

## **Abstract**

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the effect of changes in speech rhythm on the perception of personality traits which are detectable in speech. The theoretical part is concerned with the description of some important theories in the field of psychology of personality, then with summarizing research done in the effects of foreign-accented speech on perception, and finally with presenting the issue of speech rhythm with a focus on representative studies of speech rhythm and its effect on speech perception. In an independently designed experiment, the changes in speech rhythm were created by manipulating the durational patterns and pitch contours. Subsequently a perceptual test was prepared. Twenty subjects were asked to evaluate individual speech samples and rate to what extent they would characterize the speaker by the given personality trait. The results from the perceptual tests were analyzed from multiple points of view: the effects of the manipulations on the perception in general, and then in relation to the nationality of the speaker (native vs. non-native speaker), to the personality trait in question, and in relation to the individual speakers and items. The results showed some tendencies for example in perception of honesty in relation to durational patterns, or in perception of nervousness in connection with changes in pitch.