

Abstract

The current diploma thesis examines Czech listeners' perception of various accents of English from the points of view of comprehensibility, pleasantness, socioeconomic status, and model suitability. The main aim of the study is to contribute to the discussion on how accent variation within the Anglophone world is perceived by non-native speakers, and what aspects influence their evaluations of the accents. The theoretical part of the thesis defines several terms related to the domain, describes selected pronunciation varieties of English, and summarizes research which has focused on native accents of English in the perception of non-native speakers. The research part of the thesis consists of a study, in which 39 Czech students from two types of schools evaluated six accents of English and provided information about their experience with English and Anglophone cultures. The results showed that standard varieties are favoured by the students in all four respects, but also that students' evaluations, especially for pleasantness, may be affected by their relations to the Anglophone world.

Key words: Native Accent, Regional Variation, L2 learner, Comprehensibility, Socioeconomic Status, Pronunciation Model, Standard