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TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF LIBEREC  
Faculty of Science, Humanities  
and Education



# An Analysis of the Phonology of Ulster-Scots Accent

## Bachelor thesis

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**Mayor, M. 2009. Longman dictionary of contemporary English. Harlow: Pearson/Longman. ISBN 978-1-4082-1533-3**

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**Anotace:**

Tato bakalářská práce je zaměřena na porozumění Ulster-skotského akcentu, patřícího mezi přízvuky, s nimiž se studenti angličtiny jakožto cizího jazyka ve svých hodinách běžně nesetkají, tedy takové, které nejsou v hodinách angličtiny běžně vyučovány. Pro potřeby této práce byl zvolen právě Ulster-skotský akcent, který je ve vztahu s akcentem skotským, a tudíž mezi ním a standardní britskou výslovností existuje relativní blízkost. Ačkoli se Ulster-skotský akcent od standardní britské výslovnosti odlišuje. Součástí této práce je teoretická a praktická část. Teoretická část se skládá z informací přibližujících čtenářům téma Ulster-Scots, neboť se nejedná pouze o akcent, ale také o jazyk, kulturu a obyvatele žijící na území zvaném Ulster v Severním Irsku. Také jsou zde uvedeny základní rozdíly mezi Ulster-skotským a standardním britským akcentem. Praktickou částí je výzkum prováděný mezi skupinou současných i bývalých studentů oboru Angličtina ve vzdělávání či jiných oborů Technické univerzity v Liberci. Tohoto výzkumu se účastnilo celkem 34 lidí s minimálně pokročilou úrovní angličtiny a měl za cíl zmapovat sílu porozumění neznámého přízvuku, stejně jako jejich postoj k tomuto přízvuku a přízvukům obecně.

**Klíčová slova:**

fonetika, akcent, přízvuk, Ulster-Scots, Ulster-Skotský, Skotský, Ulster, Severní Irsko, lingvistika, porozumění, poslech, výuka, jazyk, dialekt, EFL (angličtina jako cizí jazyk), bakalářská práce

**Abstract:**

This bachelor thesis deals with the comprehension of the Ulster-Scots accent, belonging to accents which students of English as a foreign language do not usually encounter in their lessons. It means accents that are usually not taught in the course of a usual English lesson in the Czech Republic. For the purpose of this thesis I chose the Ulster-Scots accent which is in relation with the Scottish one; therefore, it is in a relative close distance between itself and the Standard British English accent. However, there is a difference in the accents. This thesis contains theoretical and practical section. The theoretical section consists of background information about the topic Ulster-Scots, since it is not just an accent, but it relates also to a language, culture and people living in Ulster, Northern Ireland. The basic differences of the Ulster-Scots and the Standard English accents are also presented in this section. The practical section of this thesis is a research done among a group of current and graduated students of English in education as one of their fields of study at the Technical University of Liberec, or (graduated) students of other disciplines. 34 persons with at least the intermediate level of English participated in this research with the aim of mapping their comprehension of an unknown accent, as well as their attitude to the Ulster-Scots accent and to English accents in general.

**Key words:**

phonetics, accent, Ulster-Scots, Scottish, Ulster, Northern Ireland, linguistics, comprehension, listening, education, language, dialect, EFL (English as a foreign language), bachelor's thesis



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This bachelor thesis deals with an analysis of the phonology of the Ulster-Scots accent. The principal aims of the thesis are to explore the relationship of Czechs towards familiarity with the Ulster-Scots and to find answers to the following questions: whether Czechs, both students of English as their field of study and students of other disciplines at university or graduated are able to understand words pronounced in the Ulster-Scots accent on their own, whether context helps students to understand the words more easily, and whether students would appreciate having a subject dealing with accent education at university. These questions will be a part of a research, which is an important element of this thesis.

I chose the topic of the Ulster-Scots accent because English accents have always been an interest of mine, particularly the Scottish accent. I learned about the existence of the Ulster-Scots and it sounded very interesting. In addition, there has already been extensive research examining the Scottish accent, but not so extensive on the topic of the Ulster-Scots accent.

At the beginning I did not have the opportunity to speak to someone with an Ulster-Scots accent. Nevertheless, I found videos, texts and dictionaries online. It was clear that Ulster-Scots is different from Standard English in more than just the accent. It also has its own vocabulary and syntax. On the other hand, many words are spelt in the same way and simply pronounced with an accent. I was intrigued and became very interested in learning more about the Ulster-Scots accent. I planned to research the comprehension and attitude of Czechs towards this accent.

This thesis will consist of a theoretical framework and a practical analysis. The theoretical framework will be based on relevant literature and concentrate on introducing the topic of Ulster-Scots. It will focus mainly on the historical

background of the Ulster-Scots existence and culture. It will also help to introduce the topic of Ulster-Scots as a language to the readers and show the basic differences between the Ulster-Scots and Standard English accents. The practical analysis will be based on the research carried out by means of questionnaires filled in by two groups of Czechs. One group, slightly larger, will represent students of English in education at the Technical University of Liberec. The second group will consist of Czech speakers of English for whom English is not their primary field of study at university. The practical analysis will also contain the description of methodology, including the process of compiling the list of words and sentences in the Ulster-Scots accent, which was significant for the creation of the questionnaire. The results will be evaluated on the basis of a quantitative analysis containing an evaluation of each word. There will also be a summary of respondents according to their age, current level of education, possible stay abroad, contact with native English speakers, and possible previous contact with the Ulster-Scots accent. The final results will be presented in detail with comments on every part of the research, and then summarized in the conclusion.

## **2 THEORETICAL SECTION**

There are a vast number of English accents in the world. Talking about British English, it is probably a country with one of the highest number of accents and dialects shaped by a long history. The most important types of British English accents are Received Pronunciation (further as RP), being considered a “standard accent” or “Standard English” spoken all over the country, Cockney, originated in East London, Southeast British, Southwest British, Midlands English, Northern England English, Welsh English, Scottish English, and Geordie, referring to the area of Northeast England (Trawick-Smith 2011). Since this work is dealing with the Ulster-Scots accent, the background information of Ulster-Scots will be provided in this section.

### **2.1 Background information**

#### **2.1.1 Introduction**

The theoretical section provides information about the geographical division of the Ulster area, historical background, and further development of Ulster-Scots as a language.

When studying the Ulster-Scots language, accent or culture, the reader will soon notice different names such as Ulster-Scots, Ulster Scots, Ulstèr-Scotch or even Ullans. These all are terms referring to Scottish people who migrated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century from south-west Scotland to north-east Ireland, in the area of Ulster. These terms also refer to their language, culture and literature. The only difference in the words is down to differing academic opinions. I will refer to it as to a language (more in section 2.1.4 Language).

## 2.1.2 Geography

Ulster is one of the provinces of the Republic of Ireland and is located in the northern part of the island. The area of Ulster consists of nine counties, and six of them form Northern Ireland which remained part of the United Kingdom after the partition of Ireland in 1921. These six are Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone. The remaining three counties of Ulster, Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan, belong to the Republic of Ireland (see Figure 1). Professor R. J. Gregg mapped the areas in the 1960s and found out that north, mid and south-east Antrim, north-east Londonderry, north-east Down, and east Donegal should be considered the heartlands of the language (Deane 1984, 526).



*Figure 1: Area of Ulster*

## 2.1.3 Historical background

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, there was a massive increase in migration of people across the North Channel, between south-west Scotland and north-east Ireland which led to the colonisation of six Ulster counties, Armagh, Donegal, Cavan, Fermanagh, Tyrone



and Londonderry; however, in practice, the colonisation extended to the areas of Antrim and Down as well (Robinson 2007, 13).

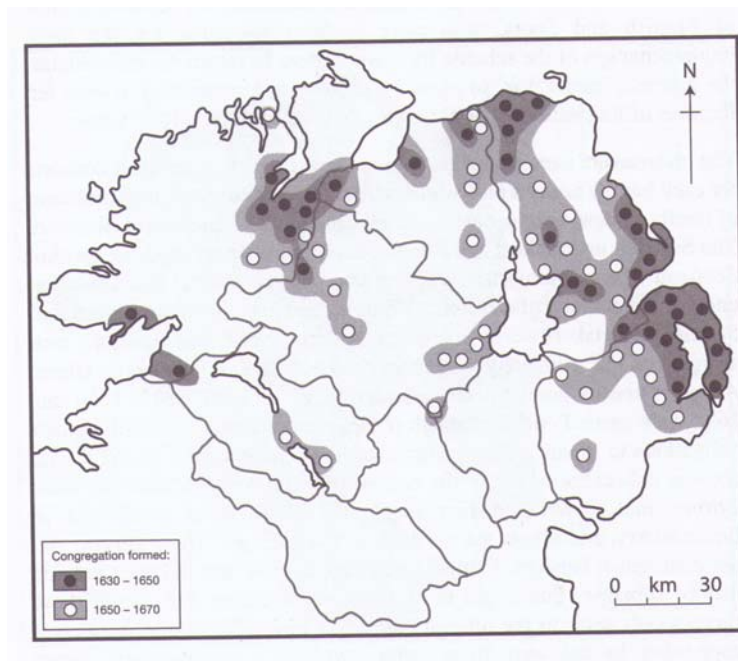
Robinson (2007) says that Londonderry was established as a new county of English and Scottish farmers by 1610 and consequently, twelve principal London Guild Companies, given their own estates there by the king James I, developed two new city ports, the ports of Londonderry and Coleraine (13). As a result and thanks to their proximity to Scotland these ports were dominated by Scottish merchants and artisans by 1630, even though they were owned and controlled by the London-English companies. The London Companies also employed Scottish land agents; under those circumstances the origin of the population in the Ulster area soon included more Scots than English people.

The North Channel was, and still is, used more as a link than a barrier between Scotland and Northern Ireland. Therefore, the number of people travelling between the two coasts soon increased and a strong community was created among the Ulster-Scots. Furthermore, in the 1630s the number of Scottish nationals in Ulster increased rapidly – as an illustration in the year 1638 the Scottish Covenanters estimated there were 40,000 Scots in Ulster, while just one year later, in 1639, it was believed there were around 100,000 Scottish men (Robinson 2007, 15-17).

As the Scots settled in, they started developing the area of Ulster according to their own ideas and customs, which led to some competitive behaviour between the Scottish settlers and the English. Not only did the Scots start using new agricultural practices and taking care of livestock, but these newcomers also brought new building styles and techniques, which began a process of urbanisation. Moreover, the language of Scots, along with their culture, had a major impact on religion and politics, such as changes in political-historical allegiances as well as in the system of

surnames. Thus, Ulster developed a combination of people and traditions that were radically different from the rest of Ireland.

Not only did the population of Scots in Ulster increase, but many Presbyterian congregations also arose in the area of Scottish settlement as shown in Figure 2 (Robinson 2007, 12-13). In the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, Presbyterianism continued to spread, especially around the four main areas dominated by Scottish settlers. These four presbyteries were Antrim, Down, the Route, and the Laggan. As a consequence of the spread of Presbyterianism, Ulster-Scots is spoken today mainly by Protestants (Robinson 2007, 13-17).



*Figure 2: The spread of Presbyterianism in Ulster in 17th century*

#### **2.1.4 Language**

Ulster-Scots is a West Germanic language with a close relation to the traditional language called Scots (Robinson 2007, 3).

The area of Ulster is considered to be the only area outside Scotland where Scots is still in existence as a spoken language. It is neither Standard English, nor common slang, and it is different from English spoken with a Scottish accent. It is the language of the Scottish Lowlands and the Northern Isles (Collins 2003, v). According to J. Harris in his book *Phonological Variation and Change: Studies in Hiberno-English* (1985), some definitions state that Ulster-Scots is Standard English spoken with an Ulster-Scots accent (14). Other people see it basically as a dialect of Scots. It is difficult to answer the question of whether Ulster-Scots is a language or a dialect because linguists do not agree on the definitions of the terms and consider the distinction to be artificial. However, they strongly agree that it is the speakers themselves who should have the right to assess and choose whether their speech is a language or a dialect (Ullans 2001, 17).

James Fenton, an Honorary Vice-President of the Ulster-Scots Language Society, now retired school principal with interests in poetry, the novel and conservation dedicated to promoting the language and spreading information about Ulster-Scots, uses the term “the Hamely Tongue”. By using this term as a title of his book *The Hamely Tongue: A Personal Record of Ulster-Scots in County Antrim* (2006) he prevents getting involved in the debate over whether it is a separate language or just a dialect of Scottish. When translated to Standard English, it means something like “homely tongue” or the speech of the common country people.

One may come across many synonyms for “Ulster-Scots like” as a name for this accent. The term Ulster-Scots is used most often when people wish to indicate that it is a separate language, whereas Ulster Scots implies that it is a variant of Scots. Some people even stated they use both depending on what mood they are in. “Ulster-Scotch” is the term used in cases when people are actually speaking in

Ulster-Scots. Furthermore, it has its own synonym, “Ullans”, which is just another way of saying Ulster-Scotch. In Scotland the Scots speakers call the Ulster-Scots language “Lallans”, which translates to “lowlands” and confirms the origin of the tongue. Native speakers also call Ulster-Scots just “Scotch” or “oor wie o taakin”, the last simply means “our way of talking” or “our form of speech” (Robinson 2007, 3).

Philip Robinson, a writer on topics relating to Ulster, states in his book *Ulster-Scots Grammar: A Grammar of the Traditional Written & Spoken Language* (2007) that the language Ulster-Scots is “considered to have originated from the 17<sup>th</sup> century dialects of south-west Scotland and the north-west midlands of England respectively” (22). Robinson also states that in the 17<sup>th</sup> century there was an enormous movement of Scots who brought their language of Ulster-Scots, spoken as we know it today, to Ulster. Throughout this century, written forms of Scots began to erode at the expense of English and were soon completely discarded as Scots speakers were taught to write only in English. All that remained in use were spoken forms of Scots until the revival of its literature in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

After that period of revival, the number of written texts increased, but they were and still are mostly from vernacular poets and creative writers. These people try to write in the Ulster-Scots language, with no knowledge of its grammar and syntax. They are basically trying to re-invent a Scots spelling system by mixing English spelling and sound rules with words from the Ulster-Scots language without using its grammatical or syntactic features. Simply said, writers combine their knowledge of the Ulster-Scots vocabulary with rules of grammar and sentence constructions that they knew from English.

Ivan Herbison et al. in his *Spelling and Pronunciation Guide* from 2012 states that “whatever new spelling conventions had been evolving in the 1700s and early 1800s, they are still unfamiliar to modern writers because of the continued exclusion of Ulster-Scots from schools” (7). Therefore, those who are now interested in the grammar of the Ulster-Scots language cannot study it based on written texts alone. Knowledge of the spoken tongue is also necessary (Robinson 2007, 8-9).

Even though there is a significant relationship between Ulster-Scots and English vocabulary and grammar, the rules of structuring words and sentences still differ from one another. Generally speaking, that is the reason why we can talk about Ulster-Scots as a language, not just a dialect.

Although some spelling rules have become more used than others, there is no standard of spelling in the modern Ulster-Scots language. This is mainly because of the lack of written texts from past. According to the editors of a recent anthology of Ulster-Scots writings from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present (*A Blad o Ulstèr-Scotch*, Ullans Press, 2003) standard spellings never existed in earlier times. Therefore, even the most common words can be found spelt in a multitude of alternatives, eg. the noun “father” is spelt “fether” as well as “faither”, “everybody” can be found spelt once as “iveryboady” but also as “iverybuddy”, and the verb “continue” can be written as “conteenye” or “continye” (Fenton 2006, 244-246). Moreover, according to the *Blad o Ulstèr-Scotch* anthology, even one of the most used prepositions “with” has a multitude of alternative spellings. The used forms generally are “wae”, “we”, “wi”, “wi” and even “with” (Robinson 2007, 39).

Today, Ulster-Scots is a living tongue spoken by around 100,000 people, although only a minority use it all the time regardless of social context (Robinson 2007, 4). When native speakers of Ulster-Scots try to write, they often adopt

phonetic spellings based on English vowel sounds. With this in mind, there have been attempts to increase an interest in traditional literature and creative writing, including an annual journal called *Ullans*, a magazine for the Ulster-Scots community that publishes almost entirely Ulster-Scots creative writing.

The Ulster-Scots Agency, a governmental organisation, along with the Ulster-Scots Language Society and the Ulster-Scots Academy, both community-based organisations, are trying to re-establish the status of Ulster-Scots as a European regional language and to unify its spelling and grammatical rules. Furthermore, the Ulster-Scots Academy is in the process of achieving agreed-upon standards through the Spelling Standards Committee. Nowadays, there are also attempts to make an Ulster-Scots Bible translation, as well as efforts to create a comprehensive, historical two-way English/Ulster-Scots and Ulster-Scots/English dictionary. Facilitating the teaching of Ulster-Scots as a modern language in schools with examination standards is considered equally important (Robinson 2007, 6).

## **2.2 Phonetic description of accents**

Crystal's (1985) book *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* (cited in Vágner 2010) says that "accents are cumulative auditory effect[s] if those features of a person's pronunciation which identify where he is from, regionally or socially" (2). As this thesis is built on the Ulster-Scots accent which pertains to Scottish English, it is important to define it in terms of its phonetic differences to the RP accent.

### **2.2.1 Consonants**

One of the most noticeable distinctions between Scots and Standard English is the typical Scottish velar plosive [x], represented in the words such as *loch*, meaning "lake" or *nicht*, which translates as "night", by the digraph <ch> (Crystal 1985, 125).

Scottish accents are rhotic, that means the final /r/ and /r/ before a consonant are pronounced, whereas RP is a non-rhotic accent – that means /r/ only occurs before vowels (Roach 1998, 60-61). Therefore, in Scottish accents the words such as *car* and *hard* are pronounced as /kɑ:r/ and /hɑ:rd/ instead of /kɑ:/ and /hɑ:d/ as they are pronounced in RP.

The book *British English pronunciation preferences: a changing scene* (1999) written by J. C. Wells and cited by Vágner (2010) says that unlike in RP the Scottish accents “still retain a difference between word-frontal wh- and w-, in words like whine and wine, where the former is pronounced [ʍaɪn] as opposed to the latter’s [waɪn], with the opposition /ʍ/-/w/ being mostly admired but not practiced in any other accent (in the poll, 82% of Scottish respondents chose /ʍ/ for white)”. Vágner also says that “the same survey also found that about half of the Scottish respondents (57%) devoiced a word-final /ðz/ as a plural form of /θ/, as in e.g. mouth /maʊθ/ – mouths /maʊðz/ > /maʊθs/.”

### 2.2.2 Vowels

For the purpose of this thesis the vocalic difference between Scottish and Standard English accent is the most important. It lies in the length of the vowel, or, better said, in the lack of it in the function of basic pair distinction. According to Vágner (2010), for example the vowels in “good” and “food” are identical as are vowels in “Sam” and “psalm”, and “cot” and “caught”. He also states that “the diphthongs /eɪ/ and /əʊ/ have merged into simple vowels /e/ and /o/, respectively.”

In Ulster-Scots speech there are vowel sounds for which there is no appropriate vowel letter (Robinson 2007, 47). James Fenton (2006) spells such vowels with an umlaut accent; in his book *The Hamely Tongue* there are words spelt as rīng or pūsh.

## **3 PRACTICAL SECTION**

### **3.1 RESEARCH**

There is almost no accent education in the English education curriculum in Czech schools. My particular interest is mainly in the accents of Scotland and the Republic of Ireland. For this reason, I chose to focus my efforts on a specific accent called Ulster-Scots, spoken in the area of Ulster.

#### **3.1.1 The aim of the analysis**

The aim of this research is to show whether Czech students of a certain level of English (at least a B2 level, according to Common European Framework of Reference, further CEFR) are able to identify English words pronounced in a different accent than in Received Pronunciation (RP). RP seems to be the main British accent students come into contact with during their studies of English at schools of any type. The research should also show whether a given context helps respondents to understand more than if they hear separate words.

Last but not least, one of the objectives of this survey is to explore the attitude towards the Ulster-Scots accent among the respondents, and to determine if they would be interested in learning more about the different accents of the English language during their studies at university.

#### **3.1.2 Assumptions of the research**

The experiment is expected to show the differences between students' identification of certain words pronounced individually or in a context, specifically in whole sentences. The words and sentences are pronounced in the Ulster-Scots accent. In view of the fact that, at the present time, Czech students are not often faced with different accents when studying English at university, it is reasonable to



suppose that they will not be as successful at understanding individual words as they would be when hearing them in a whole sentence. This assumption applies only to students who have not lived in an English speaking area for more than a month, or for those who are not in a regular contact with native English speakers. These conditions are believed to positively affect foreign language comprehension. Positively in this context means, that people improve their active as well as passive knowledge of the language and therefore they not only speak and write better, but also read, listen, and understand the spoken language at an above-average level. Nevertheless, the question remains whether Czech university students of English are actually interested in learning about different accents.

### **3.1.3 Methods of data collection**

For the purpose of data collection for the survey, recorded words and sentences were said in the Ulster-Scots accent by a native speaker. Subsequently, a questionnaire including a listening section was presented to Czech learners of English. More detailed description of the process of creation of the research can be found in section 3.1.6.

#### **3.1.3.1 Questionnaire**

One of the main parts of the research was a questionnaire called “Questionnaire for a bachelor thesis on the topic An Analysis of the Phonology of the Ulster-Scots accent”<sup>1</sup> which was meant to be handed out. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The questions were formulated to obtain basic data about the respondents and their probable level of English comprehension. Furthermore and most importantly, it

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<sup>1</sup> Original: „Dotazník k bakalářské práci na téma An Analysis of the Phonology of the Ulster-Scots accent”. Translated by the author of the bachelor thesis.

was possible to get clear answers to questions about respondents' attitudes and opinions towards the Ulster-Scots accent and accents in general. The questionnaire was written in the Czech language in order to be easier for Czech respondents to understand the questions and express themselves regardless of their level of English.

The first part of the questionnaire consisted of the identification of nineteen words pronounced in the Ulster-Scots accent, for that reason it is called "Identification of words pronounced in the Ulster-Scots accent". Noticeably, a very important element for this part is a voice recording file that is described in the following section 3.1.3.2 Recording. In the first part of the questionnaire, the main and only requirement is to determine which word the respondents hear on the recording. There is a chart of nineteen lines for them to write their answers into, divided into two columns called "individually" and "in a sentence". Obviously, the respondents first heard one word at a time, on its own, and they had to immediately write down what they heard or thought they heard. Immediately following, a whole sentence with the word in it was played to them and again they were instructed to write the word they heard or what they thought it might be.

The second part of the questionnaire deals with the respondents' attitude to the Ulster-Scots accent and to the teaching of accents during university studies. There are four statements: 1) The Ulster-Scots accent sounds good to me.; 2) I think I understand the speech in the Ulster-Scots accent.; 3) I think the teaching of accents should be a part of studies at university when learning English.; 4) Personally I would appreciate the repeated inclusion of audio recordings of accents in teaching the English language at university.

The respondents were instructed to mark one of five options to indicate their level of agreement with the statements. The five options to answer are, from left to right: I agree; I partly agree; I am not sure; I partly disagree; I disagree.

The last, third part is called “Information about the respondent”. There are eight main questions with a few sub-questions that all collect important information about the participants. These questions were intended to help determine their ability to identify words pronounced in an accent of English other than the RP. The questions are in the following order: respondents’ age, educational background, fields of study at university, year of study, and length of time spent learning English. There are also two yes-no questions with their sub-questions. The first inquiry asks whether the respondent has ever stayed abroad for more than a month, and if yes, where and for how long. The second asks whether the respondent has regular contact with native speakers of English, and if yes, what relation to the respondent the natives are, where they are from, and how often they speak together. The last question of the third part is about any possible (listening) encounters with the Ulster-Scots accent in the respondents’ lives.

### **3.1.3.2 Recording**

As stated above, the voice recording file was necessary to complete the first part of the questionnaire. There are nineteen words along with nineteen sentences recorded for the purpose of the research, all pronounced in the Ulster-Scots accent by a native speaker. The words are: *son, yet, bread, let, ring, switch, live, what, lost, book, push, cat, minister, father, seat, more, who, do, and heard*, in that particular order. The words were chosen on the basis of seven basic short vowel sounds according to the RP short vowel sound list, and are represented by thirteen words.

Furthermore, there are six additional words chosen on the basis of five long vowel sounds in RP. The words containing short vowel sounds are first, followed by those containing long vowel sounds.

Subsequently, a list of basic sentences containing each of the chosen words was created. One of the most important features of the Ulster-Scots accent had to be kept in mind. The pronunciation of some vowel sounds differs from RP; therefore, multiple words representing one English vowel sound were selected. One example of this occurrence is the RP short vowel sound /e/, which is represented by three words: *yet*, *bread*, and *let*.

Between all the words and sentences there are pauses left for respondents to clearly tell the words and sentences apart. Moreover, between every example sentence and the following new word, there is a special bell sound, so that students are aware that the speaker from the recording is about to say the next word. The words and sentences are in the order shown in Chart 1.

*Chart 1: Words and sentences in English and Ulster-Scots*

	<b>RP vowel sound</b>	<b>Word in English</b>	<b>Pronunciation in RP</b>	<b>Word in Ulster-Scots</b>	<b>Sentence</b>
1	/ʌ/	son	/sʌn/	sin	This boy is my son.
2	/e/	yet	/jet/	yit	I haven't seen the film yet.
3		bread	/bred/	breid	I need to buy a loaf of bread.
4		let	/let/	lut	Let me help you.
5	/ɪ/	ring	/rɪŋ/	rīng	I lost my wedding ring.
6		switch	/swɪtʃ/	swutch	Switch off the light, please.
7		live	/lɪv/	leeve	I live in Ulster.

8	/ɒ/	what	/wɒt/	whut	What is your name?
9		lost	/lɒst/	loast	He didn't know the place and got lost.
10	/ʊ/	book	/bʊk/	buik	I would like to borrow this book, please.
11		push	/pʊʃ/	püsh	You must push the button.
12	/æ/	cat	/kæt/	ket	My cat is black.
13	/ə/	minister	/mɪnɪstə/	mannystèr	The Prime Minister is in charge of the whole government.
14	/ɑ:/	father	/fɑ:ðə/	faither	My father is 60 years old.
15	/i:/	seat	/si:t/	sait	Have a seat please.
16	/ɔ:/	more	/mɔ:/	mair	I have to eat more vegetables.
17	/u:/	who	/hu:/	wha	Who is that woman?
18		do	/du:/	dae	Do you like it?
19	/ɜ:/	heard	/hɜ:d/	heerd	I have never heard this.

### 3.1.4 Method of evaluation of the questionnaires

The questionnaires were evaluated by hand by going through them all, one at a time, and writing down all the written answers and make a mark for each same answer. Subsequently it was needed to count the marks, evaluate the obtained answers and comment on them as well as create charts.

### 3.1.5 Participants

There were thirty-four total respondents and they can be divided into two groups.

First was a group of nineteen respondents, students of English in education as one of their field of study from the faculty of education at the Technical University

of Liberec (further only as TUL). The majority of respondents stated they were in their third year studies, although there were also those studying in their second year. Surprisingly, no first-year students participated in the survey. On the contrary, there were a few students in their fourth year of extended studies.

The second group consisted of fifteen “random” participants. These included students from other disciplines, as well as graduate students, both from TUL. There was one requirement for respondents belonging to this group: the participants must have been learning English for at least six years.

To conclude, all of the thirty-four participants were over twenty-one years of age and they were either students at TUL, or previously graduated from the same university. They all had learnt English for at least six years and, consequently, the majority had either already been abroad, or had had a regular contact with a native speaker of English. These guidelines were to ensure that they had a certain level of English and could understand its different accents.

### **3.1.6 Process of creation and implementation of the survey**

#### **3.1.6.1 Creation of a list of words and sentences**

First of all, it was imperative to come up with a list of words that would differ from RP only accentually, and not in meaning. This was expected to be a simple task, but after looking into one of the sources, *Spelling and Pronunciation Guide* (Herbison et al. 2012), the choice became more complicated. The book is divided into six main parts. Four parts deal with pronunciation and two with spelling. Two of the pronunciation sections provide information about how distinct vowel sounds are now represented in Ulster-Scots, while the other two give the same account for consonants (Herbison et al. 2012, 9). With so much factual data including many

exceptions, my supervisor suggested doing research on particular sounds rather than just on general ones. As a result, I chose to concentrate on vowel sounds only.

People interested in phonetics and phonology of English know there are twelve pure vowel sounds in RP, also called monophthongs. They are often used in books describing the English language, such as Roach's *Phonetics and Phonology* (2009). The monophthongs are divided into seven short and five long vowel sounds, as shown in Charts 2 and 3.

*Chart 2: Short vowel sounds of Received Pronunciation*

	<b>RP short vowel sound</b>	<b>Word in English</b>	<b>Pronunciation in RP</b>
1	/ʌ/	son	/sʌn/
2	/e/	yet	/jet/
3	/ɪ/	ring	/rɪŋ/
4	/ɒ/	what	/wɒt/
5	/ʊ/	book	/bʊk/
6	/æ/	cat	/kæt/
7	/ə/	minister	/mɪnɪstə/

*Chart 3: Long vowel sounds of Received Pronunciation*

	<b>RP long vowel sound</b>	<b>Word in English</b>	<b>Pronunciation in RP</b>
1	/ɑ:/	father	/fɑ:ðə/
2	/i:/	seat	/si:t/
3	/ɔ:/	more	/mɔ:/
4	/u:/	who	/hu:/
5	/ɜ:/	heard	/hɜ:d/

Firstly, I wanted to choose the words on the basis of their vowel sound in Ulster-Scots. However, I found that Scottish and Irish English have their own lexical sets which are quite different from RP (Hickey 2007, 326-327). With this in mind, I

came to the conclusion that it would take a lot of time to learn to phonetically transcribe words into the Ulster-Scots pronunciation. Furthermore, I did not know the pronunciation of all the Ulster-Scots words; neither could I find any website where it was possible to listen to them all. Therefore, it was necessary to choose words that contained the vowel sounds known from RP. The words were chosen from those in the list in the Spelling guide (Herbison et al. 2012, 18-28).

It became apparent there is not really a rule of a certain spelling pattern that the Ulster-Scots would follow in pronunciation. In order to demonstrate this aspect of the language, five examples of words containing the same vowel sound in RP were chosen. For example, the words *yet*, *bread* and *let* all share the RP short vowel sound /e/. In Ulster-Scots, however, these all are pronounced differently, and incidentally their spelling is different too. They are written as <yit>, <breid>, <lut>.

Having made the list of words, the second step was to think of short, basic sentences that would give context to the prepared words. The sentences were created based on the possibility of their occurrence in real life. The desire was to create sentences which respondents would have heard and known, and therefore should be easily understood when heard in RP.

### **3.1.6.2 Creation of a recording**

For the purpose of doing a practical analysis on the topic of a different English accent than RP, it was necessary to find a native speaker with such an accent. For that reason, my supervisor provided a contact for someone living in the area of Ulster who therefore might have known native speakers of the Ulster-Scots language. This person, luckily, had a colleague whose husband was an Ulster-Scots native speaker. Thanks to this coincidence, Willie Drennan joined the project, a traditional Ulster-



Scots musician, storyteller, poet and writer, and, most importantly, a native of County Antrim with Scottish origins, who seemed to have a strong passion for Ulster-Scots. Furthermore, of course, he also speaks the required language. Mr Drennan was contacted immediately via e-mail and asked to record the words and sentences (Chart 1 in the chapter 3.1.3.2) in the Ulster-Scots accent. He was happy to do so, although he did not have a recording device. Due to this limitation, we agreed upon a call via Skype with the purpose of recording the Skype call.

The choice of the words and sentences was discussed with Mr Drennan to check their pronunciation as well as correctness because, as has been previously stated, Ulster-Scots is not just an accent, but also a dialect, which sometimes differs from RP in its vocabulary and word order. For the purpose of the research though, I needed words and sentences that only differed accentually. As a consequence of the discussion, I changed some sentences slightly. For example, instead of saying, “I haven’t seen the movie yet.” it is more natural for an Ulster-Scots speaker to say, “I haven’t seen the film yet.” Also, I found out in Ulster-Scots it is not natural to say “must”; therefore, this word was replaced in a sentence “I have to eat more vegetables.”

After the call, the resulting output was one long recording. It was essential to cut it into smaller files containing the individual words and sentences. For this purpose, a programme called Audacity was used, free software for recording and editing sounds found on the Internet.

It took two days to cut the individual elements perfectly and sometimes even delete the acoustic noise in the background. Unfortunately, it was not possible to remove the entire rustle from the background of the pronounced words and sentences. When the rustle was deleted and the volume was increased, the listening

quality was inferior to the original recording that included background noise. Under these circumstances I decided to remove the rustle just from the sections between the words and sentences. Later, Mr Drennan and I made another call via Skype and re-recorded five words and two sentences that were not possible to hear due to the rustle in the background.

When artificially recreating the order of recordings, the initial file contained just the words said in the Ulster-Scots accent with pauses between them. The subsequent plan was to make a second file containing only the sentences in Ulster-Scots. It was originally meant to be played first as a set of words, followed by the sentences. Upon examining the recording further, the structure and order was updated to improve its function. The Ulster-Scots sentences were added into the file, each sentence following a corresponding word. For example, the word “yet” is followed by the sentence “I haven’t seen the film yet.” This change was absolutely necessary to make it easier for respondents to know which word to concentrate on when listening to the sentences. One additional improvement was added in front of all the words, and that was a special bell sound indicating an upcoming new word to listeners. Based on feedback from respondents, any additional future recordings should include a number to assist the listener in completing the questionnaire accurately.

In the end, only one recording of four minutes was created. The words and corresponding sentences are there in the same order as shown in Chart 1, section 3.1.3.2 Recording.

### **3.1.6.3 Creation of the questionnaire**

Prior to creating the questionnaire, it first was important to consider the structure of the questionnaire and particularly whether it was going to be created as an online survey or just as a document-to-print. There were two big features talking in favour of an online survey. There were two big features talking in favour of an online survey. It was believed to be a better choice in order to get more respondents, since it could be spread much more easily. People tend to think that completing an online questionnaire is a quick job, and at the same time they do it with more interest. The second big advantage of an online survey is how it deals with its results. All of the respondents' answers are evaluated in the end automatically by online software and then quickly presented in a multitude of graphical representations. The inquirer might then download the results in a text document file, or the graphs can even be downloaded.

When creating a paper questionnaire, the inquirer must make sure they think about the way to analyse it beforehand and even in the process of creating the questionnaire. They should create easy-to-respond questions as well as reduce the possibility of getting a high number of different answers, so that it is easier to evaluate it by hand. It might be done for example by asking yes-no questions or providing predefined answers such as "I agree" or "I disagree".

I went for the paper form of questionnaires and without a doubt, I made the right choice. There are two reasons why I preferred the paper form to the online survey. One reason was that I had spent hours searching for an online survey programme that would meet my requirements – to no success. Usually there was a problem that it was not possible to upload a voice recording there, nor was possible to create a question with two open answers at the time as needed for the Part 1:

Identification of words pronounced in the Ulster-Scots accent of the questionnaire. The second reason was that I had already created the first version of the questionnaire as a document in Microsoft Office Word with the aid of Microsoft Office Excel for creating charts, so I merely had to simplify and streamline the questions.

In the end there are three main parts in the questionnaire. The first part is called Identification of words pronounced in the Ulster-Scots accent<sup>2</sup> and consists of a chart with nineteen questions/lines with two columns for each, referring to nineteen words plus nineteen corresponding sentences. To fill in this part, respondents needed to listen to the recording. Part 2 is called Attitude to the Ulster-Scots accent and to teaching of accents during studying English at university<sup>3</sup>, and there is a chart with four questions dealing with the respondents' attitudes to the Ulster-Scots accent and the teaching of accents at university. The questions and predefined answers are written in the section 3.1.3.1 Questionnaire. Last but not least, in the third part of the questionnaire, called Information about the respondent<sup>4</sup>, there are eight questions asking their basic information. Four of them are open-ended questions, the fifth question has four predefined answers, and the remaining three are yes-no questions with two or three sub-questions. Again, the concrete questions and their forms are described in the section 3.1.3.1 Questionnaire.

These three parts of the questionnaire were at first in a different order, the first listening part was last. The order was changed for the purpose of catching

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<sup>2</sup> Original: „Rozpoznávání slov vyslovených Ulster-Scots akcentem”. Translated by the author of the bachelor's thesis.

<sup>3</sup> Original: „Postoj k Ulster-Scots akcentu a obecně k výuce akentů během studia AJ na univerzitě”. Translated by the author of the bachelor's thesis.

<sup>4</sup> Original: „Informace o respondentovi”. Translated by the author of the bachelor's thesis.

respondents' attention. I thought it was better first to play the recording to present them something extra, something new, then as a "by the way" ask them to complete the ordinary questions.

The questionnaire was meant to be presented to students printed and handed to the respondents, in the end this plan changed and additionally the form of the questionnaire had to be changed from Microsoft Office Word document containing charts created in Microsoft Office Excel software just to a Microsoft Office Word text document to simplify the use of the document for writing into it because in the end the participants were meant to do so.

#### **3.1.6.4 Carrying out the research**

When having done the voice recording file as well as the questionnaire, I needed to think about how to obtain as high number of completed questionnaires as possible. I agreed with one teacher from the English department of the faculty of education at the Technical University of Liberec to come to three of her Phonetics and Phonology classes, as a result I would obtain around eighty questionnaires. In the end I could not come to these classes because of their cancellation.

Having read the e-mail about cancellation of the classes, I had to think quickly about an alternative plan. I asked another teacher from the English department, teaching the subject "Practical language 5" to students of the third year the same day, to come to his class to present my survey there. I had to explain there what the participants should do, how they should fill in especially the first part, over letting them listen to the recording twice and giving them some extra time to complete all the questions. Unfortunately, the acoustics of the room was not perfect. Having a look afterwards at their answers I concluded this way was not a good methodology of

this survey. Most of the charts of Part 1 stayed blank. I discussed this problem yet the same day with my supervisor of the thesis and a few friends of mine to think of another way of how to get the questionnaires filled in but with appropriate results, having it played to a friend of mine before I knew the Ulster-Scots accent was understandable to a listener who had never heard the accent before.

Under those circumstances, I decided to ask my peers via one social network to participate in my survey. “Peers” means, in this case, other people being in a group of students of English in education at TUL on the social network, there are current students, as well as those previously graduated. I also asked students of other fields of study at TUL to participate, the only requirement I had was to make sure the participants would have a certain level of English, thus they should either have been learning English for at least six years already, or should have lived abroad in an English speaking environment for some time. Regular contact with an English speaking person was only an advantage. I uploaded the questionnaire along with the recording to a web page [files.uloziste.com](http://files.uloziste.com), that is for free sharing of files and from where it is possible to download files, and provided them the links to the files together with all needed information. To make it easier for them, I also uploaded the recording to an online player [Vocaroo.com](http://Vocaroo.com) and edited the questionnaire to just a Microsoft Word document, as already mentioned.

This way thirty-four questionnaires were sent back to me, nineteen from my peers – students of English in education at the faculty of education at TUL, and fifteen were from non-students of English as their main interest – students of other field of study, or already graduated.

### **3.1.6.5 Evaluating the data**

I decided to evaluate all the questionnaires personally and by hand, one by one. Evaluating the first part of the questionnaire took the most time as there were thirty-eight open answers and every student's comprehension of the accent was different. For this reason, I had to write down all of the answers – the words that the respondents had heard – and mark them each time they agreed. Doing that I could soon see that some words were easier and some were more difficult for the respondents to understand. For example, the last word “heard” was understood well in context by nearly all the participants of the survey, only two of them wrote an incorrect answer. On the contrary, they wrote fifteen different words as answers when heard the word individually.

### **3.1.7 Analysis of results**

The total number of respondents is thirty-four; therefore, thirty-four questionnaires were analysed. They were meant to be anonymous first; however, as people had to send them back to me online, I decided to save them under the names of the respondents. This was done with their permission. This way I could find out whose questionnaire was whose if needed. When evaluating it, I could therefore see some interesting results. For example, one friend of mine whose English is at B2 level and is not a student of English at University understood all the words from Part 1 with the exception of one. That might be because he stated that he had lived abroad for a year and is in contact with English speaking people quite often. On the other hand, another friend of mine who is a student of English at TUL and his level is somewhere between C1 and C2 understood less than a half of the words. Context didn't help him either. In addition, in Part 3 of his questionnaire I saw that he had

never been abroad for a longer period than one month and has very rare contact with native English speakers.

### **3.1.7.1 Part 1**

In Part 1, all nineteen open sub-questions concentrate on the respondents' perception and comprehension of the Ulster-Scots accent. The respondents were to write down the words that they heard. Among the respondents there were always those that sometimes did not write a word at all because they did not understand, or they just guessed and therefore wrote down an incorrect word. In each of the 19 cases, there were always different guesses written for every word; however, the number of incorrect words decreased when listening to the word in a sentence.

What is interesting, the context helped respondents to understand better in all cases except one, word number seventeen, "who", which was understood just once when heard separately and once when heard in context, both by different participants. Consequently, this was also the only case when someone understood a separate word correctly and then did not know what was said in a sentence. More information about this word and its comprehension can be found in section 3.1.7.1.2 Word 17.

Each word is represented here by a chart with a general heading, since all the charts tell the number of correct answers according to whether the words were heard individually or in a sentence. The charts are composed on the basis of the assessment of data.

#### *3.1.7.1.1 Word 1 to 16, 18 and 19*

In eighteen cases out of nineteen the number of correct answers when respondents listened to the word in a sentence was greater than when they heard it



individually. The following charts show words that were understood more often when in context than individually.

*Chart 4: The first word "son"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
son	4	5

*Chart 5: The second word "yet"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
yet	11	16

*Chart 6: The third word "bread"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
bread	6	10

*Chart 7: The fourth word "let"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
let	3	19

*Chart 8: The fifth word "ring"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
ring	1	2

*Chart 9: The sixth word "switch"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
switch	5	15

*Chart 10: The seventh word "live"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
live	6	22

*Chart 11: The eighth word "what"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
what	5	9

*Chart 12: The ninth word "lost"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
lost	7	13

*Chart 13: The tenth word "book"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
book	4	6

*Chart 14: The eleventh word "push"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
push	17	29

*Chart 15: The twelfth word "cat"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
cat	12	21

*Chart 16: The thirteenth word "minister"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
minister	10	21

*Chart 17: The fourteenth word "father"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
father	6	19

*Chart 18: The fifteenth word "seat"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
seat	6	8

*Chart 19: The sixteenth word "more"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
more	0	2

*Chart 20: The eighteenth word "do"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
do	1	4

*Chart 21: The nineteenth word "heard"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
heard	14	32

### 3.1.7.1.2 *Word 17*

The seventeenth word was “who”. The number of correct answers when respondents listened to the word individually or in a sentence was equal. However, there were two respondents who understood it correctly, one separately, one in a sentence. This was the only case out of all nineteen words when someone heard a word correctly individually, but did not understand it in a sentence (the respondent actually left the space blank). Therefore, I asked the participant about her comprehension of the word. She told me she had understood the same word in both cases but considered it impossible, thinking she could not have understood it well (the rest of her answers in Part 1 differed one from another). The corresponding sentence was interrogative, “Who is that woman?”, which is seemingly an easy question to understand in RP, although it is not in the Ulster-Scots accent. In the Ulster-Scots accent the word “who” sounds more like the word “why” without the phoneme /ɪ/ in the end (the diphthong /aɪ/ becomes a long vowel sound /ɑ:/).

*Chart 22: The seventeenth word "who"*

WORD	UNDERSTOOD INDIVIDUALLY	UNDERSTOOD IN A SENTENCE
who	1	1

### 3.1.7.2 **Part 2**

In Part 2 the respondents’ attitude towards the Ulster-Scots accent and towards accents in general is shown. The respondents were supposed to mark one of five provided answers according to their attitude towards the statements 1 - 4.

### 3.1.7.2.1 *Statement 1*

The first statement (S1) of Part 2 was “The Ulster-Scots accent sounds good to me.” No participant marked an absolutely positive attitude toward the sound of the Ulster-Scots; on the contrary, the majority stated that they did not like the sound of the Ulster-Scots accent.

*Chart 23: Statement 1*

	I agree	I partly agree	I am not sure	I partly disagree	I disagree
S1	0	9	3	10	12

### 3.1.7.2.2 *Statement 2*

The second statement (S2) was “I think I understand the speech in the Ulster-Scots accent.” One respondent was confident enough to agree with it; however, I could see that he did not understand a lot of the words well. The rest of participants were rather unsure or negative about this statement.

*Chart 24: Statement 2*

	I agree	I partly agree	I am not sure	I partly disagree	I disagree
S2	1	0	6	14	13

### 3.1.7.2.3 *Statement 3*

The third statement (S3) was “I think the teaching of accents should be a part of studies at university when learning English.” Here the respondents were mostly positive. Those who did not agree were mostly non-students of English as their main field of study at university.

*Chart 25: Statement 3*

	I agree	I partly agree	I am not sure	I partly disagree	I disagree
S3	6	15	5	4	4

#### 3.1.7.2.4 *Statement 4*

The fourth statement (S4) was “Personally I would appreciate the repeated inclusion of audio recordings of accents in teaching the English language at university.” All students of English as their field of study at university, as well as the majority of the “non-students” noted their positive attitude to S4 and agreed or partly agreed. This proves that learners of the English language are interested in learning more about English accents.

*Chart 26: Statement 4*

	I agree	I partly agree	I am not sure	I partly disagree	I disagree
S4	12	16	3	2	1

#### **3.1.7.3 Part 3**

Part 3 is about respondents’ personal data; this section consists of eight informational questions. According to my evaluation of the questionnaires, it is possible to say that the students of English at TUL understood the Ulster-Scots accent better. What seemed interesting is that although there were fewer respondents who were not students of English at university, they had been abroad more times than students of English; in addition, they declared higher frequency of contact with native speakers of English.

##### 3.1.7.3.1 *Question 1*

The division of age is demonstrated in the first question, where respondents were to write their exact age. The lowest age of the respondents was twenty-one, whilst the highest was forty-three. The respondents’ average age was twenty.

*Chart 27: Graphic representation of respondents by age*

AGE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
0-20	0
21 - 22	6
23 - 24	14
25 - 26	6
27 - 28	4
29 and more	4

### 3.1.7.3.2 *Question 2*

Educational background is represented in the second question. It turned out that all the respondents had gone through secondary school and passed a leaving exam, “maturita” in Czech. The majority of respondents studied at a grammar school, there was also a high number of respondents who studied at a secondary school specializing in a particular field of study, for example management, technology, or agriculture. Five respondents had already graduated from bachelor studies, and one respondent was an engineer.

The hypothesis was that their educational background would predict how well they understood the words, but in the end there was found probably no connection between their education and how much they understood. More relevant were especially questions 5, 6 and 7.

*Chart 28: Graphic representation of respondents by education*

SECONDARY SCHOOL	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
grammar school	16
secondary specialized school	12
graduated as bachelors	5
graduated as engineers	1

### 3.1.7.3.3 *Question 3*

The current field or fields of study at university were explored in this section. Some of the respondents did not answer this question; although, these were just from the second group of respondents. Therefore, it is likely that those who did not answer have already graduated from university and thus do not study any more. The questionnaires clearly show that the respondents studying English in education as one of their fields of study have better comprehension of the accent than the others.

*Chart 29: Graphic representation of respondents by fields of study*

FIELD(S) OF STUDY	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
English in education + other field	19
other fields besides English	10
not stated	5

### 3.1.7.3.4 *Question 4*

The current year of study at university is presented in the fourth question. There was just one respondent from the first year; however, she was not a student of English. On the contrary, there were a few respondents already in their fourth year of studies, that is, extended studies. Also, some respondents did not answer this question.

The hypothesis was that the current year of study can predict how well they understand the accent. Those studying the third or fourth year were believed to understand better than those from year one or two. In the end, there was no connection between their year of study at university and how much they understood, since their personal experience with the English language, such as contact with English speakers, had a higher value.



*Chart 30: Graphic representation of respondents by year of study*

YEAR OF STUDY AT UNIVERSITY	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
1 <sup>st</sup> year	1
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	7
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	12
4 <sup>th</sup> year	6
not stated	8

#### 3.1.7.3.5 *Question 5*

The fifth question asks about how long the respondents have been learning English. All the students of English as a field of study at TUL started learning the language either at primary or secondary school, but the majority started in between the year one to five of primary school.

The hypothesis was that as most Czech students start learning English at primary school and in the RP accent, their long-term knowledge of this accent was supposed to allow them to note differences between this accents and others – for example the Ulster-Scots accent. They have noticed them, however differently.

Should there be any further research on the topic of accents, an additional question would be presented in the questionnaire – whether the respondents have been in contact with other English accents than just RP or not.

*Chart 31: Graphic representation of respondents by start of learning English*

START OF LEARNING ENGLISH	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
primary school	26
secondary school	5
other (kindergarten or university)	3

### 3.1.7.3.6 *Question 6*

The sixth question is, at first, a yes-no question questioning possible time abroad in an English-speaking environment. For the purpose of the survey, it was not really important to know how long exactly the respondents lived abroad, but they were to specify it further by marking one of 4 possible answers as well as writing down the country. All of those saying “yes” meant they stayed there for at least a month, with the most being six years. The respondents had stayed usually in the United Kingdom or the United States of America.

*Chart 32: Graphic representation of respondents by stay abroad*

STAY ABROAD (longer than 1 month)	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
no	12
yes	22

### 3.1.7.3.7 *Question 7*

Contact with native speakers of English is presented in the seventh question. The respondents who have regular contact with native speakers outnumber those who do not. It was further specified how often they communicate, usually several times a week. The relationship was not relevant for the purpose of the survey, however asked. The respondents stated that the natives are usually teachers of theirs, although they were also friends. Some of the natives are also their colleagues or bosses.

*Chart 33: Graphic representation of respondents by contact with natives*

CONTACT WITH A NATIVE SPEAKER	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
no	11
yes	23

### 3.1.7.3.8 *Question 8*

The encounter with the Ulster-Scots accent is represented in the eighth question. The absolute majority stated they have never been in contact with the Ulster-Scots accent. Nevertheless, eight respondents said they had encountered the accent. My personal opinion as of the evaluator is that most, if not all, of those eight respondents were mistaken and wanted to express their contact with just the “normal” Scottish or Irish accent. Six of those eight were the respondents who did not study English as their field of study at university; therefore, they might not have known there are some other accents related to the Scottish or Irish ones. Furthermore, neither their answers of the Part 1 were so good.

*Chart 34: Graphic representation of respondents by encounter with the Ulster-Scots accent*

ENCOUNTER WITH THE ULSTER-SCOTS ACCENT	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
No	26
Yes	8

## 4 CONCLUSION

This bachelor thesis was designed to examine the perception of the Ulster-Scots accent by Czech people with at least a B2 level of English, who currently are or previously were students of the Technical University of Liberec. It focused on how the current and graduated university students, learners of English understand an accent differing from Received Pronunciation, in this case the Ulster-Scots accent. Furthermore, it attempted to examine students' attitude towards teaching of English accents at universities. In addition, it also investigated whether the participants of the survey had ever come into contact with the Ulster-Scots accent. The theoretical section helps to introduce and understand the topic of Ulster-Scots to readers, as well as increase the awareness of such a language/accent. As already mentioned, the Ulster-Scots language is now in the process of being renewed and brought to higher public notice; there are also tendencies to determine the rules of its spelling, so that people do not write it only according to their knowledge of the rules of standardized English spelling. The theoretical section also summarizes the key differences between the Standard English and the Ulster-Scots accents. The main purpose of the practical section was to discover and analyze people's ability to understand the Ulster-Scots accent, even without being in contact with it previously. Moreover, it was designed to tell whether learners of the English language wanted to educate themselves regarding the field of different accents when studying English at university.

The results of the survey were evaluated by means of a quantitative analysis, by the assessment of each of the questions and statements, and graphically presented in charts. The results confirm the predictions and thus show that people who know English at, at least, B2 level can only little understand separate words pronounced in

the Ulster-Scots accent. Much better results are achieved when they listen to it in a sentence – context proves to cooperate with comprehension. Besides that, it clearly shows people's interest in learning more about different accents in general, it demonstrates that they would like to have that included in their regular teaching when studying English at university. It highlights the fact of underestimating the presentation of different English accents to students of English at university. As for the better language education concern, the results indicate the direction in which English departments of universities should go – surely, subjects concerning the grammar, syntax and other linguistic disciplines and theory are important; however, a high emphasis should be put also onto the practical comprehension and use of the language. These findings can contribute to teaching English in two ways.

First, one contribution of the thesis is to demonstrate that English is in fact more languages in one. Albeit, native speakers of the English language might be considered to be one nation, due to having different history and culture in different English speaking environments there exist a lot of different English accents and dialects that cannot be understood always by an English speaking hearer. In other words, a perfect comprehension of the RP accent does not inevitably mean the comprehension of other accents, such as Ulster-Scots. However, context might help significantly.

The second contribution of the thesis is to prove to teachers of English that the presentation of English accents to students, in other words listening regarding different accents, when teaching the English language is as important as other linguistics disciplines; moreover, there is a high interest among learners of English to educate themselves in this field. Learners of the language are usually aware of differences in listening between the English accent and for example the Scottish one,

the question, though, is whether they are able to understand the “foreign” accent when encountered it, even after a long period of learning English, but without the previous accent education.

Last but not least, the research also suggested ideas for further investigation. The research topics might include: comparison of the findings discussed in the thesis and people’s understanding of the accent when encountered it in person, comparison of Ulster-Scots as a language to the English language as taught in schools or investigation whether previous regular presentation of different accents when learning English really helps people to understand them with less problems.

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# APPENDIX

## Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Dotazník k bakalářské práci na téma An Analysis of the Phonology of Ulster-Scots accent

### 1. část: Rozpoznávání slov vyslovených Ulster-Scots akcentem

1) Jaké slovo slyšíte?

	samostatně	ve větě
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		
16.		
17.		
18.		
19.		

### 2. část: Postoj k Ulster-Scots akcentu a obecně k výuce akcentů během studia AJ na univerzitě

Zaškrtněte 1 z možností dle toho, jak souhlasíte s daným výrokem:

	souhlasím	spíše souhlasím	nemám v tom jasno	spíše nesouhlasím	nesouhlasím
1) Ulster-Scots akcent se mi zvukově líbí					
2) Myslím si, že řeči v Ulster-Scots rozumím.					
3) Myslím si, že by se na VŠ měly během studia AJ vyučovat i akcenty.					
4) Osobně bych ocenil/a opakované zařazení ukázek akcentů do výuky AJ na VŠ.					

1

## 3. část: Informace o respondentovi

- 1) Věk: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Dokončené vzdělání (jaký typ SŠ): \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Obory současného studia: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Ročník současného studia: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Se studiem AJ jste začali během studia:

1. stupně ZŠ	2. stupně ZŠ	SŠ	jiné (specifikujte)

- 6) Pobyt v cizině (min. 1 měsíc): ANO - NE

Pokud ano: a) Kde? \_\_\_\_\_

b) Jak dlouho? Zaškrtněte vhodnou odpověď.

1 – 3 měsíce	4 – 6 měsíců	7 – 12 měsíců	více než 12 měsíců (specifikujte)

- 7) Hovoříte s rodilým mluvčím anglického jazyka ve Vašem běžném životě? ANO - NE

Pokud ano: a) V jakém je k Vám vztahu (např. rodič, partner, kamarád, učitel, atd.)? \_\_\_\_\_

b) Odkud pochází? \_\_\_\_\_

c) Jak často spolu hovoříte? Zaškrtněte vhodnou odpověď.

denně	Několikrát týdně	1x za týden	Minimálně 1x za měsíc	Méně než 1x za měsíc (specifikujte)

- 8) Setkali jste se někdy v hovoru s Ulster-Scots akcentem? ANO - NE

Pokud ano: a) Kdy? \_\_\_\_\_

b) Jak často? \_\_\_\_\_