

The study focuses on durational variation of segments in read speech of Czech and British speakers of English. The variation in segmental duration was examined in the speech of three Czech and three British speakers with respect to individual vowel and consonant categories. Furthermore, stress and intonation phrase boundary were explored as possible factors influencing segmental duration. The theoretical part of the study focuses on two main topics. The first is foreign accent with regard to accentedness, intelligibility and comprehensibility as well as in connection to its implications and factors which might influence its degree. The second part contains theoretical background about the time domain of speech concerning segmental duration in Czech and English, the area of rhythm, the importance of durational cues in perception and a short survey of factors reported to affect segmental duration. Czech accent in English and the importance of duration in foreign language are also covered. In the empirical part of the study, Czech speakers were found to miss the appropriate proportions between individual vowel categories and realize their long vowels as slightly too short. They lacked an adequate degree of durational contrast in stressed and unstressed vowels when compared to the British speakers. With regard to the IP boundary, the Czech English vowels and consonants in the pre-boundary syllable were found display smaller degree of pre-boundary lengthening. The present study aims to contribute to a more comprehensive description of Czech English as well as to the search for the proper focus of pronunciation instruction in EFL in the Czech context