

Abstract

The subject of the thesis is acoustic analysis of the open front vowel /æ/ in the read speech of Czech students of English. The thesis deals with the differences between Czech students and native speakers of British English, as well as the differences among individual Czech speakers. The focus on this particular area in the vocalic space derives from the widespread difficulty encountered at the acquisition of the open front vowel by Czech students. Foreign accent in general is nowadays of great interest, in both general and applied research. The theoretical part of the thesis is therefore concerned not only with issues of acoustic description of vowels (formants and vocal tract resonances) and vowel systems of the languages in question (including regional differences), but also with second language acquisition. Important concepts discussed here are contrast and linguistic categories, interference of native language, and the relationship between production and perception. Since a systematic description of Czech English is yet missing, the thesis aims to contribute a more thorough investigation in this area, which could also have practical application in ESL environment.