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Canadian English

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I have no objections to the BA thesis being borrowed and used for study purposes.

Declaration

I hereby declare that the following BA thesis is my own work for which I used only the sources and literature listed on the works cited page.

Prague, 2010

.....

Signature

Abstract

The thesis aims at exploring the variety of English spoken in Canada with a special focus on its pronunciation at the segmental level. In the theoretical part, the historic development of Canadian English is briefly outlined and the essential features of Canadian pronunciation are described.

In the practical the recordings of three native Canadian speakers are carefully analyzed and compared with the main characteristics of the Canadian accent.

Key Words

Canadian English, Canadian pronunciation, British and American Accents

Anotace

Tato práce se zabývá kanadskou angličtinou a zejména odlišnostmi v oblasti kanadské výslovnosti na segmentální úrovni. Teoretická část se skládá ze stručného nástinu historie a hlavní části zabývající se kanadskou výslovností anglického jazyka.

V druhé části se nachází praktická ukázka kanadské výslovnosti na třech nahrávkách rodilých Kanadčanů. Objevuje se zde také rozbor těchto nahrávek pro srovnání s hlavními charakteristikami kanadského přízvuku.

Klíčová slova

kanadská angličtina, kanadská výslovnost, britský a americký přízvuk

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Introduction

I have always been attracted to the phenomenon of the English language as the world's major language as well as by its dialects, accents and varieties. When I was planning my trip to Vancouver in Canada, I became primarily interested in the Canadian accent of English. Surprisingly, even though there was a lot of information about world dialects of English in the Czech National Library, only a few sources were devoted to the Canadian accent. Therefore I took advantage of my summer stay in Canada and joined the Vancouver Library, where I found a sufficient number of resources related to the selected topic. I considered the possibility of presenting this rather unknown topic to the Czech audience as very challenging.

Even though Canadian English originates from the British Isles, the pronunciation nowadays is much closer to the Standard American English than to the British Received Pronunciation. The chapters about the history of Canadian English and the influences of American and British English clarify the position of Canadian English among the two English accents. The theoretical part further outlines distinctive features of Canadian English that are predominately shared either with Received Pronunciation or General American English. Although the Canadian accent does not display as many distinguishing attributes as other accents such as Australian or Black American English, its description is worth our attention. Canada is in its everyday life influenced by the two strongest English accents as opposed to Australian geographical isolation.

The practical part offers a comprehensive analysis of the data collected from three recordings of native Canadians. Its aim is to detect to what extent the features of Canadian English, systematically presented in the preceding part, occur in the speech of randomly chosen speakers of the target accent.

Theoretical Part

1. History of Canadian English

English-speaking Canadians talk and write the way they do, not by accident, but because of the influence of all the people who have used Canadian English over the years: the settlers who came to Canada from Ireland, Scotland and England in the nineteenth century, fur traders, the pioneers of Upper Canada, the homesteaders of the West. The vocabulary, the grammar and the pronunciation of a language are the products of history. Therefore the first part provides the historical background to Canadian English.

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the history of Canadian English is similar as that of English in the British Isles. Certainly there were English speakers in Canada before that time, notably the United Empire Loyalists. When America's original Thirteen Colonies went to war with Britain over objections to unpopular taxes, not everyone in the colonies favored the move. Those who opposed the revolution were branded as traitors and became known as Loyalists since they remained loyal to the British Crown. Loyalists were harassed, denied the right to vote, sell land, sue debtors or to be lawyers, doctors or schoolmasters. Approximately one-third of the estimated 250,000 colonists who had remained loyal to Britain fled to other British Possessions. About 40,000 traveled north to what was then British North America (Canada) with the majority settling initially in a region of Eastern Canada consisting of three provinces: New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island called the Maritimes. An estimated 7,000 Loyalists settled in Upper Canada (Ontario). Their presence had a profound and permanent impact on the nation that would become Canada. Their arrival marked the beginning of a predominantly English-speaking population in the future Canada west and east of the Quebec border. About one fifth of the population of Canada can trace their ancestral roots back to one or more of those early Loyalist families. However, the great period of immigration from the British Isles which lasted from 1825 to 1860 absorbed earlier English in Canada.

Between 1825 and 1846 half a million immigrants entered Canada from the British Isles. By 1871 there were more than two million people in Canada whose country of origin were the

British Isles, and of these the Irish were in the majority. As Buckley (18) states: "846 414 of whom one hundred thousand had entered in the year 1846, the year of the Irish potato famine."

As early as 1857, the Reverend A.C. Geikie, a Scottish-born Canadian, had used the term *Canadian English* to describe the English of Ontario which he considered to be "a corrupt dialect growing up amongst our population, and gradually finding access to our periodical literature, until it threatens to produce a language as unlike our noble mother tongue as the negro patua, or the Chinese pigeon English" (Scargill 11). The sources of the Canadian English which Mr. Geikie found objectionable are the English of the late eighteenth century in England, Ireland and Scotland and words of American borrowings. The fact that Geikie was trying to hold back the tide of "the corrupt dialect" - should not deny him the credit for having discovered Canadian English. Not until 1889 was the cause taken up again by W.D. Lighthall in a magazine article which for the first time spoke without preconception about the actual state of Canadian English: "It would surprise the average British Canadian to hear it suggested that the language of his people presents any very distinctive features, so widespread are certain half-conscious notions that, excepting a few French, the language of the home born-people of our country is some very British and very un-American and practically uniform dialect, and that, although English, Scotch and Irish immigrants have individually imported their several variations, these never long remain without melting into that uniform dialect. (...) Neither do our home-born people speak a uniform dialect at all; nor is a very British dialect general; nor is our speech even practically free from Americanisms; nor is the time near when some, at least, of the variants will disappear. It can be shown that there is a possibility of the English language itself withdrawing from more than half the area of the original Province; that what remains will be long diversified by traces of dialectic division; and our daily speech is far more like that current in the United States than we suspect" (Lighthall 581-583). And during the most of its history, Canadian English continued to exhibit those characteristics which Lighthall had perceived: growing resemblance to American speech (words e.g. *down town, pants, buggy, limbs, and location*) a lack of uniformity and, particularly in the written language, a falling below "the standard of England's great literature" (Geike 11).

When any language is taken from its home and introduced into a new country which is completely different from anything that its speakers have previously known, than the language must expand the vocabulary in order to cope with new conditions. This expansion is made in predictable ways, and it includes the use of existing words with a new meaning, the

use of new words with a new meaning (*hurdy gurdy - a musical instrument that makes music by rotation of a cylinder studded with pegs*), the deliberate creation of new words, the use of the names of people of thing they invent (*Bombardier - a snow tractor, typically having caterpillar tracks at the rear and skis at the front*) and the borrowings from people in the new country who already have names for things which are new to the latest immigrants (*sockeye - small salmon with red flesh*).

2. Influences of American and British English

Although Canadian English, as Dean pointed out, has been called "a blend of British and American English" (15) one may presuppose that the English language spoken in Canada exhibits enough differences in vocabulary, syntax and pronunciation to distinguish it from both American and British English. It has much in common with both of these English dialects, but it appears to be something more than a mixture of the two. Canadian English is according to Avis "neither American, nor British, but a complex different in many respects from both. A detailed survey of Canadian speech habits would probably reveal that a number of isoglosses run parallel to the political boundary, too few, perhaps, to set Canada completely apart from the northern variety of American (i.e., North American) English, but certainly enough to establish a speech area in many ways different from the principal area. The sum of isoglosses, representing lexical, phonological, grammatical, syntactical and semantic differences would be equivalent to what is distinctly Canadian about the English language in North America. Needless to say, many of these linguistic features would be shared with English speakers elsewhere, for example in Great Britain and in non-northern speech areas of the United States." (Avis 158)

On the one hand, close contacts between Canada and United States are of long standing, and the border has never been a great barrier to the movement of populations. Today, the United States influence dominates the mass media in Canada as well as much of its commercial life. Yet membership of the Commonwealth, together with the continuing immigration from Britain, has meant that Canada is and has been more perceptive to British ways, British habits of speech, than those living further south.

That part of Canadian education, which concerns itself with syntax, grammar and spelling has for a hundred years and more been almost exclusively based on British models. The "official" orthography taught in Canadian schools is and always has been the British standard of spelling, and the "official" dictionaries are British, the various Oxford and akin lexicons and not Webster being in most cases the ranking authorities. Not until very recently has there been any attempt to relate the Oxford dictionaries to current Canadian usage, a condition which was partly remedied by the appearance in 1962 of *The Canadian Dictionary*.

3. Canadian Pronunciation of English

While it is recognized as “a variety of General American English” (Algeo 422), Canadian English has throughout its history faced something of a dilemma in its search for an identity separate from that of its powerful neighbor to the south. For obvious political reasons, Canadian English has retained a closer link with southern British standard than has the English of the United States. “Indeed, a separate "Canadian" linguistic identity seems to be largely grounded in greater use of British features on the part of Canadian speakers, by comparison to their American counterparts. By virtue of its closer links with British English, Canadians appear to feel that the variety of English which they speak is not only different from, but also superior to, the English spoken in the United States” (Pringle 183). In spite of this there is a “clear present-day trend towards greater Americanization of Canadian English and American English appears increasingly to serve as a prestige model, particularly among younger and more upwardly mobile segments of the population” (Clarke 80).

Thanks to the work of the Canadian Linguistic Association in focusing attention upon how Canadian English is spoken; it is becoming possible to define at least the dominant tendencies of Canadian pronunciation in relation to the recognized standards of British and American English.

It is usually recognized that Canada does not possess anything like a standard pronunciation, standard (or general) Canadian English was called by Bailey a “scholarly fiction” (152). Nevertheless, the standard Canadian English has traditionally been defined as a class dialect, namely, the variety spoken by educated middle-class urban Canadians from eastern border of Ontario to Vancouver Island. On the one hand, there is a remarkable homogeneity in speech over this vast area, on the other hand the limited samplings which have been made reveal that considerable variation exists not merely from speaker to speaker, but often in the same speaker. This divided usage is probably typical of Canada as a whole; it is certainly prevalent in Ontario, a province which some observers consider representative of English-speaking Canada. A survey conducted by Walter S. Avis in 1993 revealed considerable diversity among Ontario speakers in their pronunciation of many everyday words.

Canada is an officially bilingual country, though the balance is heavily tipped toward English: in 1996, of a population of slightly more than 28 million, 84 percent claimed a knowledge of English, while only 14 percent were exclusively French speakers (97 percent of whom live in Quebec), and fewer than 2 percent knew neither official language. The influence of French does not seem to be significant in Canadian English pronunciation.

The differences that mark the major dialects- the English of the Maritimes (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island), of Quebec (Montreal and the Eastern Township), and of the Ottawa Valley- from minor variants found in West (British Columbia), the Prairies (Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the Arctic North) are quite insignificant. Even the more distinctive variety of English spoken in Newfoundland is moving towards "standard Canadian English" (Kirwin 433).

This chapter attempts to illustrate the most common features of standard Canadian English and a set of characteristic pronunciation features which create the uniqueness of Canadian accent. Further differences of Prairies and New Brunswick English are not included in the survey.

As a guideline the author used Cruttenden's criteria for comparing different systems of pronunciation (84). Cruttenden names four kinds of pronunciation differences: systemic differences; distributional differences; realizational and lexical differences. Both British and American accents serve as points of reference in the following descriptions.

The subsequent detailed list was put together from following sources: Wells' *Accents of English: Beyond the British Isles*; *A Synchronic Study of English Spoken in Ottawa* by Howard B. Woods; *The Cambridge History of the English Language: English in North America* by Richard M. Hogg, Norman Francis Blake, and John Algeo; *Speaking Canadian English* by Mark M. Orkin.

As Samuel Johnson (18) pointed out "no dictionary of a living tongue can ever be perfect" as well the story of the living language is never complete. The pronunciation of Canadian English is in a state of change at the present time, and it will continue to change in the future. The most exciting thing about the study of Canadian English as well as other accents is that one can observe changes in pronunciation taking place now as *A Synchronic Study of English Spoken in Ottawa* proves. This study reveals newer tendencies in Canadian pronunciation and suitably supplements the above-mentioned works.

3.1. Systemic differences

Systemic differences, i.e. differences in phoneme inventory, are differences between two accents of a language in which one accent possesses one or more phonemes absent from the other. Meanwhile realizational differences between accents is how speakers of given accents actually pronounce the phonemes of those accents.

3.1.1. Merger of /ɑ:/ and /ɔ:/; The low-back merger

Examples: *Don/dawn, cot/caught, Otto/auto, tot/taught, hock/hawk...*

A merger refers to a loss of distinctiveness of two sounds. The low back merger blends /ɔ:/ as in *caught, small, talk* and /ɑ:/ as in *cat, hat* in favor of the latter. The merger of /ɑ:/ and /ɔ:/ has resulted for most speakers of Canadian English (up to 85 percent) in homophonous pairs such as those above. This merger is evident in Canadian English as early as the mid nineteenth century (Chambers 11). Although these vowels are distinguished in certain dialects of American English, the merger is spreading in the United States as well. One respect in which Canadian English differs from American English is in the preservation of /ɔ:/ before /r/ more consistently, as in *sorry, tomorrow, orange, porridge, and Dorothy*.

3.1.2. /hw/: the presence or absence of voiceless /h/ before /w/.

Examples: *where, why, whether, whipped, ...*

This variable is represented by the presence or absence of /h/ before /w/ in words spelled with <wh>. Canadian English shares a general North American shift from /hw/ to /w/.

Avis (1956:53) investigated the /hw/ variable in Ontario among the upper middle class. Of 159 informants, 68 claimed to pronounce /hw/, 41 acknowledged inconsistent usage, and 50 claimed just /w/.

A Synchronic Study of English Spoken in Ottawa indicates that /hw/ is not often a goal even in the linguistically more self-conscious styles.

Richard Bailey notes that /hw/ is rare for Canadian speakers even in citation form, and Léon and Martin discovered that it has almost disappeared in Toronto. However, Woods (139)

states that /hw/ “is still held as a goal in Ottawa”, though he finds that it is used less frequently by young female speakers – a sign that the pronunciation may be on the way out.

3.2. Distributional differences

3.2.1. Palatal glide after /t/, /d/, or /n/ before /u/.

Examples: *tune*, *new*, *duke*, *mature*...

This variable involves the presence (as in British English) or absence (as in American English) of the palatal glide /j/ after /t/, /d/, or /n/ and before /u/. Avis (1956:48) observed that in Ontario, the palatal glide enjoyed prestige, but there was a remarkable degree of variation for individual words. This systemic feature, which Canadian English (CE) shares with GenAm in contrast with BE, is the deletion of the semivowel /j/ between the alveolars /t/, /d/, /n/ and the vowel /u:/. In BE so called “yod” is always retained, except in certain types of regional dialect speech which is, of course, stigmatized. In the US the “yod-less” pronunciation is clearly that of the majority, as American dictionaries give this pronunciation alone, or list it as the preferred form. For CE, on the contrary, forms with yod are preferred, thus: *duke* /dju:k/, *new* /nju:/, *tune* /tju:n/.

Interestingly enough, A Synchronic Study of English Spoken in Ottawa stated that the palatal glide is decreasing in usage. (Woods 159)

3.2.2. Rhoticity

Examples: *barber*

As for the consonants, in contrast with British English- Received Pronunciation (BE), the most important distributional difference is that Canadian English is rhotic while BE is non-rhotic, i.e. CE maintains /r/ before consonants and in word-final position, e.g. *barber* /'bɑ:rbər/, as opposed to BE in which /r/ is realized only prevocally, thus in BE /'bɑ:bə/. This feature in Canada is shared with most of their American neighbors.

3.3. Realizational differences

3.3.1. Canadian raising

Undoubtedly, Canadian raising is the most distinctive phonetic feature of Canadian English. In Canadian English the “price” and “mouth” vowel phonemes, /aɪ/ and /aʊ/, have special allophones employed in the environment of a preceding voiceless (fortis) consonant namely /p/, /t/, /k/, /f/ and /s/. These allophones are diphthongs with a mid starting-point (half-open or somewhat closer): [əi] and [ʌʊ] respectively. As mentioned, Canadian raising occurs in these two cases:

- a) the diphthong /aɪ/ before voiceless final consonants is typically realized in Canada as raised /əi/

Examples: *kite, tonight, invite, write...*

The allophone of /aɪ/ is a major pronunciation feature which differentiates Canadian English from General and Northern American counterpart. This diphthong is pronounced relatively close to /əi/ before voiceless final consonants and it, too, is a high and fast diphthong.

Because of Canadian raising many speakers are able to distinguish between words such as writer and rider.

- b) the diphthong /aʊ/ before voiceless final consonants is typically realized in Canada as a raised [ʌu]

Examples: *house, mouth, without, about, trout, out,*

The /ʌʊ/ allophone is sometimes perceived by Americans as a variety of /u/, which leads to popular claims that Canadians say ‘oot and aboot’ for out and about” (Wells 494).

This variable, spelled <ou>, is the major pronunciation feature, which differentiates Canadian English from General American English. This diphthong is pronounced relatively close, realized as [ʌu] before voiceless consonants in syllable-final position.

Although this Canadian diphthong is widely known as one of the characteristic markers of Canadian English, it is mainly only a higher and faster segment of the continuum, transcribed in *A Synchronic Study of English Spoken in Ottawa* as [ʌu], which is singled out by foreigners and imitated as /u/. Thus foreigners say they hear /ə'bu:t/ for 'about'. *A Synchronic Study of English Spoken in Ottawa's* informal studies indicated that linguistically naive Northern American speakers perceive (and are jolted by) this /ʌu/ sound in approximately 20% of Canadian speech while they hear no difference from the 50-60% of Canadians who use /ʌu/ which is lower and slower than /ʌʊ/.

The very high initial vowel onset [ʌu] occurred in the study predominately among male and female informants over 40 years of age and younger males. This very high initial vowel was rare among the younger informants, i.e. those younger than 25 years of age.

In conclusion we note that the Ottawa synchronic data demonstrate that this characteristically Canadian diphthong has been present for several generations and that it is markedly stronger in older generations. The study predicts that this Canadian diphthong will slowly lose its distinctiveness and slowly merge with Northern American variant /au/.

3.3.2. *The pronunciation of <ing>*

Examples: *doing, fishing, morning, building,...*

<ing> is the grammatical suffix which marks the progressive aspect and the gerund and it also serves as nominalizing suffix. The three variants of pronunciation are /in/, /iŋ/ and /ən/, the first of which is Canadianism in the sense that it is more prevalent in Canada than in U.S.

“Concerning the three variants, the /ən/ pronunciation, so frequently used in the United States, was very infrequently used in Ottawa” (Compared the Ottawa data in *A Synchronic Study of English Spoken in Ottawa*, p. 157 figure 2a, with Labov’s (1966:398) New York city data, figure 2b). “The /iŋ/ variant is the most frequent variant for all socio-economic and sex-age groupings in the minimal pairs and word lists, while /in/ is the most frequent in the more casual styles: pictures, reading and free speech.”(Woods 157)

The Ottawa Study reveals that the younger age group consistently has a higher frequency of /ɪn/ than the older group; this tends to suggest that the /ɪn/ variant will most probably increase in Ottawa while the use of /ən/ will decline. In conclusion, the synchronic data suggest that this Canadianism is gaining in use.

3.3.3. Medial intervocalic <t> realized as an alveolar flap; t - voicing

Examples: *Ottawa*, *little*, *butter*, *out of* ...

The stronger stress on initial syllables of words such as *city*, *butter*, *little*, *better*, etc. naturally favors the voiced /ɾ/ in nearly all varieties of North American English. Medial intervocalic <t> is reduced to a “flap” – a sound alike /d/, but the tongue only briefly touches the alveolar ridge. In the United States, *Webster’s Third International Dictionary* transcribes words with post-tonic medial <t> as /ɾ/ as first choice, recognizing that the change has already taken place (e.g. it gives for the *butter* the pronunciation /'bʌɾər/ before /'bʌtər/). In England a medial /-ɾ-/ would be dialectal (e.g., south-west) and would be stigmatized. Many speakers in Canada (e.g. as in the Survey of Vancouver English informants) retrieve the underlying /t/ when they are speaking in a formal style.

The attempt on the part of Canadian schools, the CBC television, etc. to force /VtV/ has been artificial and unnatural.

The Ottawa Study suggests that in the past, the older informants had a goal of /VtV/ related to British usage in formal usage. However in less guarded speech /VɾV/ was unconsciously used. This dual standard reinforces the thesis that Canadian English has been influenced significantly but superficially by BE while fundamentally remaining a variety of North American English. The sources point to a higher frequency of /VɾV/ in the future.

3.4. Lexical Incidence

Some lexical items have distinctive pronunciations in Canadian English, pronunciations that are found in neither British nor American English. These include *khaki* /kɑrki/, *offense* /əv 'fens/, and *longitude* /lɒŋgɪ,t(j)u:d/. Studies show, however, that the Canadian pronunciation of *khaki* is being replaced by American /kæki/. Other pronunciations are shared with

American English, though they are of limited distribution in the latter, being either socially marked or old-fashioned: *asphalt* /æʃˈfɒlt/, *progress* /prəʊˈɡres/ (also *process*, sometimes *product*), *vase* /veɪz/, *bilingual* /baɪˈlɪŋɡjuəl/, *drama* /ˈdræmə/, and *tomato* /təˈmæʊtəʊ/.

It is in the pronunciation of individual lexical items that Canadian English shows the influence of a British prestige. In contrast to American pronunciation, Canadians normally pronounce the suffix *-ine* as /aɪn/ rather than /ɪn/; the suffix *-ile* as /aɪl/ rather than /əl/, and prefixes such as *anti-* and *semi-* with the final vowel /ɪ/ rather than /aɪ/. Oddly, /aɪn/ for *-ine* was though vulgar in nineteenth-century Canada. Canadians side with the British on the pronunciation of *lieutenant* /leɪˈtenənt/, *shone* /ʃɒn/, *lever* /ˈli:və/, and several other words; the word *been* is pronounced by many speakers as /bɪn/ rather than /bi:n/; as in Southern England, *either* and *neither* are more commonly /ˈaɪðər/ and /ˈnaɪðər/, respectively.

The Survey of Canadian English (Wells 497) revealed an east-west difference in the word *apricot*, which is pronounced with initial /eɪ/ in British Columbia, but /æ/ elsewhere. This survey also showed a general trend for association between American variants and a lower level of education, and between British variants and a higher educational level. For example, 77 percent of those with only a high school education reported /sk/ in *schedule*, while the smaller figure of 68 percent of those with college or university did so. For *leisure* with /i:/ as against /e/ the corresponding 71 per cent and 60 per cent, respectively.

3.5. Suprasegmental Aspect

As far as the suprasegmental aspect of CE is concerned, there is no special difference there. The most important features are the primary and secondary stress. One stress pattern CE shares with GenAm is the existence of a special group of words that preserve a secondary stress which has been lost elsewhere. These are word like *secretary* /ˈsekrə,teri/, *stationery* /ˈsteɪʃə,nerɪ/, *territory* /ˈterə,tɔ:ri/, etc. In BE and elsewhere, apart from North America, these words have no secondary stress, and lose a syllable because they elide the vowel of the syllable in question: /ˈsekrətɪ/, /ˈsteɪʃənɪ/, /ˈterətɪ/.

Practical Part

4. Method

The purpose of the practical part is to find out which features of Canadian English explored in the theoretical part occur in the speech of three randomly chosen native Canadian speakers. The aim of the section is also to demonstrate several differences at the segmental level of Canadian English in comparison to General American and RP pronunciation by analyzing recordings of three Canadians. Consequently, tables showing General American pronunciation of words, RP pronunciation with the actual pronunciation of the three speakers are produced and commented. The pronunciation of the target words was transcribed using the modified subset of symbols for the English language stemming from the International Phonetic Alphabet. Wells' Pronunciation Dictionary served as a source for correctness of subscribed words.

The text used for the practical part was created by the author out of words mentioned especially in Wells' Accents of English in the chapter about Canadian pronunciation.

The following text is the exact wording that contains the discussed expressions (underlined). It was quite difficult to compose a meaningful text out of the words with different pronunciation. Therefore a fictional news story was created. The author preferred to create a fictional story rather than to use separated sentences to make the practical part more attractive to the reader.

On tonight's news: psycho salmon have been caught in the Hudson River.

The newest hypothesis suggests that this strange behaviour is caused either by a certain type of apricot or the colour khaki which is known to be disposed of on a regular basis by a local food company. What is known for sure is that salmon in this area go deaf, then their condition progresses into a state of complete hostility and they begin to shoot themselves like missiles at unsuspecting fishermen. The situation became so critical that it caught the attention of the Canadian military, which sent Lieutenant John Cyclops to investigate the matter more closely. Lieutenant Cyclops rode to the location all the way from Ottawa on his bicycle and

quickly solved the matter by killing all the salmon with a big lever he brought with him. For this heroic act he was awarded a Star of Courage and even the Duke of York postponed his leisure activities such as swimming with whales and writing his memoirs and came to congratulate_him for his deeds. Now all is back to normal and the local food company scheduled the next apricot disposal on Tuesday afternoon without any fear of psycho salmon.

The table below shows age, sex, place of origin and occupation of all three speakers.

<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Place of origin</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
1	26	female	Uxbridge, Ontario	student
2	29	male	Vancouver, British Columbia	waiter
3	23	male	Victoria, British Columbia	photographer

Table 1: Description of Basic Information about the Participants

The instructions given to respondents were very brief. Only the topic of my bachelor’s thesis, the text for the recording and how to record the text was given.

The first speaker is a woman currently on working holiday in the Czech Republic, Prague. We met at her apartment and for recording the voice we used the mobile phone Nokia 6600 Slider and its voice recording device. She was very enthusiastic about the project and when the recording was done, we were talking about the topic of my thesis and she was very well informed about Canadian pronunciation.

On the contrary, the remaining two recordings were taken in Canada and sent over the internet. The text was dictated directly to speakers’ own computers via Express Dictate, a computer - based Dictaphone.

After having received all the recordings, the author listened through BS player to each of them twice a day every second day for a week in order to secure the reliability of the results. The quality of all three recordings was sufficient.

5. Results

It is obvious from the following summary sheets that these three records did not always show the Canadian pronunciation features mentioned in the sources and in the theoretical part. From the recordings it is visible that the American influence in a regular speech of Canadians is strong.

The results represented in this section follow the structure of chapter 3 from the theoretical part. Each sub-chapter contains a table consulting of a word or words with the examined phenomenon and the British and American pronunciations. In the fourth column the preferred Canadian pronunciation is given followed by the respondents' pronunciations of the target words.

5.1. Systemic differences

5.1.1. Merger of /ɑ:/ and /ɔ:/; The low-back merger

<u>Word</u>	<u>RP pronunciation</u>	<u>GenAm pronunciation</u>	<u>Canadian pronunciation</u>	<u>Record 1</u>	<u>Record 2</u>	<u>Record 3</u>
caught	/kɔ:t/	/kɑ:t /	/kɑ:t/	/kɔ:t/	/kɑ:t/	/kɑ:t/

The merger of /ɑ:/ and /ɔ:/ is audible in two out of three readings of the word *caught* and therefore it supports the hypothesis. For most Canadians the merger is complete and words *caught* - *cot* are homophones.

5.1.2. /hw/: the presence or absence of voiceless /h/ before /w/.

<u>Word</u>	<u>RP pronunciation</u>	<u>GenAm pronunciation</u>	<u>Canadian pronunciation</u>	<u>Record 1</u>	<u>Record 2</u>	<u>Record 3</u>
which	/hwɪtʃ/ or /wɪtʃ/	/hwɪtʃ/ or /wɪtʃ/	/ wɪtʃ/	/ wɪtʃ/	/ wɪtʃ/	/wɪtʃ/
whales	/hweɪ ^ə lz/ or /weɪ ^ə lz/	/hweɪ ^ə lz/ or /weɪ ^ə lz/	/weɪ ^ə lz/	/weɪ ^ə lz/	/weɪ ^ə lz/	/hweɪ ^ə lz/

The theory suggested /hw/ as rather rare for Canadian speakers. In the word *which*, none of the records showed /hw/, however in the 3rd recording the word *whale* was pronounced with /h/ before /w/.

5.2. Distributional differences

5.2.1. Palatal glide after /t/, /d/, or /n/ before /u/.

<u>Word</u>	<u>RP pronunciation</u>	<u>GenAm pronunciation</u>	<u>Canadian pronunciation</u>	<u>Record 1</u>	<u>Record 2</u>	<u>Record 3</u>
		<u>n</u>	<u>n</u>			
news	/nju:z/	/nu:z/	/nju:z/	/nju:z/	/nu:z/	nu:z/
duke	/dju:k/	/du:k/	/dju:k/	/du:k/	/du:k/	/du:k/

In observed words *news* and *duke* the palatal glide /j/ was absent in all six cases. This trend confirms the theory found in all the sources. The palatal glide is decreasing in use among native Canadians and the pronunciation of such words is now in most cases the same as that of American pronunciation.

5.2.2. Rhoticity

<u>Word</u>	<u>RP</u> <u>pronunciation</u>	<u>GenAm</u> <u>pronunciatio</u> <u>n</u>	<u>Canadian</u> <u>pronunciatio</u> <u>n</u>	<u>Record 1</u>	<u>Record 2</u>	<u>Record 3</u>
matter	/mætə/	/mætər/	/mæt̚ər/	/mætər/	/mætər/	/mætər/
either	/aɪðə/- southern England	/i:ðər/	/'aɪðər/	/'aɪðər/	/i:ðər/	/i:ðər/
lever	/li:və/	/levər /	/li:vər/	/li:vər/	/li:vər/	/li:vər/

Canadian as well as General American English is rhotic and keeps the /r/ sound in word final position and before consonants. Rhoticity was found in all three recordings of words *matter*, *either* and *lever*.

5.3. Realizational differences

5.3.1. Canadian raising

Canadian raising might be observed within these words from the text: *hypothesis* and *without*. However the author as not a native English speaker found it very difficult to hear this very specific yet hardly distinguishable feature of Canadian English. Unfortunately, this feature was not analyzed in the practical part.

5.3.2. The pronunciation of <ing>

<u>Word</u>	<u>RP</u> <u>pronunciatio</u> <u>n</u>	<u>GenAm</u> <u>pronunciation</u>	<u>Canadian</u> <u>pronunciation</u>	<u>Record 1</u>	<u>Record 2</u>	<u>Record 3</u>
unsuspecting	/,ʌnsə'spektɪŋ/	/,ʌnsə'spektən/	/,ʌnsə'spektɪn/	/,ʌnsə'spektɪŋ/	/,ʌnsə'spektɪŋ/	/,ʌnsə'spektɪŋ/

The pronunciation of <ing> in all recordings was the same as in J.C.Wells' dictionary /,ʌnsə'spektɪŋ/, the RP pronunciation.

5.3.3. Medial intervocalic <t> realized as an alveolar flap; t - voicing

<u>Word</u>	<u>RP</u> <u>pronunciation</u>	<u>GenAm</u> <u>pronunciatio</u> <u>n</u>	<u>Canadian</u> <u>pronunciatio</u> <u>n</u>	<u>Record 1</u>	<u>Record 2</u>	<u>Record 3</u>
matter	/mætə/	/mætər/	/mæt̬ər/	/mætər/	/mætər/	/mætər/

In both Canadian and American English, it can only occur if the /t/ is between two vowels, and as long as the second vowel is not stressed, such as in the word *matter*. The word was pronounced with an alveolar flap: /t̬/ sound. This feature might make the pair *matter* – *madder* homophonous.

5.4. Lexical Incidence

a) Distinctive pronunciation

<u>Word</u>	<u>RP</u> <u>pronunciation</u>	<u>GenAm</u> <u>pronunciatio</u> <u>n</u>	<u>Canadian</u> <u>pronunciatio</u> <u>n</u>	<u>Record 1</u>	<u>Record 2</u>	<u>Record 3</u>
salmon	/sæmən/	/sæmən/	/samən/	/sæmən/	/sæmən/	/sæmən/
apricot	/eɪpɹɪkɒt/	/æpɹɪkɒt/	/eɪ/- British Columbia /æ/- elsewhere	/eɪpɹɪkɒt/	/æpɹɪkɒt/	/æpɹɪkɒt/
khaki	/kɑ:kɪ/	/kæki/	/karki/	/kɑ:kɪ/	/kæki/	/kæki/
leisure	/leɪzə/	/li:zər/	/e/-higher education /i:/ - lower education	/li:zər/	/li:zər/	/li:zər/
scheduled	/ʃedʒu:ld/	/skedʒ u:ld/	/ʃ/- higher education /sk/- lower education	/skedʒu:ld/	/skedʒu:ld/	/skedʒ u:ld/

In spite of the fact that distinctive pronunciation was expected in the word *khaki* /karki/, the pronunciation was as that of American English in 2nd and 3rd record, in the first one the pronunciation was British. It has already been mentioned that the pronunciation has been replaced by the American version.

The oddity in the word *salmon*, in Canada often pronounced /samən/, in comparison to RP-GenAm /'sæmən/ was unfortunately not approved by any of the recordings.

In the recording of the word *apricot*, the theory proved the opposite in practice. Similarly, all three speakers were highly educated, thus the pronunciations /'leɪzə/ and /'ʃedʒu:l / of words *leisure* and *schedule* were expected. Nevertheless, they all pronounced the words in an American way (/ 'li:zər/ and / 'skedʒʊəl/), as common in speech of less educated Canadians.

c) British Pronunciation

<u>Word</u>	<u>RP</u> <u>pronunciation</u>	<u>GenAm</u> <u>pronunciatio</u> <u>n</u>	<u>Canadian</u> <u>pronunciatio</u> <u>n</u>	<u>Record 1</u>	<u>Record 2</u>	<u>Record 3</u>
missiles	/mɪsaɪlz/	/mɪsəlz/	/mɪsaɪlz/	/mɪsəlz/	/mɪsəlz/	/mɪsəlz/
lieutenant	/leɪˈtenənt/ /ləɪˈtenənt/	/luːˈtenənt/	/leɪˈtenənt/	/leɪˈtenənt/	/luːˈtenənt/	/luːˈtenənt/
either	/aɪðə/- southern England	/iːðər/	/'aɪðər/	/'aɪðər/	/iːðər/	/iːðər/
lever	/li:və/	/levər /	/li:vər/	/li:vər/	/li:vər/	/li:vər/

It was said that the word *missile* and something here are usually pronounced as /'mɪsaɪl/ in Canadian English as well as in RP. Conversely, all three speakers chose to pronounce the word as in GenAm /'mɪsəl/.

Furthermore, pronunciation of *lieutenant* /leɪˈtenənt/ is said to be common in Canadian pronunciation. This proved in record one by the girl from Ontario, meanwhile records two and three showed the standard American pronunciation /luːˈtenənt/.

The theory proved itself while analyzing the word *lever*, the pronunciation was supposed to be and was the same as RP pronunciation /'li:v ə/.

The word *either* was present to show the assumptive Canadian pronunciation parallel to that of Southern England: /'aɪðə/. The hypothesis proved itself in recording one, and did not come to light in the two remaining records.

d) American Pronunciation

<u>Word</u>	<u>RP</u> <u>pronunciation</u>	<u>GenAm</u> <u>pronunciatio</u> <u>n</u>	<u>Canadian</u> <u>pronunciation</u>	<u>Record 1</u>	<u>Record 2</u>	<u>Record 3</u>
progresses	/prə'gresɪz/	/prəʊ'gresɪz/	/prəʊ'gresɪz/	/præg'resɪz/	/prə'gresɪz/	/prə'gresɪz/

The question of preferable American pronunciation /prəʊ'gresɪz/of the word *progresses* in Canadian speech was not proven, and all three speakers pronounced the word as in BrE: /prə'gresɪz/.

Conclusion

The main goal of the thesis was to present the topic of the distinctive features of the Canadian pronunciation of the English language. The theoretical part presents in a comprehensible way both the history of the Canadian accent and the influences of American and British English to see how the English language in this area developed over the years and what the prevalent influences were. For systematic purposes, the Cruttenden's criteria for comparing different systems of pronunciation serve to introduce the Canadian pronunciation differences and characteristic features to the reader.

What came through in the theoretical and practical part was that Canadian English is a mixture of British English and General American English, slightly inclining towards American English as analyses showed. Any of the three records can be used during lectures upon Canadian English or word accents to show American and British English pronunciations of underlined words and consequently reveal to students that this “blend of American and British English pronunciations” is Canadian English, yet there are certain specificities such as Canadian raising and merger of /ɑ:/ and /ɔ:/.

Sometimes the practical part confirmed the Canadian pronunciation features mentioned in the sources and in the theoretical part, such as the merger of /ɑ:/ and /ɔ:/, sometimes it showed the complete opposite – e.g. pronunciation of the word salmon. Yet all the Canadian features are mainly tendencies in language, with many varieties from speaker to speaker and the sample of three recordings can only illustrate the different accent in a larger context, not while considering each isolated word. On all accounts, each recording is considerably different from RP English or General American English pronunciation, so it might be used to present the Canadian accent during lectures.

Writing this bachelor thesis helped me a lot in realizing how appealing the life of a living language is. The life of the Canadian language can be compared in some way to our lives. We are all in some respect trying to stand up for our traditions, but at the same time we are strongly influenced by the more powerful ones. I am very interested in onward life of Canadian English, whether it will nurse those small unique differences that make its existence special or on the other hand whether it will gradually melt into the bigger ocean.

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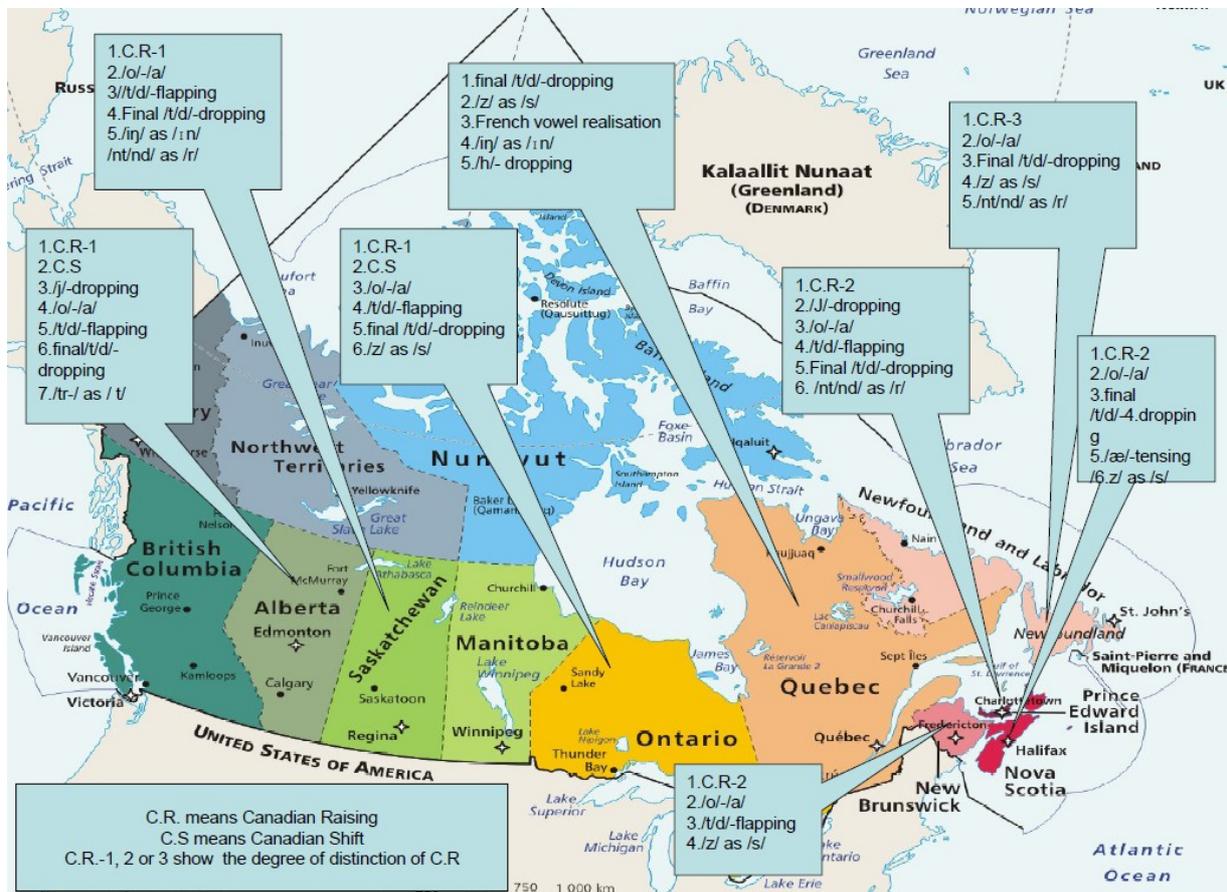
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Appendix

1.



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