

ABSTRACT

The aim of the thesis is to ascertain whether and how the modification of pitch in the acoustic signal influences what we hear, i.e. whether we perceive a difference between the original, unmodified stimulus and the one with a modified melodic contour. The theoretical part of the thesis explains terms such as: the fundamental frequency and its contour, the just noticeable difference, intonation and the structure of intonational phrases, and the difference between English and Czech intonational structure. The practical part uses recordings of Standard British English. The contour of the fundamental frequency (F0) is changed at different places of the intonation phrase (the nuclear syllable, stressed and unstressed syllables of the head) and the pitch is either lowered or raised by 1.5 semitones with respect to the original production. The main goal is (1) to determine the influence of the melodic prominence of a syllable on the pitch manipulation detection (judged by 20 listeners of Czech origin, all students of English) and (2) to find out which other factors (such as the already mentioned direction of the change) might be significant. The results are analysed and their statistical significance is evaluated.