending (kids, spoons) had only 6% success and words (frog, cheese) 16% of correctness.

On the contrary phonemes /w/ and /r/ were pronounced 100% correctly, also aspiration was with no mistakes too. There were few mistakes in diphthong /əʊ/ (go), which was only 5% mispronounced. Followed by /ð/ (these) with 17% of errors and /θ/ (thick) mistake was made by 37% of students. Last phoneme /ŋ/ (bring) was only 35% successful.

Detailed tables:

Table 3: Detailed table with phoneme /æ/

<b>Vowels</b>													
/æ/													60
slabs	/slæbz/	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	6	60
snack	/snæk/	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	6	60
bags	/bægz/	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	6	60

Six students out of ten made a mistake in each word where the phoneme /æ/ was tested. To be more specific, only one student made no mistakes in the given words, while three students made mistakes in all three model words.

Table 4: Detailed table with phoneme /ð/

<b>consonants</b>													
/ð/													
these	/ði:z/	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	3	30
the	/ðə/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	10
brother	/'brʌðə/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	10

Phoneme /ð/ was pronounced well in all words by six students. The word 'these' was mispronounced three times and the rest only ones. This is an intriguing result again, because Polish language does not possess similar sound and the Polish students did not make that many mistakes.

Table 5: Detailed table with phoneme /θ/

/θ/													
Things	/θɪŋz/	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	4	40
Thick	/θɪk/	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	4	40
Three	/θri:/	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	30

Phoneme /θ/ was more demanding to pronounce and it was tested in three words. The mistake was committed by seven students, but only one made mistakes in all of the words. On the other hand, three students read it perfectly.

Table 6: Detailed table with phoneme /ŋ/

/ŋ/													
Bring	brɪŋ	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	80
Things	/θɪŋz/	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	5	50

Phoneme /ŋ/ caused a lot of uncertainty, especially with the word "bring," which eight out of ten students mispronounced, and half of them also made mistake in the word 'things'. Only two students did not make any mistake with that phoneme.

## 8. Results comparison

### 8.1 English language lesson allowance

The table below shows the lesson allocations and what textbook are used in Czech and Polish schools.

Table 7: Lesson allowance and student's book

Year	Czech (lessons per week)	Polish
Year one/grade 1	1 - colourful English	1 - After school club
Year two	1 - colourful English	1 - After school club
Year three	3 - Chit- Chat	3 - Happy Street
Year four	3 - Chit-Chat	3 - Happy Street
Year five	3 - Explore together (3)	3 - Bloggers
Year six	4 - Project	3 - Bloggers
Year seven	4 - Project	3 - Bloggers
Year eight	3 - Project	3 - Project
Year nine	3 - Project	3 - Project

It is also worth noting that English is taught during the school day in years one and two of Czech school. The Polish school, on the other hand, does it as an after-school club activity, but it is free of charge.

Another distinction is that in years six and seven, the Czech school provides four English lessons per week while the Polish school provides only three. When we look at the books they use, the biggest difference is in lower primary.

In comparison, the Czech school present more English lessons, on the contrary students in Polish school can speak Polish and Czech already, so they benefit from two languages. Both schools follow the Czech National Curriculum, only Polish school has got an exception for teaching in Polish. Information was provided by both schools from the arranged meeting.

### 8.3 Compared results summary

As expected, the results are very similar with slight deviation in one or two phonemes.

Figure 5: Graph comparing results of Czech and Polish teenagers



Examining the chart, most mistakes appear to be related to linking from the table we can see that students do not use aspects of connected speech in particular linking. Where intrusive linking in both groups of learners were 100% unsuccessful. The plain linking is slightly better, but again both groups reached over 80% of mistakes.

There is a proof if you wish to speak like a native speaker, you must produce linking in your speech. Otherwise, you always will sound like foreigner speaking English.

This may mean that teachers do not focus on aspects of connected speech, but only on individual phonemes. Another reason which was identified was, that students were a little nervous as the

pace was sometimes faster, therefore they only concentrated on phonemes and forgot about linking and intonation.

Next chapter are final voiced consonants (both words and ending) which was again very similar, and students made many mistakes within it.

94% of Polish students committed mistake in final voiced consonants in plural ending, in words such as 'kids' or 'spoons'. Czech students were noted to be slightly better with 75% failure rate. The other part final voiced consonants words like 'frog' or 'cheese', Polish pupils made more mistakes, results were 84% and Czech pupils 66%.

Unpronounced /r/ caused significant problem as many students pronounced it. Czech students were slightly better committing only 65% incorrect pronunciation compared to Polish where it was 95%. Many students do not realise the difference between 'rolling' /r/ and unpronounced /r/. To the contrary /r/ was pronounced very well and only 20% of Czech learners made mistakes, Polish did not commit any mistakes.

Phoneme /ŋ/ caused the same problem for both groups and 65% of both students struggled with it.

Vowel /æ/, as in 'snack' or 'slabs,' also caused some confusion among students, with 63 percent of Czech and 60 percent of Polish responding incorrectly.

Phoneme /ð/ like in 'these', even though the sound like this does not exist in any of the languages, to my surprise it was pronounced very well by both groups. Each of them had only 17% unsuccess.

Phoneme /θ/ like in 'thick' has also got a good score and 37% of Polish and 43% of Czech students made mistakes. I think teachers explain how to pronounce these two phonemes, because they are unique in our languages.

Diphthongs /əʊ/ like in 'go' was nearly pronounced perfectly, 5% of Polish students committed mistake and no-one from Czech students.

To add more the pronunciation of consonants /w/ was very similar only the pupils' changed roles and Czech made 5% and Polish score was clear. It was identified that they know it from Polish /ł/ which is the same sound as English /w/ and also, they know Czech /v/. For this is the reason they know it, and how to pronounce it. And Czech learners were influenced by the dialect.

Aspiration of /p, t, k/ where Polish learners did not commit any mistakes and Czech ones only 23%.

In the study it must be noted that that the standard was set by British English pronunciation (Received Pronunciation), that means, that American pronunciation was counted as an error.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the study demonstrated that there were only minor differences in English pronunciation made by Czech and Polish teenagers. The chart revealed that only three of the thirteen investigated errors had a significant difference. The rest of the common mistakes were pronounced in the same manner.

The thesis was demanding and time consuming, but the valuable information was gained. My aim of the thesis was to compare common mistakes in English pronunciation made by students attending Czech and Polish schools in the Czech Republic, which was succeeded well and managed to get some results.

Theoretical part of the thesis provided basic information about phonology, also summarized common mistake in English pronunciation made by both nationalities and finally acquainted us with various methods of pronunciation. Mainly it served as a foundation for the practical part. After completing the theoretical part, I realised that Czech and Polish learners endeavour with the same common mistakes in English, therefore it was expected, that the difference in pronunciation between Czech and Polish learners will not be significant.

Practical part conclusion was to compare and assess the data collected and the table and chart were produced. From the research it could be said that both schools had 100% of incorrect pronunciation in linking. These could mean that both schools only concentrate on pronunciation of individual sounds, and the aspects of connected speech, in particular linking is not taught, or students were nervous and forgot. Also, final voiced consonants were mispronounced. Czech teenagers were slightly better, but both had over 60% of incorrect pronunciation. Phoneme unpronounced /r/ was incorrectly pronounced by Polish in 95%, Czech only 65%. On the other hand, Czech made mistake in phoneme /r/ but Polish did not. Also Czech made mistake in aspiration of /p, t, k/. In contrast, this was the most significant difference, therefore Czech and Polish learners did not make the same mistakes. It could be said that the common mistakes are similar but not identical.

The final phoneme to be mentioned is /w/, where practically everyone correctly pronounces it. I would say that the correct pronunciation was influenced by local dialect as there is a sound like in English.

In summary, it is acceptable to claim that common mistakes committed by Czech and Polish teenagers differ slightly, particularly in terms of aspiration. They also have the similar issue with final voiced consonants and linking, yet they both thrive with the phoneme /w/. Overall,

with information discovered, I can only reaffirm myself that pronunciation is important, and teachers should dedicate more time for it in their lessons

It should be noted that the study is very limited, and the results may differ from those of other studies. The emphasis was on a small group of students from a specific region. It is reasonable to expect that results would differ if students from different parts of the Czech Republic and Poland were assessed.

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## Appendices

Appendic 1: Table of incorrect pronouciation made by Czech learners

### Czech students

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	sum	per cent
<b>vowels</b>													
<b>/æ/</b>													
	slabs	/slæbz/	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	7	70
	snack	/snæk/	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	5	50
	bags	/bægz/		1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	7	70
<b>/əʊ/</b>													
	also	/'ɔ:lsəʊ/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	go	/gəʊ/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>consonants</b>													
<b>/ð/</b>													
	these	/ði:z/	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	5	50
	the	/ðə/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	brother	/'brʌðə/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>/θ/</b>													
	things	/θɪŋz/	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	4	40
	thick	/θɪk/	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	3	30
	three	/θri:/	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	6	60
<b>/r/</b>													
	frog	/frɒg/	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	10
	brother	/'brʌðə/	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	3	30
<b>unpronounced /r/</b>													
	store	/stɔ:/	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	70
	for	/fə/	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	6	60
<b>/w/</b>													
	with	/wɪθ /or/ wɪð/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	we	/wɪ/	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10
	will	/wəl/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	10
	Wednesday	/'wenzdeɪ/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>/ŋ/</b>													
	bring	brɪŋ	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	6	60

things	/θɪŋz/	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	70
<b>aspirated p,t,k</b>												0	
peas	/pi:z/	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	5	50
toy	/tɔɪ/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
kids	/kɪdz/	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	20
<b>final voiced consonants</b>													
Words													
please	/pli:z/	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	5	50
cheese	/tʃi:z/	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	90
Bob	/bɒb/	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	4	40
frog	/frɒg/	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	9	90
five	/faɪv/	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	6	60
<b>plural endings</b>													
things		0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	70
spoons	/spu:nz/	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	60
peas	/pi:z/	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	80
slabs	/slæbz/	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	100
kids	/kɪdz/	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	7	70
bags	/bægz/	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	7	70
<b>plain linking</b>													
spoons of	/spu:nzɒv/	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	8	80
slabs of	/slæbzɒv/	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	8	80
need a	/ni:də /	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	80
and a	/ændə /	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	100
<b>intrusive /j/</b>													
maybe a	/'meɪbi: jə /	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	100
we also	/wɪj 'ɔ:lsəʊ/	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	100

## Appendic 2: Table of incorrect pronouciation made by Polish learners

		Polish students										Sum	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
<b>Vowels</b>													
/æ/													60
slabs	/slæbz/	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	6	60
snack	/snæk/	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	6	60
bags	/bægz/	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	6	60
/əʊ/													
also	/'ɔ:lsəʊ/	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	10
go	/gəʊ/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Consonants</b>													
/ð/													
these	/ði:z/	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	3	30
the	/ðə/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	10
brother	/'brʌðə/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	10
/θ/													
things	/θɪŋz/	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	4	40
thick	/θɪk/	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	4	40
three	/θri:/	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	30
/r/													
frog	/frɒg/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
brother	/'brʌðə/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
unpronounced /r/													
store	/stɔ:/	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	100
for	/fə/	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	90
/w/													
with	/wɪθ /or/ wɪð/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
we	/wɪ/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
will	/wəl/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wednesday	/'wenzdeɪ/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
/ŋ/													
bring	brɪŋ	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	80
things	/θɪŋz/	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	5	50
<b>aspirated p,t,k</b>													
peas	/pi:z/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
toy	/tɔɪ/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
kids	/kɪdz/	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>final voiced consonants</b>													

Words														
please	/pli:z/	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	90
cheese	/tʃi:z/	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	90
Bob	/bɒb/	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	8	80
frog	/frɒg/	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	100
five	/faɪv/	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	6	60
<b>plural endings</b>														
spoons	/spu:nz/	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	8	80
peas	/pi:z/	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	90
slabs	/slæbz/	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	100
kids	/kɪdz/	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	100
bags	/bægz/	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	100
<b>plain linking</b>														
spoons of	/spu:nzɒv/	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	90
slabs of	/slæbzɒv/	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	90
need a	/ni:də /	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	90
and a	/ændə /	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	90
<b>intrusive /j/</b>														
maybe a	/'meɪbi: jə /	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	100
we also	/wɪj 'ɔ:lsəʊ/	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	100

## ANOTACE

<b>Jméno příjmení:</b>	Dorota Bosnyáková
<b>Katedra:</b>	Ústav cizích jazyků
<b>Vedoucí práce:</b>	Mgr. Jana Kořínková Ph.D.
<b>Rok obhajoby:</b>	2022

<b>Název práce:</b>	Porovnávání nejčastějších chyb anglické výslovnosti českými a polskými žáky 2. stupně
<b>Název v angličtině:</b>	Comparing common mistakes in English pronunciation made by Czech and Polish teenagers
<b>Anotace práce:</b>	Cílem této bakalářské práce je porovnat výslovnost žáků z českých a polských škol v České republice. V teoretické části práce jsou definovány klíčové pojmy z jazykovědného a pedagogického prostředí a vysvětleny nejčastější chyby ve výslovnosti. Praktická část se zabývá vyhodnocením nahraných vzorků. Hlavním cílem je zjistit, jestli žáci českých a polských škol dělají stejné chyby ve výslovnosti.
<b>Klíčová slova:</b>	Výslovnost, chyby, žáci českých a polských škol, fonetika metody výuky výslovnosti,
<b>Anotace v angličtině:</b>	Purpose of this bachelor thesis is to compare the pronunciation of pupils from Czech and Polish schools in the Czech Republic. The theoretical part of the thesis defines key concepts from the linguistic and pedagogical environment and explains the most common errors in pronunciation. The practical part deals with the evaluation of recording samples. The main goal is to find out if the pupils of Czech and Polish schools make the same pronunciation mistakes.
<b>Klíčová slova v angličtině:</b>	Pronunciation, mistakes, pupils from Czech and Polish schools, phonetics, pronunciation teaching methods,
<b>Přílohy vázané v práci:</b>	2
<b>Rozsah práce:</b>	44
<b>Jazyk práce:</b>	angličtina